

# Legislative Council

Tuesday, the 11th September, 1973

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

## BILLS (2): ASSENT

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

1. Weights and Measures Act Amendment Bill.
2. Supply Bill.

## QUESTIONS (9): ON NOTICE

### 1. RING ROAD SYSTEM

#### *Realignment of Northern Section*

The Hon. F. R. WHITE, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) Has the original alignment of the extension of the Northern leg of the Freeway system passing from Newcastle Street through the Maylands Peninsula, been changed in the vicinity of Bath and Wall Streets?
- (2) If so—
  - (a) When was the decision made;
  - (b) what is the new alignment;
  - (c) what actions were taken to advise the public of the proposed alteration;
  - (d) what were the reasons necessitating the realignment?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) Recommendations made in 1968 in a report on the Inner Ring Road were forwarded to all local authorities for comment. The Stirling City Council agreed with the recommendation to realign Swan River Drive where it crosses the Maylands Peninsula and advised the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority to that effect. The realignment was adopted by resolution of the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority on 19th April, 1972.
- (b) The new alignment is shown on page 1556 of the *Government Gazette* dated 2nd June, 1972, a copy of which is, with permission, hereby tabled.

The document was tabled (see paper No. 274).

- (c) Answered by (2) (b).

- (d) (i) Improved alignment.
- (ii) To allow for a more suitable area for development on the Maylands Peninsula.
- (iii) To retain more river foreshore for recreation purposes.

### 2. KARAWARA HOUSING PROJECT

#### *Roads*

The Hon. CLIVE GRIFFITHS, to the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) When giving consideration to the appeal lodged by the State Housing Commission in respect to the Karawara project for permission to provide road pavement width of 20 feet in lieu of the minimum 24 feet prescribed for in the Local Government Act, was the number of dwellings to be served by the roads one of the factors which influenced the Minister to uphold the appeal?
- (2) Were there any other factors, and if so, what were they?

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

- (1) No.
- (2) Yes.
  - (a) The reduction was in respect of minor internal roads and culs-de-sac.
  - (b) The roads were designed to give access to residences only and will not carry through-traffic.
  - (c) The total design of the subdivision provides for adequate off-street parking.
  - (d) The Commission's function is to provide mainly for the low, moderate income group and any extra costs must be passed to the people who can least afford to pay.

### 3. KARAWARA HOUSING PROJECT

#### *Contracts*

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

- (1) Have contracts been let for the construction of any of the State Housing Commission houses to be built at Karawara?
- (2) If so will the Minister lay on the Table of the House a copy of the contracts and any conditions which apply to those contracts?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No. These contracts are the private business of the construction firms and consequently will only be available for confidential perusal in the Minister's Office.

#### 4. HIGH SCHOOL Eastern Wheat Belt

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

- (1) Does the Government contemplate building a new senior high school in the Eastern wheat belt?
- (2) Has the Lake Grace Shire made land available for such a school and a hostel?
- (3) Does the Government appreciate the need for a school further east of the present high schools at Katanning and Narrogin to reduce the travelling distance for children who live in the Lake Grace Shire and the northern part of the Ravensthorpe Shire?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) and (3) In an endeavour to provide full secondary education in rural areas, investigations are being made into the needs of a number of areas, including the Eastern Wheatbelt. In the case of the latter area, a decision has not been reached.
- (2) The Lake Grace Shire Council has intimated that suitable land exists, adjacent to the town, for the establishment of a Senior High School and hostel.

#### 5. KARAWARA HOUSING PROJECT

##### *Subdivisional Approval*

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

- (1) Has the Town Planning Board granted final subdivisional approval to the State Housing Commission for any of its Karawara estate?
- (2) If so, which areas have received such approval?
- (3) If the answer to (1) is "No" what is the reason?
- (4) Is it necessary for subdivisional approval to be granted by the Town Planning Board before construction of houses can be commenced?
- (5) If the answer to (4) is "No" what are the circumstances which must apply for buildings to be constructed without subdivisional approval?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Answered by (1) above.
- (3) Survey documents have not been submitted to the Town Planning Board for approval.
- (4) Under Town Planning provisions, no. I am not aware of the application of the Uniform Building By-laws to this particular case.

- (5) Any buildings erected on a proposed residential lot would need to meet the restrictions applicable to the finally created lot; namely lot area, minimum frontage, minimum boundary setbacks, maximum plot ratio, etc. as required by an operative Town Planning Scheme or By-law in the district.

#### 6. CARNARVON HOSPITAL

##### *Library*

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

Has provision been made for a Medical Reference Library in the new hospital at Carnarvon?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

No particular area has been set aside for a library, but a limited number of reference books is available at the hospital.

There is a regular routing throughout North West hospitals of technical periodicals. In addition, any urgent needs are immediately communicated to the main departmental library and are quickly met—usually within one to two days.

#### 7. HOUSING

##### *Farms*

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

- (1) Are there public health and housing standards laid down under which families living on farms must abide?
- (2) Is the Government aware that many farmers, particularly conditional purchase holders, are living in caravans and converted sheds because of lack of availability of housing funds?
- (3) Is it possible for the State Housing Commission to build housing for these farmers, or for farm workers living on farms?
- (4) Now that deficiencies in Aboriginal housing are being appreciated and remedied, is it the Government's intention to look at the remaining under-privileged group living in country areas?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) From time to time over the years since land for farming has been opened up, there have been reports that farmers, including Conditional Purchase holders, are inadequately housed.
- (3) Only if the farmer is prepared to grant the State Housing Commission first mortgage over the

farm holding and his income or that of his employee does not exceed \$109.14 per week in the South West Land Division and \$1.92 per week for each dependant under 21 years.

- (4) Aboriginal Housing is financed by the Commonwealth making grants under Section 96 of the Constitution, i.e. for the specific purpose of housing Aboriginal people or people of Aboriginal descent. In regard to non-Aboriginal people the Commonwealth is negotiating with the State a new Housing Agreement Act 1973, the essential element of which is that families of Husband, Wife and two children (plus \$2 per week for each additional dependant) in receipt of an income in excess of 85 per centum of the Adult Male Average Weekly Earnings (exclusive of overtime) will not be eligible for housing assistance. This scheme if accepted will parallel under the State Housing Act the eligibility under which is outlined in (2) above.

As there are many aspects to the Member's question it is recommended that if he wishes to be more comprehensively informed, he either attend the Housing Seminar to be held in Busselton on 19th October, 1973 or alternatively confer with the General Manager of the Commission.

## 8.

## POLICE

*Detection Staff*

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH, to the Minister for Police:

In each of the years 1970-71, 1971-1972, and 1972-73—

- (a) what was the value of live-stock reported stolen;
- (b) what was the value of live-stock recovered;
- (c) what was the value of the stolen livestock on which convictions were recorded;
- (d) how many police were in the department responsible for stock theft apprehension;
- (e) what was the value of gold reported stolen;
- (f) what number of police were in the gold squad;
- (g) what was the total value of bank robberies reported;
- (h) what numbers of police were employed in the Criminal Investigation Branch?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON replied:

Reports of livestock stealing cannot always be confirmed and there have been many instances where

losses could be attributed to natural deaths, broken fences and inaccurate records. Nevertheless, all Police officers in country districts, including both Criminal Investigation Branch and uniformed officers, are aware of the problem and are constantly looking for instances of stock stealing.

There has been one special detective consigned to co-ordinate the work of country Police and recently a further detective has been added to the Special Squad. The point I wish to make is that the detection of stock stealing is not solely the work of this Special Squad.

The situation regarding gold stealing is vastly different in that recoveries of stolen gold are made from time to time although in very few cases are reports of thefts received.

The replies to the specific questions are—

	1970/71	1971/72	1972/73
	\$	\$	\$
(a)	51,970	28,043	108,739
(b)	37,730	12,486	48,599
(c)	320	816	4,749

- (d) No specific department is responsible for stocks theft apprehension which receives the attention of all Police officers of districts where stealing is reported. A special Squad of 2 detectives complements the work of other Police officers.

(e)	Nil	Nil	\$14,000
(f)	4	4	4
(g)	\$872	\$11,003	\$2,261
(h)	189	187	195

## 9.

## GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTAL HEADS

*Representations by Members of Parliament*

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

In view of the reply to question 4 on the 22nd August, 1973, in which he stated that "information on the day to day administration of instrumentalities are more correctly directed to the management of those instrumentalities", would the Minister indicate how this can be achieved when experience has shown that the General Manager of the State Electricity Commission is averse to receiving telephone calls from Members of Parliament?

The Hon. J. DOLAN replied:

It is not agreed that the General Manager of The State Electricity Commission is averse to receiving telephone calls from members of Parliament.

Government and semi-government departments are required to deal in detail with a large cross-section of the community. The numbers of such communications make it necessary for many different specialist officers to deal with limited aspects of the Department's activities. It is usual for telephone callers to briefly state their business and they are directed to the officer most likely to be able to assist. It is not always practical for the caller to reach a particular officer especially those who have the broader responsibilities. Most Members of Parliament have been able to have the needs of their constituents met by a letter of inquiry direct to the department administrative head or alternatively, through the office of the responsible Minister. It is suggested that the Hon. Member follow this course of approach.

### BILLS (3): RECEIPT AND FIRST READING

1. Property Law Act Amendment Bill.
2. Wood Chipping Industry Agreement Act Amendment Bill.

Bills received from the Assembly; and, on motions by The Hon. J. Dolan (Leader of the House), read a first time.

3. Companies Act Amendment Bill.

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by The Hon. R. Thompson (Minister for Police), read a first time.

### HEALTH SERVICES

#### *Deeble Report Proposals: Motion*

Debate resumed, from the 22nd August, on the following motion by The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon—

That this House views with grave concern the proposal by the Federal Government to radically change the Health Services in this State as proposed in the "Deeble Report", because, if carried out, the proposal will—

- (a) threaten the individual's freedom of choice of hospital accommodation and medical attendant;
- (b) centralise in Canberra control over hospitals and medical practitioners;

- (c) place at risk the independence of church and private hospitals;
- (d) deny the individual the right to insure against the cost of medical care;
- (e) place in jeopardy the many associated services such as Silver Chain, Meals on Wheels, Home Help and the like which have been developed individually in this State and which rely on enthusiastic individual participation and local control;
- (f) register and number each adult person in the community which would be basic to the maintenance of computer data banks of personal histories;
- (g) lead to deterioration in the quality of health care; and
- (h) increase the burden of the cost of health care in the community.

**THE HON. J. DOLAN** (South-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [4.58 p.m.]: I suppose it could be said that this motion is typical of its type and is fairly common. It is what I would classify as an exercise in debate and criticism. Similar motions have been moved previously, irrespective of who has been in Government and who in Opposition.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I do not know about that.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I have examined all the contributions made by members of the Opposition and I have looked in vain for some words of praise in connection with the proposed health service. Of course, at this stage the Commonwealth Government is only making proposals.

Had Mr. Williams delivered his speech one day later, I am sure we would have received a few crumbs of approval for the Commonwealth Government's proposal to allocate \$7,500,000 to help the States develop community-based mental health, alcoholism, and drug dependency services.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The Commonwealth Government could do that without nationalising medicine.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: The debate on the motion was quite long and many comments were made about various aspects of health services. For these reasons I may perhaps take a little longer to reply than is customary for me on occasions such as these.

Items (a) to (h) in Mr. MacKinnon's motion were mentioned as causes of grave concern and appear to have had their basis, principally, in the pamphlet "Paying More, Getting Less".

This pamphlet, on which the mover of the motion placed considerable emphasis, was issued by the Voluntary Health Insurance Association of Australia. It contains no fewer than 30 "mays", "coulds", "unlikely", "ifs", "appears", "open to question", and "doubt only" expressions which are not convincing, and, I suggest, not even worth while in debate.

I would like to refer to, and comment on, each paragraph of the motion. Paragraph (a) reads as follows—

threaten the individual's freedom of choice of hospital accommodation and medical attendant;

The individual's freedom of choice of hospital accommodation and medical attendant is in no way threatened at all. Paragraph (b) reads—

centralise in Canberra control over hospitals and medical practitioners;

The State will remain the responsible authority for all hospital services. Medical officers will be free to choose their own type of practice. Paragraph (c) reads—

place at risk the independence of church and private hospitals;

Church and private hospitals will be free to continue to serve the community as they do at present. The Australian Government proposes to increase payments to them from \$2 per day to \$10 per day. Paragraph (d) reads—

deny the individual the right to insure against the cost of medical care;

The present system provides for only one table of medical insurance, and the new programme is similar. However, it will not be necessary for individuals to undertake medical insurance. Of course, they will be free to contribute to any hospital insurance scheme.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: In addition to the Government's scheme.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Paragraph (e) reads—

place in jeopardy the many associated services such as Silver Chain, Meals on Wheels, Home Help and the like which have been developed individually in this State and which rely on enthusiastic individual participation and local control;

The proposals will not place in jeopardy the many associated services such as those mentioned in the above paragraph. Let me refer briefly to the Budget proposals as detailed in Federal *Hansard* of Tuesday, the 21st August, 1973 and in *The West Australian* of the 22nd August, 1973. The Press report reads as follows—

Mr. Crean said that subsidy payments under home-care programmes for the aged would be increased from one-half to two-thirds of State expenditure, on condition that a State's spending did not fall below its present level.

The Government would double its contribution towards the capital cost of senior citizens' centres—making it \$2 for every \$1 contributed by a State Government or local authority. It also would increase from one-half to two-thirds the contribution towards the salaries of welfare officers at those centres.

The basic subsidy rate for meals-on-wheels services would rise from 15c to 20c a meal.

Paragraph (f) reads—

register and number each adult person in the community which would be basic to the maintenance of computer data banks of personal histories;

The Health Insurance Planning Committee report points to the desirability of an identity card for a number of reasons, but lays emphasis on the fact that heavy penalties should be imposed if the card is used for other than health insurance matters. The public is already registered on computers in a score or more ways; for example, they are registered in connection with motor vehicle licenses, drivers' licenses, bank accounts, child endowment payments, taxation returns, electoral registrations, etc. Paragraph (g) reads—

lead to deterioration in the quality of health care;

I believe there will be an improvement in the quality of health care as a result of the various health programmes envisaged. An amount of \$30,000,000 will be expended on such matters as welfare schemes for the aged, accommodation for needy groups such as single mothers, alcoholics, homeless men, as well as extra provision for marriage guidance counsellors, meals on wheels, foster programmes, and legal aid programmes. I would like to say how delighted I was to see a comment by a former Minister of the previous Federal Government (The Hon. Don Chipp). He said that the proposed scheme is a credit to the Labor Government and he would have been proud to put his name to it. That comment can be seen in *The West Australian* of the 31st—

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: He was the Minister for Customs, of course.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Yes, but I believe he is a man of ability, and no doubt the honourable member will agree with this.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: He is a nice bloke, yes, but you could write what he knows about health on a postage stamp.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: That is the honourable member's opinion.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Nonetheless, it does not surprise me that you are prepared to give him credit for his statement.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I give him credit for it as, I believe, would members of the Opposition. I think it is a true statement. The proposed programmes must

improve the health of the people of Australia. It is without doubt that the cost of health care under existing legislation is rising rapidly and the planning committee's proposals are designed to lessen the rate of increase.

I would like to refer to the planning committee which produced the report now known as the Deeble Report. The Health Insurance Planning Committee was established on the 22nd December, 1972, by the Minister for Social Security (Mr. Hayden). The committee was composed of Dr. J. S. Deeble (chairman), Dr. Scotton—I do not wish to misrepresent the situation in any way and I point out straightaway that Doctors Deeble and Scotton are not doctors of medicine—Mr. L. J. Daniels, Mr. R. G. Williams, Mr. L. B. Holgate, and Mr. D. A. Harragan. Doctors Deeble and Scotton were the special advisers to the Minister, and the other gentlemen came from the Department of Social Security and were well versed in social security matters. Another member of the committee was Mr. Carroll from the Department of Health.

The first task of the committee was to prepare a detailed representation on the timing and method of implementing the Government's health insurance programme and on other questions such as the position of existing health insurance funds. The committee's recommendations were based on the following principal elements of the Government's programme—

- (1) The establishment of a single health insurance fund to finance medical and hospital benefits to which the whole population is entitled.
- (2) Medical coverage based on benefits calculated at 85 per cent. of the fees in a schedule negotiated with representatives of the medical profession.
- (3) Hospital coverage based primarily on free standard ward equipment without means test including medical care provided by staff doctors under agreements to be negotiated with the States. Out-patient treatment to be available to all without means test and without charge. Doctors providing services to standard ward patients would be remunerated by salaries and sessional payments. Preferred accommodation in public and private hospitals would also be available to private patients. Hospitals would be paid by bed day subsidies, based on fee revenue foregone and special funds to cover payments for services now rendered by doctors on an ordinary basis.
- (4) Some provision for community health centres, ancillary health services and domiciliary services.

- (5) Funding of the health insurance fund by a 1.35 per cent. levy on taxable incomes—that is, 1.35c in the dollar—a matching Commonwealth subsidy, and a levy on workers' compensation and motor-car third party insurers.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Does it end there?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: The levy would provide an exemption for low-income earners and a ceiling on contributions payable by high-income earners. I would like to say that I examined my own position to see how I will fare and I will not fare too well.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Why don't you fare so well?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: At present I pay a certain amount per annum to a health benefit fund. Under the new scheme I will pay 1.35 per cent. of my taxable income, and I will therefore pay more than double what I am paying now. I must say that it will not cause me the slightest worry because what is taken from me will help someone else in a less fortunate position. I am quite happy to pay it.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Do you know the maximum you will pay?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I believe I have this in my notes later. If I do not have it here, I will find it and inform the Leader of the Opposition later.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I thought you would know that. It is my understanding that a person would pay a maximum of \$150 a year.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I do not think so.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: They will pay more for it?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I think so.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: All the more reason for people to worry.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: To continue—

- (6) The continuation of existing tax concessions on contributions to private health insurance funds and on net medical and hospital expenses.

The committee held discussions with, and/or received submissions from, a number of organisations more directly affected by the proposals. These included the Australian Medical Association, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the General Practitioners Society in Australia, the National Association of Medical Specialists, and a number of health insurance organisations.

These communications made the committee aware of the issues which the organisations regarded as most important to them, and enabled the committee to give its representatives a broad indication of its thinking.

The committee and the four working parties which it established were materially assisted by a number of consultants who were able to offer specialised advice. These included Dr. D. Race, Director of the computer study group of the Victorian Hospital and Charities Commission, Dr. S. Sax, the Chairman of the Interim Committee on Hospital and Health Services, Dr. R. M. McLellan, a Melbourne consultant physician, and Dr. N. A. Andersen, a Sydney general practitioner.

I would like to comment on the calibre of the men who comprised the committee. First of all I will refer to Dr. Scotton—a co-designer of the scheme with Dr. Deeble. In 1967 Dr. Scotton was responsible for a treatise on a survey of general practice in Victoria entitled *Medical Journey*. In 1970 he prepared a thesis for the University of Melbourne called *Medical Care and Health Insurance*. In 1967 he compiled a treatise entitled *Medical Manpower in Australia*, and he compiled another in 1969 called *Membership of Voluntary Health Insurance*. All these surveys were carried out under the aegis of the previous Federal Government. Members will see that he is a man of very wide experience in all fields associated with health matters.

Comparisons have been drawn between the proposed scheme and the health scheme operating in Great Britain. I believe such comparisons do not present the true picture. One of the first factors that must be taken into account is the doctor-population ratio in Great Britain and in Australia. It has been mentioned that it takes longer to arrange for certain operations in Great Britain than is the case in Australia at present, and that the proposed scheme will lead to similar delays here. Therefore, the doctor-population figures are very interesting. In 1972 in Australia we had one doctor to care for every 721 people. The latest figure available for England and Wales is one doctor to every 830 people. Therefore, in Great Britain each doctor is responsible for over 100 more people than is his Australian counterpart.

We must also take into consideration the fact that the population in that country is far more concentrated than it is here and I say, advisedly, that this might make it much easier for a doctor to treat his patients. So while I think this is a matter of interest, I do not regard it as one of great moment in arguing that the position in England is worse from that point of view than it is in Australia.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Those figures relate to a ratio of doctor per head of population.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Yes.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Can you tell me how many of those people are attended by doctors?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I would not have a clue.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Well, don't give a story that does not count.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Why does it not count?

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Of course it does not.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: If there is a doctor for each 700 persons in Australia by comparison with one for every 800 in England I cannot see how the Leader of the Opposition can say that the figures are not relevant.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That is completely different.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: It is strange that all the authorities both in Australia and in England are quite concerned over the important question of medical education and they went to the trouble to find out how many doctors they need because they are basing their figures on population. For example, in England a Royal Commission on medical examinations brought in a recommendation that a great effort should be made to reduce the ratio in England and Wales of one doctor for 722 people in 1975.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: But we have plenty of doctors here.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: That is so. The honourable member is not telling me anything; I am trying to tell him something. By 1975 the position in Australia will have improved generally by about 2 per cent. per annum when it should be less than 700 to one. The position here is much better than it is in Great Britain.

In Western Australia—and I ask Mr. Withers to take note of this—the current doctor-population ratio is one to 817. The metropolitan area has 67 per cent. of the population and 88 per cent. of the doctors. Accordingly the ratio in the metropolitan area is one to 636, whereas in the rural area—and by that I mean everything outside the metropolitan area—the ratio is one to 2,094.

So the problem is not in the number of doctors we have but in their maldistribution. If we could only reach a solution whereby doctors could be encouraged to spread themselves more widely in the community in order that the ratio in the country area could be reduced when compared with that in the metropolitan area, I feel sure we will be doing the public a great service.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Do you think the Commonwealth Government's nationalised health scheme will rectify that situation?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: There is the possibility it will.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: How?

The Hon. W. R. Withers: You are not sure.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Until we can get the doctors to move and until we can see the plan in operation we cannot judge.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: How is it possible?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: If doctors are guaranteed some of the things they are guaranteed under the Commonwealth scheme I think it will prove sufficient encouragement to them to move to the country areas.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Don't you think they have enough now?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I have here the recommendations of the committee set up in July, 1973, to inquire into medical schools. I doubt whether this would be available to any other members, because I was fortunate enough to get an advance copy.

We find this committee undertook a general review of what would be necessary in the medical schools of Australia to permit the training of sufficient doctors. The committee felt it was not necessary to train doctors or expand facilities in various universities if there was no reason for these expansions. The University of Western Australia should increase its second year enrolment to 120 in 1977 and 150 in 1983. The committee in question found that the proposal for a new medical school in the Murdoch University should not be supported within the period under review. The committee feels that over the next 20 years there is no necessity to be concerned about having a medical school at the Murdoch University. The committee of inquiry which carried out this survey of medical needs is headed by a very well-known emeritus professor, P. H. Karmel—Chairman of the Australian Universities Commission. The committee comprised Mr. H. R. Beer, Chief Executive Officer, Sydney Hospital; Professor Cox, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, University of Adelaide; Dr. Horner, Deputy Commonwealth Statistician; Dr. Nelson, physician, Sydney; Mr. Sewell, State Auditor-General, Queensland; and Professor Sir Sydney Sunderland, Professor Experimental Neurology, University of Melbourne.

The committee was appointed on the 22nd June, 1972, to inquire into and make recommendations to the Australian Universities Commission for the need for new or expanded medical schools in the light of likely trends in the delivery of health care in Australia over the next 20 years.

Quite a lot of play was made of the fact that no charge was made in Queensland for patients in public wards. That is a system the committee wanted to keep and there will be no interference with that at all. It is as well that members know the particular facts about Queensland and its health services and in this connection

I would like to refer to page 44 of a work entitled *Australian Health Services* by Dewdney.

The previous Commonwealth Government was very keen about charges for public ward accommodation and by the end of 1956, under that Government, the charges for public ward accommodation were enforced in all States of the Commonwealth except Queensland. This position still obtains and despite Commonwealth pressure the State Labor Government refused to levy such charges. This is why there are still no charges made in Queensland; it is because of the insistence of the State Labor Government of the day, which has been supported since by subsequent Governments; and despite Commonwealth pressure that this be done the Queensland Government has refused to do anything about charges in its public ward system.

It might be interesting to members to know what has happened about voluntary health insurance over a number of years. In this connection the picture is not as has been painted. The matter goes back a long way. First I would like to refer to a Bill introduced into the national Parliament by Mr. Casey, as he was then. He is now Lord Casey. I would now like to quote from page 30 of the book to which I have already referred entitled *Australian Health Services*. Sir Walter Kinnear from the British Ministry proposed a contributory scheme of health and pensions insurance and it was following this report of Sir Walter Kinnear's that the National Health and Pensions Bill was introduced into the Federal Parliament in May, 1938, by R. G. Casey, Treasurer in the Lyons Ministry. This book from which I am quoting was written before Dewdney was aware there would be a change of Federal Government. Accordingly Dewdney was not aware of the subject matter we are discussing at the moment. He gives the history of national health insurance as it was mooted and put before the Federal Parliament in 1938 and says—

The main difference in this Bill from its predecessor of 1928 was the inclusion of provision for free medical attendance and treatment for insured persons, including medicine and certain appliances.

It is important that members should listen carefully to what Mr. Casey had to say at that time. He said—

All that we are asking is that men and women when in employment and earning wages—

They are the taxpayers who will foot the bill of expenditure as is envisaged by the Commonwealth Government—

—will, by a great co-operative effort in conjunction with their employers and the Government, contribute about 2 per cent. of their wages in order



to support a scheme which will assist the sick, the aged, the widow and the orphan, preserve the dignity of labour, and enable the Government to extend its benevolence on a self-respecting basis, to a very largely increased number of participants.

This sounds very much as if it were Mr. Hayden who was speaking. Mr. Casey continued—

I say quite frankly that unless something is done to put these schemes on a contributory basis, no government of the future,—

And we now come to the present—

—however well intentioned, could embark upon any worthwhile extension of our social services without seriously threatening the whole financial fabric of the Commonwealth.

So when introducing his Bill as long ago as 1938 Mr. Casey insisted that it had to be on a contributory basis; that all the people earning money should contribute to a worth-while health service. He also intimated that no Government after that time could hope to introduce anything really worth while unless it was a contributory insurance scheme.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What sort of health scheme did we have in those days?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I do not know, because I do not visit doctors much. I have visited a doctor only a couple of times in my entire life.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I am not talking about you.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: That is the only way I can judge the issue.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Do you mean to tell me that a statesman as long ago as that had a conception of the scheme being introduced by the Commonwealth today?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You do not know the history of this at all.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You do not even know how much we are going to pay.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: To continue to quote from page 31—

In March, 1938, the Executive Committee of the British Medical Association in Australia (now the Australian Medical Association) and representatives of the Government reached agreement upon rates of doctors' remuneration and other conditions of service within the national insurance scheme. The Bill was introduced to Parliament on the 4th of May. But on the 13th of June, the Treasurer, Mr. Casey, received a letter from the Secretary of the British Medical Association on behalf of the Federal Council repudiating the March agreement. This *voite-face* resulted from the barrage of criticism levelled

against the Federal Council from the State branches of the B.M.A. when they learned of the terms that the Federal Council's Executive Committee had accepted.

It is worth while bearing this in mind. Notwithstanding that set-back, after the doctors had agreed to go on with the scheme and despite continued opposition from other bodies, they were dragged in.

Despite the opposition from the doctors and other bodies which were concerned, Mr. Casey went ahead with the Bill and it became law in July, 1938. I take it that that Bill passed through both Houses of the Federal Parliament. That was what was done in an effort to implement the provisions contained in the legislation. To continue with the quote—

A National Insurance Commission was appointed to administer the scheme, staff was recruited, explanatory booklets for the public and procedure manuals for the friendly societies who were to be involved in operating the scheme were printed. A Royal Commission was appointed to investigate doctors' remuneration under the scheme—

This is somewhat similar to what Mr. Hayden proposed, when agreement could not be reached with the doctors. He suggested that a special tribunal including representatives of the doctors, be set up to undertake an examination and to take evidence so as to arrive at a scheme which is acceptable.

Originally agreement had been reached, but it was subsequently repudiated. A Royal Commission was appointed to determine whether the doctors would agree to the scheme. To continue with the quote—

—but before the Commission's report had been written, some key figures in the inquiry were killed when an aeroplane in which they were flying to Sydney crashed into a Dandenong hillside.

I think three or four Cabinet Ministers were killed in that tragedy. Incidentally, this resulted in a Cabinet decision being made that not more than two Ministers would in future travel in the same aircraft. That was to reduce the risk. To continue—

This tragedy was perhaps symbolic of the fate of the whole scheme because as the forces of war mobilised in Europe and the Commonwealth Government's attention was turned to matters of national defence, the national insurance scheme was dropped.

That scheme was introduced by Mr. Casey, and agreement was originally reached with the doctors. Despite the opposition from

other bodies the then Government proceeded with the Bill, and it was passed. However, as a result of the tragedy which occurred, the legislation was allowed to lapse. Other attempts have been made by non-Labor Governments to introduce similar legislation.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The one thing you have not done is to tell us what was involved in that scheme.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: The main aspect is that it was a contributory national insurance scheme. That is one of the important aspects of the proposals of the present Federal Government, as outlined in the Deebie report. In the report made under the proposal of Mr. Casey, it was suggested that 2 per cent. of the income of wage earners be the rate of contribution, but I cannot say whether it was based on taxable income.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The amount to be raised based on 2 per cent. of a person's wages in 1938 would be a mere pittance compared with the amount that is to be raised under the present Government's proposal. What was the basic wage in 1938?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: The honourable member should not start on that line of reasoning.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You have to.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: The answer to the query of the Leader of the Opposition is that the proposed contribution of 2 per cent. in 1938 was greater than the proposed contribution of 1.35 per cent. of taxable income under the present scheme. Surely it must be agreed that the taxpayers were to be mulcted to a greater extent at that time, than they are to be under the present Federal Government's scheme.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I have never heard so much utter nonsense.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I have not heard so much utter nonsense from the Leader of the Opposition.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You have taken the amount to be raised from a levy of 2 per cent. on the earning capacity of the taxpayers in 1938, and you are comparing it with the amount to be raised from a levy of 1.35 per cent. in 1973.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: If we take the wages then compared with the wages of today, and the percentage of contribution then and now, we have a comparable basis. The honourable member should not pick out merely one item, as he is doing.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I am not trying to pick out anything.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Much has been said about Lord Beveridge. This gentleman has been given the credit for many social reforms which have been introduced

in Great Britain. However, we have to go beyond the time of Lord Beveridge, because he was the one who implemented much of the results of the efforts of the Prime Minister of the day, Mr. David Lloyd George, who was really the initiator of many of the social reform schemes. I do not think it will do any harm for us to examine what Lloyd George did, because he started what is now in operation in Britain. The achievements of David Lloyd George have been referred to in glowing terms. However, some people who have migrated to Australia from Britain have been complaining about the period of waiting for certain medical treatment; they say that in some cases it takes up to three years before an operation can be performed, and many weeks before a tooth can be extracted. We hear all this guff being uttered, but not one Government in Britain has made a move to abolish the system which is operating.

This is an indication that the present system is acceptable to the people of that country. We are all aware that the British are a hard-headed people who like to get value for their money, and invariably they examine a proposition before they accept it. In the case of the national insurance scheme they have accepted it, and they are happy with it. For that reason I am distressed to hear some migrants from that country criticising what is happening there. They are merely exhibiting their prejudices in writing letters to the Press to complain about what the present Federal Government in Australia is proposing. Yet many facets of this very scheme are similar to those in the British scheme.

I shall now refer to the work of David Lloyd George, and what I am about to say has particular application to the position in Australia. In 1908 that gentleman was responsible for the passage of the Old Age Pensions Act. In those days it was a revolutionary piece of legislation, but today it is an accepted fact of life. That legislation was introduced in 1908. After its passage David Lloyd George had to secure the funds for the payment of the pensions. He had to do that in 1909. David Lloyd George also brought in other measures of social welfare. He set out to raise the money by levying certain taxes on land values in the 1909 Budget. This province was a sacred cow of the landed gentry in those times, and the proposal to impose taxes on the land was something unheard of.

The Tory peers responded by taking the reckless and unconstitutional step of throwing out the Budget in the House of Lords. That was a grave step for the Tories to take. As a result the Liberal Government of the day went to the country: in fact, it appealed to the country twice.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: They would have to go to the country after their Budget was thrown out.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Not necessarily.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Would they not?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: No. On the first occasion that the Liberal Government went to the country, it was returned with a majority.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You should bear that in mind!

The Hon. J. DOLAN: After the Government was returned to office it introduced and passed the Budget which the House of Lords had rejected. When it went to the country a second time it was again returned to office, and it passed the Parliament Act of 1911 which limited the veto powers of the House of Lords; and that Chamber was told it no longer had the right to veto Bills transmitted from the House of Commons. Various details were worked out to restrict the veto powers of the House of Lords.

The land campaign of Lloyd George was not only a political victory, but also a social revolution. What had been accepted for centuries was no longer accepted as fact. This campaign ended the lingering feudalism in Great Britain which had made land ownership the one qualification for social status and political authority.

Then followed the next step of Lloyd George. In 1911 he introduced the National Insurance Act which provided sickness benefits, unemployment relief, contributory pensions, and funeral grants. So well was it framed that it has continued to be the basis of all further extensions, expanding to the fullness of today's welfare state.

Lord Beveridge was given the job of implementing the legislative actions of David Lloyd George. The latter was the one who introduced the Bills in Parliament, and persuaded Parliament to pass them. At one time Lord Beveridge was elected as a Liberal member of Parliament, but he only lasted one term. He was not the type of man cut out for parliamentary work and parliamentary debate.

Circumstances and ideas change with the passage of time, and we have to be cognisant of this. Recently the Victorian Government changed its views on capital punishment. This is why we have to be a little resilient when we deal with some of the points referred to in the motion. When it was decided that capital punishment would be abolished in Victoria, the Premier (Mr. Hamer) said, "At last we are moving out of the nineteenth century."

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Don't tell me that capital punishment is connected with national health.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: No, not that particular matter. I do not wish to be dragged into a debate on the abolition of capital

punishment. I want to point out that our opinions and our thinking have to change with the times; and when schemes such as the one under discussion are proposed by the Federal Government it is only right that we should have a good look at them.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I am wondering how you can connect hanging with national health.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Hanging would solve all our health problems!

The Hon. J. DOLAN: There is not a facet of Britain's national life that is not in the debt of David Lloyd George. He was the one who was responsible for bringing in the legislation which set the pattern of reform. I can give a list, which is almost interminable, of all the reforms for which he was responsible. Lord Beveridge was given the job of implementing what Lloyd George put through by his legislative actions.

In 1911 he made the contributions to the National Insurance Act compulsory for workers in certain selected industries; those who were to be insured under a contributory scheme or system. That was in 1911, yet today in Australia we find objections to a contributory scheme. Those opposed to it have said, "Why push us around? If it is a voluntary scheme and people want to join it, it would be all right, but there should be no compulsion on contributions." Yet back in 1911 this very principle was accepted in Great Britain.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Times have changed.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Yes, they have changed.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Who has said that there should be no compulsion on contributions in a voluntary scheme?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Almost everybody opposed to the scheme.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You say the people are opposed to the health insurance funds? I would point out that 97 per cent. of the people contribute to the health insurance funds.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: On a compulsory basis?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: No.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: That is what I am talking about. I want to draw the attention of members to this matter: the present Commonwealth Government has been prepared to spend money—

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Taxpayers' money.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Yes, and it is prepared to spend it in a way the money has never been spent before.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You're telling me.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: That is right; I know.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: There has never been anyone that silly.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: That is right. The Commonwealth Government has been prepared to spend money with regard to everything it has done for the benefit of the people, and it is prepared to do the same in connection with the setting up of a health scheme. Quite obviously there is no substance whatever in the statements made during discussion on this motion that the proposed scheme will affect Meals on Wheels and home nursing. Of course, the Commonwealth Government has indicated that millions of dollars will be spent to improve and enlarge existing services.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Can the Minister tell us what is wrong with the present scheme?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Members opposite have been telling us what is wrong with it.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You cannot, obviously.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Members from the other side of the House have been telling us what is wrong with it, but I am explaining to them a better scheme.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Well, tell us what is wrong with the present scheme.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I will not discuss the present scheme.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Why not?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I would say that the new scheme will be better.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Well, tell us what is wrong with the present scheme.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I am telling members that the present one is the better.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I know the present one is better.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: The present one proposed by the Commonwealth Government will be better.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Why?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Because it covers everybody.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You do not know.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Many people, today, are frightened at the prospect of becoming ill and not being able to obtain treatment, and the Commonwealth Government is trying to remove that fear. If people become sick they will be cared for, and that care will be extended to all sections of the community.

I recently saw where a doctor criticised one of his colleagues, and he said he hated to do so by means of a letter. He referred to the fact that doctors would be better employed in trying to make a contribution

towards improving the existing set-up, rather than in pushing their own barrows.

In conclusion, I recently saw the Minister who is responsible for this proposed scheme, Mr. Hayden, face up to—to say the least—a hostile crowd of doctors. I think it was on the programme, "Monday Conference". The doctors represented about two-thirds of those who were assembled at the particular gathering, and included a man who has been in this State during the last couple of days. However, that man had nothing but generalities to throw in whenever Mr. Hayden tried to get down to something specific. I think that if ever a man deserves credit for his courage in standing up and replying to criticism that man is Mr. Hayden. He came through with flying colours.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Are you sure that Mr. Hayden did not organise the show?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: The first speaker, on behalf of the doctors, was the gentleman who is in Perth at present.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Is not that gentleman the Federal president of the organisation?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Why ask if Mr. Hayden organised the show? The gentleman referred to was present in opposition and he fared badly.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Is not he the Federal president of the medical organisation to which he belongs?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I think he is the treasurer.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I think the Minister ought to think again.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: To whom does the Leader of the Opposition think I am referring?

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I am not sure, but the Minister said it was the man who was here two days ago.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I think we are at cross-purposes. I will name him; it was Mr. Wilson.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I saw him, and I thought he was first rate.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What is his official position?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I thought he was treasurer.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I think you might find he has even been the president.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: That would answer the interjection from Mr. MacKinnon when he asked if the whole set-up was organised by Mr. Hayden.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Let us assume he was the president; do you not think he had a right?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: Of course, I am not denying that right. I am only answering the interjection by Mr. MacKinnon.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You are not denying his right; you are trying to belittle him.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I am not trying to belittle him.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. J. DOLAN: The doctors were in opposition to Mr. Hayden and I think he deserves full marks for his stand. He came out with flying colours despite the opposition which was created. I only hope that in debates in which I become engaged in future I can do as well as Mr. Hayden.

I must say that I cannot go along with the motion moved by Mr. MacKinnon and I oppose it.

**THE HON. V. J. FERRY** (South-West) [5.50 p.m.]: I do not intend to reply to all the comments made by the Leader of the House because that is the prerogative of my colleague, Mr. MacKinnon, who moved the motion. I must say that after listening to Mr. Dolan I am convinced of one thing: Despite the fact that he referred to numerous publications he did not seem to have a very good grasp of his subject. I do not think he fully understands the scheme espoused by the Commonwealth Government.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: He would not know.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: I am sure he would not know. My understanding is that each contributor in the high income bracket will make a contribution with a limit of not more than \$150. Mr. Dolan assured us that we would pay more, and I think he is right.

The Leader of the House supported the motive behind this motion and I believe the contributions by all citizens will be much higher, in reality, if and when the proposed scheme is introduced. We, in Western Australia particularly, would do well to continue to build upon and improve the fabric of our society which has been constructed for us by past generations. We should try to improve on what we already have. We should also acknowledge the benefits which we enjoy at the present time, and which have been derived from past experience.

When we have something which is efficient, but which, perhaps, could be sensibly improved, we should not throw it overboard with the pious hope that an untried system, in Western Australia particularly, might work as well or even better. We should stay with the situation which we know, and with which we have had experience in this part of Australia, at least.

I am particularly concerned for the fate of a number of—if not all of—the existing medical funds. I will refer particularly to a fund which is fairly well-known to me

but to which I do not personally belong. I refer to the Warren Medical and Hospital Fund Incorporated. It has its head office in Manjimup and was founded in 1952, some 21 years ago.

The membership of the Warren Medical and Hospital Fund extends throughout Western Australia, and benefits are provided for citizens throughout the Commonwealth of Australia. It is a nonprofit organisation which means that profits are returned to its members by way of additional benefits.

It is of interest to note that the fund started in a community which comprised, in the main, people associated with timber milling. Agricultural pursuits were also carried on in the area but pay sheet deduction groups operate in a number of places today, and they operate in all the mill centres. Also, agents are situated in most of the major towns of the south-west.

Manjimup, and its surrounding districts, are catered for by three medical practitioners situated in the town of Manjimup. Those doctors provide a very good service to the people in the region, and they have the use of an up-to-date and very well equipped hospital.

The Warren Medical and Hospital Fund has a place in the community because it not only provides, in the first instance, a service to its contributors in the provision of hospital and medical benefits but it also provides an important link between the doctors and the hospital on the one hand, and the contributors on the other. That human relationship exists within the community and that understanding between the doctors at the medical centre and the contributors as patients is most important. The fund offers on-the-spot facilities for cash refunds on doctors and hospital accounts, with a minimum delay in settlement of claims.

I do not have the actual figure regarding the number of contributors to the fund, at the present time, but I suggest it would exceed 2,000. To estimate the number of dependants involved we could use the not unusual method of multiplying by three, to come up with a figure of 6,000.

I am concerned that this type of fund, which has evolved from the hard, cold, practical application of assisting the community with regard to medical problems will go to the wall. I do not think there is any doubt about that at all. As I have said, this fund has been in existence for some 21 years as a nonprofit organisation. Its profits are returned to its contributors by way of increased benefits and I am concerned that it will be put out of business. It is my understanding—and I can be corrected if I am wrong—that under the proposed centralised Federal plan a number of offices will be created throughout the Commonwealth of Australia for the very purpose of doing the work which the

comparatively small organisations are already doing. In fact, such organisations will be put out of business. I do not believe this is good enough.

Medical and hospital funds are serving the community well. Their accounts are subject to Commonwealth audit and they meet the requirements set out under the Commonwealth Act. A Government institution should not take over this sort of service; the existing system should continue. The philosophy that the Government knows best regarding the medical care of the people is not a good one.

As the Leader of the House quoted a number of incidents which have occurred in the past, I think I should mention, in passing, that in 1952 the late Sir Earle Page—the then Commonwealth Minister for Health—had the good sense to recognise and use the already functioning administrations of nonprofit funds and societies to handle Australia's national health scheme without cost to the Government and the community. Sir Earle Page harnessed the avenues which were already functioning on a voluntary, nonprofit basis to provide health benefits for the citizens of this country.

Since that time, steady progress has been made with step-by-step improvements such as the elimination of age limits; the provision of coverage for people who have pre-existing and chronic ailments; the extension of hospital benefits to 365 days a year or for the full duration of an illness; the elimination of contributions by low income families; coverage for patients in nursing homes; and so on.

I would add that it is my understanding that people responsible for medical care have made recommendations to the Government from time to time, and that even today a number of recommendations are in the "pending" files of the Commonwealth Government and have not yet been acted upon. This is a continuing process. Experienced people from time to time put forward ideas for improving the system and building on what is good and worth-while, but a number of those suggestions and recommendations have been pigeon holed. Some of them relate to underprivileged people and pensioners.

I want to refer very briefly to the situation in Canada. In the Province of Quebec surveys were conducted on the eve of the introduction of Medicare in 1970 and a year or so later to enable a comparison to be made. The situation which existed after the Medicare scheme had been in operation for just over 12 months showed that it took up to 10 days to obtain an appointment with a doctor, that doctors gave less time to patients—I imagine because of the volume of work—that house calls had been cut by one-third, and that the percentage of patients seeking medical attention without good reason had doubled. Rather than say, "I will

get by without medical attention for this complaint", people were visiting doctors for a check-up. It is not a bad thing for people to have more frequent check-ups, but the increased frequency has placed a load on the medical services in Montreal.

The survey also revealed that a significant number of people felt the quality of care had worsened. This brings me back to the point I made a moment ago—that the quality of medical care must be maintained, and I referred to the situation in Manjimup.

I recently saw an A.B.C. television programme—I think it might have been "This Day Tonight"—dealing with the health scheme in New Zealand. I was alarmed to hear about the problems being experienced there with the system of socialised medical care. Huge centralised hospitals have been built, which it is acknowledged are not ideal, and in fact there is a strong movement to revert to what might be called the cottage hospital system, with smaller hospitals in which more personalised care can be given. The large centralised hospitals are extremely expensive to administer and run, and I understand that, for political reasons, they have been built in areas where an electoral advantage may be gained. This is not always in the best interests of people who need medical care.

Another thing I learnt from that half-hour television programme was that, despite the fact that New Zealand has a so-called free medical scheme, it is necessary for people who wish to have top quality benefits or services to take out private insurance to enable them to pay for specialists, single room accommodation, and so on. Therefore, people who want good attention must take out insurance over and above the Government scheme, otherwise they receive less personal attention from medical practitioners.

As regards the health scheme in Britain, I understand that only emergency cases can now be sure of gaining admission to hospital. For nonurgent surgery, such as for haemorrhoids, varicose veins, and hernias, it takes up to three years to get a hospital bed.

It is quite evident that the aim of the Commonwealth Government's Deeble report is to give everyone in the community free standardised medical care; that is, care in a public ward without the application of a means test. That is a very laudable aim, but what does it mean? It involves bed and lodging, as well as hospital care, which must be paid for by the community whether through a contribution scheme or through a super tax levy commencing at 1.35 per cent. of income. However, under the proposed nationalised scheme, practically every hospital patient would be worse off in one way or another because the public wards would be overcrowded and the people most urgently needing attention would be battling to

obtain accommodation in single rooms or two-bed wards for specialised attention. That is quite apparent.

*Sitting suspended from 6.08 to 7.30 p.m.*

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: In supporting the motion moved by Mr. MacKinnon, I would like to contribute two final comments. I would like to refer to groups of people who, in my opinion, will be downgraded to second-class citizenship if and when the proposed Commonwealth health scheme comes into being. The two categories of second-class citizenship in my view will be the women and the low-income earners of Australia.

It is quite apparent to me that people on low incomes will be thrown to the wolves and forced to compete with more affluent people for standard ward accommodation; and if they are unable to compete for this accommodation they will be the losers. As I mentioned earlier, it is quite apparent to me that the public will need to insure privately, over and above their compulsory contributions to the proposed health fund, to cover the higher costs of specialised medicine, or single ward accommodation. Therefore, those on lower incomes, unlike those who are more affluent, will be unable to match this; so in fact they will be disadvantaged.

Women, who already comprise about 40 per cent. of the work force, will pay more than they do at present. This is clear when one reads the proposals of the present Commonwealth Government. If single or widowed, women will be required to pay a super tax on the same scale as a family, because no concession will be made for single persons, and in addition to that they will be required to pay income tax. If they are working wives they will no longer be covered under family contributions as they are at present; they will be required to pay the same double scale as single women will be required to pay, and their husbands will be required to pay as well.

But above all that, women, like people on low incomes, will probably lose their right of choice when they go to a hospital where only standard beds are available. This seems to me to be a true assessment of the situation; whether or not we like it, it appears to be what is in store for us. I foresee that the women of Australia and of Western Australia in particular will be quite considerably disadvantaged under the proposals of the Commonwealth.

Firstly, women will be required to pay more if they are working, and their husbands will lose present concessions under the family contribution scheme. Working women will also lose in taxation, as will their husbands. Secondly, their right of choice when they are forced to go to hospital will be in jeopardy. I support the motion.

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (Lower West) [7.36 p.m.]: Mr. President, may I first of all welcome you back to Western Australia. I trust that you and your good wife thoroughly enjoyed your trip. I am sure you were the best possible ambassadors for our State while you were away.

#### *Point of Order*

I regret that in commencing my speech I wish to ask you for a ruling on a point of order. During the debate The Hon. L. D. Elliott had occasion to present to the House a pamphlet issued by the Commonwealth Government for the purpose of publicising the proposed health scheme, and she asked that it be incorporated in *Hansard*. It was a fairly lengthy pamphlet, and I raised some objection at the time and suggested that other pamphlets which answer that pamphlet could also be incorporated in *Hansard*. I would like your opinion, Sir, regarding whether you believe that the incorporation in *Hansard* of entire pamphlets of an advertising nature is in accordance with our Standing Orders.

#### *President's Ruling*

The PRESIDENT: I have been advised that during this debate The Hon. Lyla Elliott sought and was granted permission by the Deputy President to incorporate in *Hansard* a booklet entitled *Australian Health Insurance Program—The Plain Facts*.

I have given this matter careful consideration, and am of the opinion that this is a complete departure from the practice of the Council.

I am satisfied that such a procedure should be sanctioned only by leave of the Council—that is, without a dissentient voice—and I trust that the Council will allow me to say that, in my opinion, this is an undesirable precedent to establish, and I would hope that honourable members would carefully consider the position before relaxing our procedure to such an extent.

Although the incorporation in *Hansard* of tables and lengthy statements in reply to questions seeking information has been approved in the past, this has always been with the indulgence of the Council, and has not applied during debate.

It is therefore my ruling that before the matter referred to by The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon can be incorporated in *Hansard*, it will be necessary for leave of the Council to be given, but I emphasise again that I would hope that honourable members would not seek or sanction this variation of our procedure.

#### *Debate (on motion) Resumed*

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Thank you, Mr. President. I had to ask for that ruling because it has some influence on the way in which I will handle the debate. I

appreciate your comment and, indeed, I believe it is the proper one in the circumstances.

I wish to thank those members who spoke during the debate. I think something like 11 members spoke, so obviously the motion excited a deal of attention. I must admit that I was immeasurably pleased to think that so many members have taken a keen interest in the matter. For my own part, I am gravely concerned that medical practitioners are fighting a battle for the welfare of the people of Western Australia—and, indeed, for the people of Australia—in the field of health service delivery. However, I think the issue has become confused and that many people have interpreted the doctors' battle as one for money alone. I do not believe that to be true. I believe they are fighting for what they believe is right and for what they are in the best position to know is right; that is, that the present health service is the best health service delivery system that Australia could have as a base for evolutionary types of improvements. I admire the doctors for the stand they have taken and I would like them to know that at least some of the members of this House are supporting them.

A number of members have supported my stand, and I thank them for the contributions they have made. I wish to answer to some degree the comments of those who opposed my motion. The main tenor of Mr. Cloughton's speech was that I had not really presented any case. Well, let the record be the judge of that. I went to the trouble of rereading the speech made by Mr. Dans, and apart from the fact that he said we should not bring doctors into the debate and then proceeded to speak about doctors for a fair time, the only comment he made that caused me concern was a very personal one about me.

I assure Mr. Dans that I must be of extremely low intelligence if I am to be judged by the degree of formal education I received—and I take it that he was talking about formal education.

Mr. Dolan, as usual, was interesting. He gave us a lecture on history which I think we all appreciated, and took us back to the days of Casey and Menzies, and the first effort to establish a national health scheme at the close of the depression and just before a major world war—in the days before penicillin and specific diagnosis, and before the health services had been developed. Indeed, in those days health was a totally different matter. We were all pleased to hear of his admiration for Lloyd George. It is peculiar—and this was highlighted by Mr. Dolan—that the people who are working out matters connected with the health service under which it is proposed we must operate in the future are economists and the like; and they are all working under the Department of Social Security. This must be galling in the extreme

to the Minister for Health in Canberra. Under the circumstances, one cannot be surprised that Sir William Reefsauge has seen fit to leave Australia and to take up an appointment with the World Health Organisation. I do not know why he did so, but one can imagine why, because certainly the health field seems to have been taken over by the Department of Social Security and all its economic advisers.

There is no doubt that Dr. Deeble and Dr. Scotton are well educated, intelligent, and probably very likeable men; but I would dearly love to get either one or both of those gentlemen in a quiet, confidential atmosphere in order to talk to him or them, because I would bet my bottom dollar they are gravely concerned now they have had some experience of the practicalities of running hospitals and have talked to people who have administrative experience in the field of health service delivery. They could not fail to be gravely concerned because they must be aware of the imponderables of which they originally knew nothing, but which are inherent in a scheme for which they have become the apologists.

I was a little fascinated by Mr. Dolan's mention of a Royal Commission report on medical education in the United Kingdom, because the United Kingdom is a wonderful place for reports. Whilst I was there I saw two reports dealing with medical education. One specified that by about 1972 or 1973—I have forgotten the exact year—there would be such a diminution of major health problems that there would be a superabundance of medicos and therefore a cutback in medical education should be made. This report was submitted about 1960. However, a report issued about four years later put forward submissions stating exactly the opposite.

Whilst I was in the office of one ministerial head I asked him if he had a report on the British health system. He replied by asking me which one I would like. He said, "I have one here which will tell you that the system is no good, and another which will tell you that it is first rate. I have yet another that will tell you that it should be completely reviewed." Therefore in the United Kingdom one can get any report from which one would like to quote. They have been pushed into pigeon holes and have lain there for many years.

I think it was Mr. Dans who said that no Government in the United Kingdom would change the system, but I can assure Mr. Dans that any Government there would dearly love to change it.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: What would happen if it did?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Not much harm would be done except in the field of catastrophic illness such as a major heart attack. I quite agree that in this field the



United Kingdom health service is not costly, but for everyday illnesses it is. One hears much more criticism in the United Kingdom about the United Kingdom health service than one ever hears about the Australian system in Australia.

Mr. Dolan spoke about improving the health system. Let us be clear on one fact. I do not believe the system can be improved by bulldozing it out of the way and by starting to build a new one, because a great many mistakes must be made all over again. What is intended here is to change the system and history alone will tell us whether it will be an improvement. I believe that our health system is such that it will stand improvement, but not the sort of improvement that will be brought about by the radical change envisaged.

I do not know whether I mentioned this when I first spoke to the motion, but while in the United Kingdom I happened to visit a doctor who had worked under the Australian, Canadian, and United Kingdom systems. He was a United Kingdom doctor. Whilst we were conversing, he said to me, "Whatever you do, use all your powers not to allow any change in the Australian system because currently it is the best in the world; not the best possible, but the best in the world."

Miss Elliott gave what I thought was the best speech made by any member on the Government side of the House. Realising the limitations of any reply to what is proposed by Mr. Hayden—because all his proposals are theoretical—Miss Elliott referred to a pamphlet entitled *Australian Health Insurance Program—The Plain Facts*, and I intend to comment on the answers and questions set out within it. The pamphlet commences by stating that the Australian Government has decided to introduce a new health insurance programme and that it has issued this pamphlet in order to tell the public exactly what is involved.

At the outset I would say that the pamphlet would be better titled "The Half Truths", because one can find few full truths in the whole context. One of the few plain facts in the whole document is the opening sentence which states that the Australian Government—not the Australian people—has decided to introduce a new health insurance programme. This is one of its first moves to further the platform of the Australian Labor Party which has as its sole objective—

The democratic socialisation of industry, production, distribution and exchange—to the extent necessary to eliminate exploitation and other anti-social features in these fields—in accordance with the principles of action, methods and progressive reforms set out in this platform.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I take it that the Australian Government is what we

used to know as the Commonwealth Government.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Yes. It will be noted that there is no agitation from the Australian people for a change; none whatsoever.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: The existing health schemes are not profit-making.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: That is quite correct. The pamphlet I am dealing with poses many questions upon which, for ease of analysis, I have commented. The first question is—

Why do we need a new health insurance programme so urgently?

The answer to that question is as follows—

A major reason is that the present health scheme is headed for financial chaos. It has only been kept afloat by massive Government subsidies—and that means more of the money you pay in tax. Subsidies for medical and hospital benefits nearly trebled between 1969 and 1972 when they rose from \$80m to \$200m.

The present scheme could only survive if you paid very much more, either through taxation revenue or through higher medical and hospital fund contributions.

My comment upon that answer is that it is not health costs which have risen, but Government subsidies. There is no direct relationship between increases in Government subsidies and rising health costs. Government subsidies have risen faster than health costs generally because of improvements made to the voluntary scheme by the previous Government, mainly as a result of the Nimmo committee recommendations. The increase in Government subsidies of \$120,000,000 between 1969 and 1972 includes the following items—

- (1) Increase in the rate of Commonwealth medical benefits which had not been increased since 1964—\$50,000,000.
- (2) Changes in the Special Account legislation so that long-stay hospital patients and patients with pre-existing illnesses receive full benefits instead of part benefits—\$27,000,000.

Mr. Dolan mentioned something about that which I have always known as catastrophic illness. The previous Government had a look at the position and the idea came from a Liberal Party member in Western Australia. I could name the man who started it. The next item was—

- (3) Introduction of subsidised health benefits plan ..... \$10,000,000

This was introduced to look after the very people about whom so much fuss has been made; that is, those people who cannot afford to pay for hospital benefits.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: They do not pay now.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: That is right. The next two items were—

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| (4) Benefit Fund membership increase, which is of course related to population increase ..... | \$13,000,000 |
| (5) Increase in the utilisation of medical and hospital services .....                        | \$20,000,000 |

These are only approximate figures.

The second reason the answer is misleading is in its implication that health costs will be brought under control by the proposed compulsory scheme. The total cost of health care for the nation comprises the cost of running hospitals and nursing homes, the cost of medicines, the cost of doctors' services and the cost of dental and other ancillary services. Because of inflation, the increasing population, the increasing demand for health services and the development of new and expensive techniques which save and prolong life, the total national health bill must continue to rise. This is happening all over the world. There is good reason to believe that the demand for certain services which will become "free" under the compulsory scheme will increase. Of course they will increase! The true answer to this question is that we do not need a new health insurance programme of this kind. With only minor exceptions, our present system has operated to the general satisfaction of health care providers and consumers. It is unique to Australia and it is highly regarded by health care authorities throughout the world. Instead of introducing revolutionary changes, we should be looking to remove the minor deficiencies in the present health insurance plan.

Certainly there are minor deficiencies, but many of them are well known and taken care of.

The second question asked in this pamphlet *Australian Health Insurance Program—The Plain Facts* or "The Half Truths" as it should be called, is—

Are there other reasons for the change?

The answer to this question is as follows—

The two other main reasons are that the new program will cover many more people at much fairer rates than the present scheme can. The strength of these reasons will become clear as you read on.

This is not the truth. A recent survey by the Bureau of Census and Statistics established that 93 per cent. of Western Australians are covered by health benefit schemes which include the Yarloop scheme, the Waroona scheme, the goldfields scheme, the Hospitals Benefit Fund of W.A., and the Friendly Societies Health Services. The

remaining 7 per cent. includes people who have made a deliberate decision not to insure, people who cannot afford to contribute, and people who find the paper work too difficult. There is, of course, every reason to be concerned about those people and the previous Government took the step of introducing the subsidised health benefit plan expressly for this purpose. It was a cumbersome plan. The States objected to its cumbersome nature, and the A.M.A. also objected to it because of this reason. Objections had been made to the plan particularly by those States that had a great many Aborigines. However, I am certain that with a few modest modifications the plan would have coped with the requirements.

In any case the people in question still get health care and a great number of them can be seen by anyone who cares to enter not only country hospitals but also many others because it is in those hospitals that indigent patients and those who cannot afford to pay are treated. Unfortunately there will always be a small percentage of people who cannot cope with the paper work of any scheme. There are those who cannot write a letter for a variety of reasons. However no reliable evidence has been produced to establish that the proposed scheme will cover more people at fairer rates than does the present scheme.

Question 3 and the answer to it in this pamphlet are as follows—

Question: Is it true that the Government intends to nationalise the medical profession?

Answer: No. The Government does not have the constitutional power to do this, and, in any case, it would not wish to do so.

My comment on that answer is that the Government does not have the power to legislate to "nationalise" the medical profession. The contract will be between the doctor and the Commonwealth Government and not between the doctor and the patient. Once the Government is in the position of being the doctors' paymaster, there is no need for the Government to nationalise them. With the aid of the information it will get from the giant computer in Canberra it will be able to control them because they will be on the Government payroll; let us make no mistake about that. As for the Commonwealth Government not wishing to nationalise the medical profession, let me quote from the A.L.P. platform of 1971 as follows—

Believing that health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, and that the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is a fundamental right of every citizen,—

I pause there to inform the House that that is a direct "pinch" from the World

# Health Organisation's definition of health. Continuing—

—a Labor Government will promote the establishment of a comprehensive public health service available to all who choose to use it, and staffed by those who choose to serve in it. Such a scheme will be free of means test and financed from the introduction of a specified social services contribution.

Furthermore, on the 25th July, 1972, the present Prime Minister (The Right Honourable E. G. Whitlam) said in a lecture—

The major act of nationalisation in the traditional sense to be undertaken by a Labor Government in the next term, will be through the establishment of a single health fund, administered by a Health Insurance Commission.

The reference is to a major act of nationalisation in the traditional sense. Yet we are told over and over again, even in this half-truth pamphlet Mr. Hayden has distributed, that there is no intention to nationalise. In the same address, he said—

It would be intolerable if a Labor Government were to use the alibi of the Constitution to excuse failure to achieve its socialist objectives—doubly intolerable because it is just not true that it need do so.

I hope members will keep that in mind. The next question is—

From what date will the new program operate?

The answer is—

The target date is July 1974.

It seems pretty obvious to me that the Government cannot answer its own question; because, again if present indications are a guide, the Government certainly will not be able to get the scheme in operation by that time. Anyhow, I suppose it is reasonable to ask why the Government is trying to introduce a revolutionary scheme in such haste in exchange for the present satisfactory system.

The next question is—

Who will be insured under the new program?

The answer is that all residents of Australia will be insured. My comment to that is that there will be many people who will not register under the compulsory scheme. No doubt under the compulsory scheme, arrangements will be made for people who need treatment and have not registered to register at the time treatment is first sought. Such arrangements could be made now under the voluntary scheme for people on low incomes, if the Minister accepted a suggestion which has been put to him by some of the voluntary funds.

Generally the arguments put forward on the urgent need for a new health insurance programme lack substance when they are carefully examined. Certainly the

public has given no indication that it wants an urgent change. Most Western Australians are satisfied with the refunds they are receiving from their benefit funds. Members will recall that I read an excellent article by Kirwan Ward highlighting that point. The present scheme expects the individual to accept some responsibility for his own health insurance and it seems that the vast majority of individuals are prepared to accept this responsibility. Australia is a democracy and a democracy can function only if people act responsibly. It seems to me we are headed for this "planned society" for which the control of medical services is essential.

The next question is a key question, and it reads—

How will the new program be financed?

The answer supplied is—

It will have three sources of funds. You will pay a levy of 1.35 per cent of your taxable income (i.e. your income after all your tax deductions, such as for dependants, insurance and education, have been taken out).

Incidentally I interpolate here to say that the Federal Government seems to be cutting out every exemption as fast as it can. To continue—

The Government will give a grant. And it will levy workers' compensation and motor vehicle third party insurers.

That is done at present in a different way, anyway. To conclude the answer—

The program will be administered by a new Health Insurance Commission.

It is important to realise that the levy will be 1.35 per cent. of taxable income in the first year of the scheme. The planning committee points out that this percentage will have to be increased later on as may also the Government grant.

Great play has been made of this 1.35 per cent., but the committee itself admits it will have to be increased. From where does the Government grant emanate?—from the taxpayers' pocket. That is another way in which we pay, and the planning committee has said that the percentage will have to be increased.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Is there a maximum?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Yes. I will come to that in a moment. Before the election it was stated that the grant the Government would "give"—from taxpayers' money—would match the 1.35 per cent. levy. The planning committee report, however, says the Government grant will be 25 per cent. more than the levy in the first year of the compulsory scheme and 50 per cent. more in the second year. That is all extra money to be paid by the taxpayer.

One wonders what further increases will be necessary in later years particularly to cover the costs of the vast new bureaucracy that will be established. The guess made in the planning committee report in regard to the running costs of the commission is obviously a gross underestimate. Members will recall that I said I would like a nice quiet conversation with Dr. Deeble about that question. The next one is—

Does this mean I'll be paying more or less for health insurance?

Listen to the answer. If it were not so tragic it would be comical. The answer given reads—

The great majority of people will pay less than they would under the present scheme. If you're a middle-income earner or a low-income earner, you'll pay less. If you're a high-income earner, it will cost you more, although it is worth remembering that you will pay a fixed levy of \$150 a year if your taxable income is above \$11,112.

That answers Mr. Arthur Griffith. Also, the information will lighten Mr. Dolan's heart because he thought he would pay three times that much.

The Hon. J. Dolan: I will pay considerably more.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I have just read the answer to that question, but how true is it? Government spokesmen have for a long time been saying that four out of five people will pay less under the compulsory scheme. They are now publicly modifying these figures because of the effect of the proposed scheme on single taxpayers, family units where both husband and wife are taxpayers, persons earning taxable incomes at the middle level or higher, persons requiring preferred hospital accommodation—that is, private wards and the like—persons who will be unable to obtain standard ward accommodation in public hospitals and persons who now do not choose or have no need—such as defence services personnel—to insure for health fund benefits.

As the total national health bill is likely to rise faster under a compulsory scheme than it would if the voluntary scheme continued, it is likely that the majority of the population would in fact pay much more under compulsory insurance. That is the truth. Members must bear in mind that Dr. Scotton, I think it was, admitted to a \$10,000,000 mathematical error when questioned by Justice Wootten. Question 8 reads—

What are some examples of the cost?

The answer includes many examples of cost on which we cannot rely because of what I have just said. Anyhow, a married man on a low income who is not eligible for subsidised health benefits, whose wife does not work, and who is content with

standard ward care, would pay less under a compulsory scheme; and that is about it.

The next question is—

Why does the man earning \$180 a week now pay less than the man earning \$100 under the present scheme of private health insurance?

This is a question concerning the fellows who have big incomes and who therefore have a bigger tax deduction. I think it was Mr. Whitlam who pointed out that he apparently paid less than the man who drove his car.

My comment is that because it seems unfair to many people that those on lower incomes are apparently paying more than those on higher incomes under the present scheme, although they are paying less tax, the matter could easily be resolved by allowing every taxpayer the same flat rate deduction—say, 25 per cent.—for his health insurance contributions. The reference to the Prime Minister paying less for health insurance than his car driver under the present scheme is correct, but as mentioned above there is a simple remedy. Under the compulsory scheme the Prime Minister could pay less for his health insurance—the maximum any taxpayer would pay is \$150—than his car driver if his car driver's wife is working.

It can be seen that we can play with these figures. What Mr. Hayden has done in this pamphlet is to really play with figures and misrepresent the situation from the beginning to the conclusion. Whose money is paying for this? It is the taxpayers' money. What is the Government spending? It is spending \$250,000 for a very comfortable 10-bed hospital to confuse the people with its publicity. I might also add that the Government is in addition spending enough to provide a comfortable brand new hospital in Mr. Willmott's province at Busseton to publicise the Budget. That involves something in excess of \$1,000,000.

The next question is—

If I earn less than any of your examples, what costs am I up for?

The answer given to that is that if a person earns less than \$2,210, he will not have to pay anything. A person would pay nothing if his gross income were \$65 a week. This is in the answer given.

My comment to that is that there is no reason why, under the subsidised health benefits plan, introduced by the previous Government, a dependent wife and two children, with a gross income not exceeding \$65, should not have free cover. At the moment a family with a gross income not exceeding \$60.50 has free cover, but the Minister could increase this to \$65 quite easily without changing anything else.

The next question reads—

If I'm a pensioner, what will happen to me?

To indicate that I am a fair and honest fellow I will say that I agree with the Hayden report with regard to pensioners. I believe they will be a bit better off; but this applies to pensioners only. I blame our previous Administration in Canberra for this one point because the A.M.A. and I personally tried to talk that Administration into changing the pensioner health service. It was a very simple and easy matter to change and certainly did not involve the revolutionary scheme we must now suffer in the future.

The next question reads—

What will happen to my medical bills under the new programme?

The answer deals with direct billing. My objection to that is that it breaks the contract between the doctor and patient. The planning committee report recommends that the \$5 maximum for an operation and associated services which applies under the present scheme should be phased out. That was established by the previous Government, so I suppose we will actually be paying more even under this scheme.

The next question reads—

What would I do with my bills, if my doctor sent them to me?

The answer to this is a little confusing because it is not clear why the commission needs to establish collection and payout points when the funds already have them established and will have to continue to operate them, anyway. The costs of setting up and running a new bureaucracy would be enormous. There would be obvious economies in continuing to use the registered benefit organisations with their trained staff.

The next very pertinent question is—

Will I still be able to go to the doctor of my own choice?

The answer to that is—

Yes. You will be able to go to any general practitioner you choose and he will be able to refer you to any specialist, as at present.

Let us be certain about this. Initially, at least, a person would be able to visit the general practitioner of his choice, but this may be restricted if the general practitioner does not conform to the Government's requirements. As a patient in a standard ward of a public hospital, a person's medical treatment or operation would be performed by doctors on the staff of that particular hospital. There will be no choice about that; and anyone who has had a relative in a standard ward in a hospital like the Royal Perth Hospital

knows this. For a patient to have the doctor of his choice, he could be involved in considerable extra cost.

So the questions continue. In each case the answer is much as I have outlined before. If a person wants private ward treatment then over and above the Federal grant and the 1.35 per cent., he will have to find an insurance company with which to insure in order to obtain private treatment or to enter a private hospital.

A lot has been said about this and a question was asked about it, but when we really analyse the situation we find that no-one has any idea at present what the cost of private insurance will be because the system will be so different from the present one. It is foolhardy to say that the average wage-earner would find the combined cost cheaper than he would if the present scheme continued because with the big bulk of the people taken out of the scheme, how can we tell what the cost will be?

I will not deal with some of the questions, not because they are not as misleading as the others, but because I appreciate that such a procedure could become tedious. Other questions in the paper could be criticised as being indeterminate and, in many cases, markedly inaccurate.

Mr. Dolan mentioned hospitals and, for this reason, the following question is interesting—

If I live in Queensland, where there are free hospitals, how would the new program affect me?

Of course, this is simply not relevant to Western Australia. I know the Queensland system quite well. When people grow up with a system they tend to become used to it. I know of no-one outside Queensland—and, in saying this, I am referring to objective people who are quite capable of making objective judgments—who has a good word to say for the Queensland system. The following question is interesting—

What will happen to religious and charitable hospitals?

The answer states that the Commonwealth Government will not make any changes and will match payments made by the States. However, if Governments are going to subsidise religious and charitable hospitals and limit their charges to the maximum proposed for private patients in public hospitals, they must lose their independence to such an extent that they may no longer have any desire to carry on. The desire to carry on is a very important factor.

I give the scheme little chance of success because of the attitude which Mr. Hayden has engendered in doctors. The scheme depends on doctors and there must be few doctors in this country who have the desire to carry on their service in the manner in which they do now.

There is also the question about a membership card, but the Government has simply wiped this off. Mr. Dolan said that this is done in dozens of ways and mentioned the computer system for issuing car licenses. Of course, nothing is as private and confidential as one's health.

It is useless to say that the details will not be made known because, despite an error of \$10,000,000, someone was able to compile from the records of the Income Tax Department the figures of doctors' incomes at the present time.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: The information was not obtained from the doctors.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: The information was not right and, as I have said, there was an error of \$10,000,000. Apparently that does not matter! It will be a tremendously costly exercise and I do not see the point of it because we are over regimented and over governed as it is. This could lead to an identity card system for all the citizens of Australia and, indeed, an identity card is referred to in question 22. Question 23 reads—

What will the Insurance Commission do with information it collects about individuals?

The answer reads, in part—

The Commission will only collect the same information that is now kept by private health funds.

This is not true, either. The commission will have much more information than that. As I said a few minutes ago the information held by the Taxation Department is not so secret because it has been divulged to the Commonwealth to enable it to present information on doctors' incomes to the Medical Fees Tribunal. Question No. 24 is quite interesting and it reads—

How similar will the new programme be to the British national health system?

The answer reads in part—

The two systems are quite different. The British system is a nationalised medical service in which doctors work for the government.

The proposed compulsory scheme would be similar to the British scheme in that the Government would become the paymaster in Australia, as is the case in Britain. In Britain, however, doctors have some freedom which Australian doctors would not have under compulsory insurance. For example, a doctor in Britain is free to derive all or part of his income from private patients who have private insurance. The Deeble report recommends that private medical insurance should be prohibited by law. I am referring to medical insurance, as against hospital insurance. Consequently, Australians would not be able to insure against the cost of being treated by

a doctor unless the doctor was being paid by the Government.

I have gone to some trouble to answer Miss Elliott. By taking the action she did, Miss Elliott put forward what purports to be a sound, solid argument. The scheme is being put forward by the Commonwealth Government, specifically by Mr. Hayden, and it will be at the taxpayers' expense. I take grave exception to this.

I believe I have answered the information in the pamphlet referred to by Miss Elliott. I could answer it in far more detail but I appreciate this would be an exercise in tedium and I do not want to inflict that on anybody.

I return now to the point with which I commenced; this is not a battle for extra income for doctors. In fact, Mr. Hayden is offering doctors, on average, more money to try to con them into an acceptance of the scheme. Some doctors are in favour of the scheme but these are in a minority.

Under the scheme, doctors will lose job satisfaction. Let us make no mistake about it; job satisfaction is extremely important. I believe we are lucky indeed with our medical practitioners; with both those who are trained in Australia and those who come from overseas. In most communities doctors are leaders and are men who are admired for their public work. Those who know them and understand the work they do admire them for the very high percentage of voluntary service which they render to the sick. They put in no bills for this service and they receive no payment. I believe the system which exists in Western Australia at the present time is extremely good.

It is useless for people who advocate this proposed new system to say that ancillary services will not alter. They will. I will stake my reputation on the fact that pharmacists will be the next because pharmacies will be set up in hospitals. Dentists will follow not long after. This will be the way with most of the ancillary services.

The scheme will be a regimented service and a nationalised one. Again, in this area we will be reduced to the grey uniformity which is so beloved by the theorists who espouse the socialist cause.

Question put and passed.

## BILLS (2): RECEIPT AND FIRST READING

1. Age of Majority Act Amendment Bill.  
Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by The Hon. R. Thompson (Minister for Police), read a first time.
2. Excessive Prices Prevention Bill.  
Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs (Minister for Local Government), read a first time.

**TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

(No. 2)

*Second Reading: Defeated*

Debate resumed from the 9th August.

**THE HON. T. O. PERRY** (Lower Central) [8.25 p.m.]: The measure proposes to increase the license fee on commercial vehicles. It is estimated that the additional license fee will return slightly less than the revenue received from road maintenance tax. I do not defend road maintenance tax because I believe it is a greater burden on people who live in the isolated areas of the State but, at the same time, I cannot support an increase in license fees for commercial vehicles. The motorist in Australia is already the most heavily taxed of any section in our community.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: He has been caught again as a result of the Federal Budget.

The Hon. T. O. PERRY: Prior to the increase of 5c a gallon duty on petrol, Australian motorists were already paying \$1,000,000,000 in taxes. If we divide this figure by approximately 5,000,000 motorists, it is a tax of \$200 on every motorist. This is an extremely heavy burden, particularly when we consider that many motorists do not drive more than 1,000 or 2,000 miles in a year. People who live in the isolated parts of the State bear a far greater portion of this burden.

Let us look at what the increase in license fees will mean. The license fee of a Bedford five-ton truck will be increased from approximately \$50 to \$74; that of a Ford six-ton truck will be increased from \$56 to \$77. The license for a Ford seven-ton truck will be increased from \$71 to slightly over \$102. In the utility range, a Holden utility license will be increased from \$34 to \$38, while that of a Toyota utility will be increased from \$29 to \$33.

The Hon. N. McNeill: None of those would be subject to road maintenance tax.

The Hon. T. O. PERRY: That is so. If anything can be said in favour of road maintenance tax, it is that one pays as one earns. With the increase in commercial vehicle license fees a person will pay before he earns and, in some cases, will pay if he does not earn.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: With road maintenance tax one pays for what one destroys.

The Hon. T. O. PERRY: In reply to that interjection, I think a person driving a Holden utility would not do much more damage to a road than a person driving a Mercedes Benz.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: He would not pay road maintenance tax.

The Hon. T. O. PERRY: With the increase in commercial vehicle license fees, the Holden utility will attract a higher license fee.

Most political parties, particularly at election time, press decentralisation. If we are ever to achieve decentralisation we must institute a scheme of reasonably cheap transport. It is useless to plan cities such as Salvado, Albury, or Wodonga and think that people will live in areas away from the metropolitan area if we do not make living in country areas attractive.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Salvado is in the metropolitan area.

The Hon. T. O. PERRY: I see it as trying to relieve the position in the metropolitan area. To me it is simply building a suburb in the metropolitan area.

The Hon. N. McNeill: Wodonga is about six feet under water.

The Hon. T. O. PERRY: That could be so, Mr. McNeill, according to some of the reports we have seen on the television.

Our early settlers, with all their transport problems, were probably not much worse off than we are today. When our grandfathers wished to travel to the metropolitan region from the area in which I live, they loaded their wagons and covered the distance in about a week. They would purchase their tea, flour, fencing, and building materials. They would then take another week to return to their homes, but at least they did not have traffic inspectors hiding around every corner or heavy haulage squads waving them to stop on every hill to investigate whether or not their vehicles were overloaded. Our grandfathers could park in St. George's Terrace for 24 hours without incurring a fine for overparking. The vehicle they drove was not licensed and they did not need a license to drive it. Of course, it was not covered by third party insurance either. The big problem in those days was the time factor, but our grandfathers did not face all these additional charges.

It is a very poor way to raise finance for education or for Aborigines by overtaxing the motorist, and particularly the transport section of our community which transports the wealth of the nation—our primary and mineral products—from the place where they are produced to the coast or to the ports. There must be some other way to raise finance than to continue to overtax the motoring public of our State. The people who provide the facilities to transport our wealth should not be overtaxed. If we are ever to achieve decentralisation, it must be done by giving consideration to making transport facilities as favourable as possible.

With those few remarks I oppose the Bill before the House.

**THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH** (South) [8.33 p.m.]: I intend to keep my speech fairly short because I feel that road maintenance tax has been well and truly thrashed out both in this House and in another place, not only at the present time

in relation to this measure but also last year and no doubt on many occasions before that. Undoubtedly the Government which introduced road maintenance tax was indeed most unhappy with it, but after a lot of investigation it discovered it could not find a suitable substitute to raise matching money for funds made available by the Federal Government for roads.

It is very interesting to note that whether our Federal Government is Liberal or Labor, it still insists on matching money for that granted for the construction and maintenance of roads. As members are well aware, it is very difficult for the States to raise taxes or finance, and it was with real reluctance that the previous Government introduced and continued with road maintenance tax.

Of course, during the last election campaign the Labor Party indicated it proposed to repeal the road maintenance tax legislation. Unfortunately, and particularly so for the farmer, when the Labor Government was returned, we found that its intention was not to remove road maintenance tax, but rather to replace it by an increase in registration fees. Of course, this had not been mentioned at all when we were electioneering before the change of Government.

We now have a Bill before us which proposes to increase quite considerably the cost of registration. This is the price we would have to pay for the repeal of the road maintenance tax legislation. The Government is insisting on the nexus between the two Bills.

I represent the South Province, and probably my electors are more aware than others of the high cost of road maintenance tax, particularly to the farming community. The areas of Newdegate and the south coast are very poorly served by the railways. It is a well-known fact that when the south-west was opened up, most farmers and country communities were within a day's travel by horse of the nearest railway. However, this was not so with Newdegate and the south coast. The result is that farmers in this area are carting their goods with their own transport and it is costing them money by way of road maintenance tax whether they cart grain or superphosphate.

A group of farmers from the lakes district visited Parliament recently and produced a very good paper showing that it cost something like 1c per ton per road mile for a farmer using his own vehicle. This increased the farmers' costs by some 14 per cent.—a very considerable amount.

I have today received a letter from the Lake King Progress Association commenting on the answers to Mr. Ferry's question concerning the amount of road maintenance tax collected and how it is spent. This group violently disagreed with the contention that moneys expended in the Lake Grace, Ravensthorpe, and Esperance

district, correlated in any way with the amount collected. I wonder whether these farmers are aware of the difficulty and the burden being borne by the farmers who are served by the railways. The farmers from the lakes district may perhaps feel they are very lucky to be allowed to cart their own goods and pay road maintenance tax. I have received many complaints from people, particularly those in Esperance, concerning the necessity to use the railways for the cartage of their goods. I believe I have explained to this House the difficulties I have experienced in trying to have a wool shed carted from Albany to Esperance. It had to go to Perth and then via Kalgoorlie to Esperance.

I recently spoke to the Minister for Railways in regard to an Esperance merchant who supplies reinforcing weld-mesh. He found one article was so damaged by the time he took delivery of it that he had difficulty in selling it and had to discount it drastically.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Are you advocating we should close down more railways?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I am not saying that at all.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You are being very critical.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I am simply saying that a burden is placed on a farmer who has to use the railways. In the last few days I heard that fence posts may no longer be carted into Esperance or beyond Esperance by road. I believe they are allowed to come only within 50 miles of Esperance by road. I am referring to the treated posts from Bunbury. These must be loaded into a rail truck at Bunbury, carted to Perth, then across to Kalgoorlie, and then transferred into another railway truck for the journey to Esperance. They are then taken from the rail truck to the stock agent's yard and sold to the farmer.

Members can imagine the amount of handling involved in this manoeuvre. It is utterly ridiculous. I realise this is not related to road maintenance tax but I believe it should be mentioned that although farmers who are forced to use the railways do not pay road maintenance tax they do bear a burden.

The whole matter of road maintenance tax has been well and truly discussed in this House. However, it is very unfortunate that the delegation from Lake King was led to believe that if this Bill is not passed the Premier may still seek to repeal the road maintenance tax legislation; and yet, when he was asked this question within the Parliament, the Premier did not indicate this at all. He led us to believe that the farmers had misinterpreted his comments.

We have had other unfortunate incidents in relation to road maintenance tax when the Government indicated that it would



not prosecute certain people. I represent the town of Albany, in which a most difficult situation recently occurred. The magistrate found that a person before the court had received letters from the Premier to the effect that the charges against him would be withdrawn. This has certainly made the people of the town and district feel very worried; they feel the Government is interfering with the administration of the law.

I do not believe it would be out of place to read an editorial in *The Albany Advertiser* of Friday, the 17th August. It is headed, "Law no place for politics".

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: What has that to do with roads?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: Quite a bit, because the particular farmer referred to was apprehended by a team of inspectors looking for people who were evading road maintenance tax. It has a lot to do with the Bill. It commences as follows—

The interference by State Cabinet in the minor charge against Mr. Jones, farmer of Ongerup, which was dismissed in an Albany court this week was so blatant that he did not know whether to plead guilty or not.

A little further on it reads—

Apparently Mr. Jones is important enough to the Labor machine for Premier Tonkin and others to devote attention to the minor charge of refusing a name and address.

Everyone is well aware of the magistrate's view on this case. He was amazed that the Government should interfere in the administration of justice.

A few days ago the Deputy Premier visited Albany and remarked that the Premier had signed the letter to Mr. Jones only by accident; that this was just one of the many letters the Premier had received and answered. I was rather surprised to see Mr. Taylor's comments in *The Albany Advertiser* of the 3rd of this month. The article reads as follows—

Mr. Taylor said he was not familiar enough with the case to know what injustice Mr. Jones had complained of.

Mr. Taylor said that, as he understood the position, Mr. Jones wrote to the Premier as many other people did.

The matter was passed to the commission, whose director drafted a proposed reply in the first person (that is, saying "I will" do this and that).

One of the dozens of letters Mr. Tonkin signs, it was typed for him without the words being changed to "the director intended."

That seems a rather amazing statement for Mr. Taylor to make in Albany because for many months the correspondence be-

tween Mr. Jones, the Premier, the Transport Commission, and others, has lain on the Table of the House for all to see. On perusing this material, it is not hard to see that Mr. Taylor's comments are incorrect and that obviously the Premier was in touch with the Minister for Transport. The Minister explicitly stated in a letter to the Premier that the Premier could add a clause if he wished to do so.

He wished to withdraw the charges, so it is quite obvious to me, as it would be to anyone who reads the file on this particular case, that it was the intention that the charge be withdrawn. In fact this was the subject of some correspondence between the Minister and the Premier.

The whole matter of road maintenance tax has caused considerable difficulty not only in my area but also in the north-west. I hope the Premier will stick to his word and that he will remove the burden of road maintenance tax in spite of the fact that this House will probably once again throw out this particular Bill. I think there is probably greater reason for this to be done now than there was ever before, particularly when one realises that in this State we collect something like \$3,250,000 from road maintenance tax. Yet during the last Commonwealth Budget we had an increase in petrol tax amounting to 5c, plus the withdrawal of the equalisation scheme which will raise for the Commonwealth Government \$137,000,000 this year. In view of the fact that \$137,000,000 will be raised as a result of the increase in the petrol tax, surely the Federal Government can now forget about forcing the States to raise matching money for their road maintenance?

The Hon. F. D. Willmott: Particularly when we know that the petrol tax was originally introduced to be spent on the roads.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I wonder whether the Commonwealth Government will spend \$137,000,000 extra in this direction.

The Hon. F. D. Willmott: Of course it will not.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I certainly feel the Commonwealth Government could well remove the burden and the necessity for the States to find matching money. If this were done Mr. Tonkin would be able to keep his word and not insist on the passing of this Bill before he removes road maintenance tax. I shall certainly be opposing this Bill.

THE HON. R. THOMPSON (South-Metropolitan—Minister for Police) [8.48 p.m.]: You will remember, Sir, that this Bill was introduced by my colleague. Since then there has been a change of portfolio and I will be making the reply to close the debate.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Technically you will not, you know.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That is so.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Would you like me to speak when you sit down?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I was making the point that I was replying on behalf of the Government, and I think the Leader of the Opposition will appreciate that.

The first speaker on this Bill was Mr. Ferry. He traversed, mainly, the comments made by the Premier in respect of the previous legislation. I shall endeavour to contain my remarks to the current Bill now before Parliament.

In his policy speech, after setting out that the road maintenance (contribution) legislation introduced a most inequitable tax, the Premier made a clear statement without qualification of any kind and without suggesting there would or would not be some other form of revenue raising, and said, "We will abolish this inequitable tax."

In commenting upon this Bill the Premier said he did not know what the Opposition wanted in regard to this question. The action of Opposition members during the time they were in Government showed they did not like the tax at all. They were doing their level best to find a way to get rid of it and the Labor Party opposed the tax from its inception. I am sure that all members of this Chamber will know that the Labor Party was totally opposed to this tax from the beginning.

We said at the time it should not have been imposed at all; that it was placing a burden on the people farthest away from the city and that it was only being brought in to enable the Government to qualify for additional assistance.

Some attempt has been made to show that at some time or other the Premier gave an undertaking that when he abolished road maintenance tax he would not put anything in its place. When comparative legislation was previously introduced the Opposition had its chance to pass one measure and reject the other.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Come off it!

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: We had to be responsible.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That was the undertaking given in this House and the honourable member knows it.

The Government is determined to abolish road maintenance tax and it gave that undertaking by offering the Opposition the opportunity to pass the Bill without the other and the Opposition neglected to do this.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: If this Bill does not pass through this House will you go ahead and proclaim the abolition of road maintenance tax if that Bill is passed?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I do not think the Leader of the Opposition requires an answer from me.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Oh yes I do because you have taken over the responsibility for the Bill.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: If the Leader of the Opposition reads the second reading speech on the Bill he will find that it says "This Bill is complementary to the repeal of the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act and unless this Bill is passed the Government will not proceed with the other and it will not become law."

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Then what is that other ballyhoo you are giving us?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: When this legislation was previously before us last year that was the guarantee given to the House.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: Why has the Government changed its view?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I will come to that. I repeat: the Government was determined to abolish the road maintenance tax and it gave that undertaking by offering the Opposition the opportunity to pass the Bill without the other and the Opposition neglected to do this.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Neglected?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Yes.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You have an infernal audacity to say that.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The Opposition voted it out. The position is different now. The Opposition has had its chance—it had its chance last session but it neglected to take it.

The Hon. F. R. White: And you are going to punish us now.

The Hon. F. D. Willmott: Dangle the carrot and then take it away.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: If you continue as you are doing you will cause me to follow you.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: With the unpopularity of the road maintenance tax the Premier believed there was a good chance the Council would pass the legislation on this occasion.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What gave you that impression?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: However, the Premier commented and said, "You cannot have it both ways." The Premier introduced two Bills on the last occasion and tried to have them both passed, but he finally said that if Parliament did not pass the one imposing the license fees he would still abolish the road tax. As members know, this is now history. That opportunity has, however, now been lost and the

Government is trying again to fulfil the undertaking which it had given unequivocally that it would abolish road maintenance tax.

In order to ensure that local authorities are not deprived of funds for roads—and that would be the result if no attempt were made to raise some money—the Government proposes to substitute another method to raise money. If the present proposals are agreed to I can inform the House without the slightest hesitation, and after considerable research on the subject, that the amount paid by the owners of motor vehicles in this State will be less than that paid by owners of motor vehicles in other States.

While the road maintenance tax does not provide the money for all the roads in the State to be kept in first-class order the Government has no wish to see road funds depleted.

The virtue of the tax as proposed in this Bill is that it will make people think a second time before they enter a business, particularly if they have to find the money to buy a vehicle.

The proposals before Parliament at present provide for a similar method of raising revenue as was previously proposed, but on a reduced scale, because when the proposed method was being considered the Premier asked the Minister in charge of the Main Roads Department—who at that time had the Commissioner of Main Roads with him—to inquire into an alternative scheme of licensing and effect a reduction in the amount to be levied. The scale of licenses set out in this Bill has been prepared on the basis of a reduction of what was previously proposed.

Lest there be any doubt as to where the Premier stands in this matter, I reiterate his introductory remarks when he introduced the traffic Bill in another place. On that occasion the Premier said—

This Bill is complementary to the preceding Bill and unless this Bill is passed the Government will not proceed with the other and it will not become law. I like to make my position clear because I realise I am likely to receive all sorts of misrepresentation. To replace road funds which would no longer be forthcoming if the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act is repealed it is proposed to amend the third schedule of the Traffic Act to provide a new scale of fees for commercial vehicles.

Should the Bill be passed through all stages and assented to it will not be proclaimed until the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act has been repealed.

In confirming this the Premier later added that if Parliament refused to pass this Bill he had already indicated that he was not prepared in those circumstances to

agree to the proclamation of the other Bill even if it were passed. However, he did not believe that Parliament would pass the other Bill alone.

So if this Bill is defeated the Premier believes both Bills will be defeated. There were the numbers in the other place and the hopes there were that the Bill would pass. We, of course, have not the numbers in this Chamber, and therefore the Premier was disposed to add, "If the legislation is defeated that will not be my fault."

I pass now to the remark made by Mr. Heitman. During his speech he was careful in the choice of his words and phrases and he created a false impression in regard to certain facts. This has just been referred to by Mr. Wordsworth. Mr. Heitman said, and I quote—

After accompanying a deputation from the lakes district yesterday morning to wait on the Premier, I asked the Leader of the House a question without notice . . .

In all reasonableness, the members present in the House would conclude that the honourable member had attended the deputation.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I was not one who would conclude that.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The phrasing of the question by Mr. Heitman also supported this conclusion. The honourable member stated unequivocally and of his own volition, and I quote—

The Premier promised that if the Traffic Act Amendment Bill No. 2 was not passed and the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act Repeal Bill were passed he would still proclaim the Bill to abolish the road maintenance tax. As this point will have a big bearing on our comments in connection with the two measures, will the Leader of the House confer immediately with the Premier to ascertain the truth of his remarks . . .

As I pointed out, the impression given to the House was that the honourable member attended the meeting and heard the Premier give a promise to do certain things, as a consequence of which Mr. Heitman asked the Leader of the House whether the Premier was speaking the truth.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: On what page of *Hansard* is Mr. Heitman recorded as having said that?

The Hon. F. R. White: Mr. Heitman attended a meeting which was after their meeting with the Premier.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The honourable member should read the question without notice. I have quoted what Mr. Heitman said, word for word.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You are trying to hang your argument on a very weak story.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: As a consequence of the discussion which the Leader of the House had with the Premier, and in the course of the debate in this Chamber, the truth has been established; and the truth is that Mr. Heitman did not attend the meeting. He was accepting the word or impression of someone who had attended the meeting, and was presenting it to the House as his own. The Premier's reply to the question was—

No. I said that if the Legislative Council passed the Bill to repeal the road maintenance tax I would have it proclaimed.

This is not an isolated case of misrepresentation by endeavouring to put words into the mouth of the Premier during the course of the debate on the Traffic Act Amendment Bill (No. 2).

Mr. Heitman proceeded to state—and here I mention that I quote from an uncorrected copy of *Hansard*, lest this passage has been deleted—

However, it is not fair for the Premier to say initially that he would not introduce a substitute tax . . .

If the honourable member wishes to be fair in this matter, I suggest that the least he should do when making such an assertion is to quote the time when and place where the Premier gave that undertaking, and I am quite certain that the honourable member will find it impossible to produce this evidence. It is truthful to record that the Premier did not say initially that he would not introduce a substitute tax.

As recorded on page 2222 of the 1973 *Hansard*, the Premier (Mr. J. T. Tonkin) is recorded as having said—

In the policy speech after setting out that it was a most inequitable tax, I made this clear statement without qualification of any kind and without suggesting there would or would not be some other form of revenue raising—

We will abolish this inequitable tax.

As recorded on page 739 of the 1971 *Hansard*, on the 17th August, 1971, the Premier in reply to a question asked by the member for Greenough (Sir David Brand) said he would outline measures by which he proposed to provide the funds necessary to replace the road maintenance tax.

On page 714 of the 1971 *Hansard* the Premier in explaining the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act Repeal Bill, and referring to various means which were considered for raising alternative revenues, said, and I quote—

Having given consideration to and rejected these alternatives for the reasons I have explained, the Government feels that the only satisfactory way of producing replacement road funds is to impose an increase in the motor vehicle registration fees of all trucks and vehicles used for commercial purposes. There will be no increase in motorcar licenses and there will be a special concession for farmers' trucks.

Again, on page 716 of the 1971 *Hansard* the Premier is recorded as having said—

I do not think anybody would argue that we should attempt to abolish the road maintenance tax and not make an attempt to obtain funds in some other direction . . .

The method we propose to employ is, in the opinion of the Government, the fairest and most equitable of any offering in view of the fact that some other alternatives for one reason or another cannot be adopted.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Would you mind telling me what contributions the Eastern States hauliers will make to State finances under this Bill?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: On my understanding, nothing.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Of course they will not; so, how can anybody suggest this will be a replacement tax?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: There is not a great number of Eastern States hauliers operating now.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That has nothing to do with the principle.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: When the road maintenance tax legislation was first introduced there were hundreds of Eastern States hauliers operating in Western Australia, but now most of them are using the pick-a-back railway system.

On the 15th September, 1971, as recorded on page 1348 of *Hansard* of that year the Premier is recorded as having said—

I am not in a position to indicate at this moment what attitude the Government will adopt should another place in due course decide that it will not allow the Government to raise any revenue at all.

The report on the Bill was adopted on the 15th September, 1971. On prorogation of Parliament the Bill lapsed, but it was reinstated on the 17th November, 1971.

In the second session of Parliament in 1971, the Premier is recorded on page 74 of *Hansard* of that year as saying—

My suggestion is: Let us pass this Bill and get on with the job. In due course the amendment to the Traffic Act will be brought before Parliament. That Act can be amended if it is not

satisfactory, or it can be accepted or rejected. Whatever happens to that Bill will decide the issue.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith stated, and this is recorded on page 1083 of the 1971 *Hansard*—

Your Premier said, that if the Bill—the one which was just lost—was not passed the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act would not be repealed. That appears on page 453 of *Hansard*.

From the foregoing it is apparent that the Opposition was fully aware in 1971 that the Premier would not proclaim the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act Repeal Act, 1971, were it passed. Nevertheless, the opportunity was given to this House in 1971 to pass either one Bill or the other, or both, and both were defeated. The fact remains that had both Houses passed the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act Repeal Bill of 1971 the matter of its assent and proclamation would have remained in the hands of the Government for action as and when desired.

The Premier, when reintroducing this legislation in 1973, stated, as recorded on page 1700 of *Hansard* of that year—

I like to make my position clear because I realise I am likely to receive all sorts of misrepresentation. As already indicated this Bill is complementary to the preceding measure—That is, the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act Repeal Bill. To continue—and unless this Bill is passed the Government will not proceed with the other and it will not become law.

It is apparent that some members of the Opposition are unwilling to accept at their face value the statements made by the Premier regarding this legislation. Endeavours are made to put into his mouth words not uttered, and by imputation to apply to his words some meaning of their own imagination or to expect in reply to some hypothetical question something better than a hypothetical answer.

We have Mr. Heitman's opinion that the reply given by the Premier was misunderstood by the deputation from the lakes district. The foregoing quotations should leave no doubt as to the Premier's intentions.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: In other words, he misled those people.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: He did not mislead anybody. He told them the truth. Mr. Heitman states that had the Premier looked at the matter closely in the first place he would have found that once a tax such as this is abolished a great deal of money for works would be lost if a substitute were not introduced. Such a statement merely belittles the Treasurer's intelligence. Mr. Heitman asserts that it is a tax which must be continued in this

State until we all agree that the imposition of a petrol tax throughout the Commonwealth should take the place of the road maintenance tax imposed on those owners of vehicles that cart more than a ton.

This is the very point the Premier put forward at the Premiers' Conference, but he did not get very far. He had looked into this idea because he felt it was a sensible approach if it was practicable. However, those who are in a position to know—or ought to be in a position to know—advise the Premier that we would not be able to implement it. It seems that an attempt in this direction would place us in the same position as Tasmania in regard to the tax on tobacco, which was apparently contrary to the Constitution.

At this point I wish to make some observations with respect to Mr. Heitman's comments on comparative road and rail costs for the carriage of superphosphate. The rail freight charges are as follows—

161 Kilometres (100 miles)

(a) January to June—\$4.18 per tonne  
= \$4.25 per ton

(b) July to December—\$3.52 per tonne  
= \$3.58 per ton

(a) 4.25c per ton mile

(b) 3.58c per ton mile

322 kilometres (200 miles)

(a) January to June—\$5.42 per tonne  
= \$5.51 per ton

(b) July to December—\$4.56 per tonne  
= \$4.63 per ton

(a) 2.76c per ton mile

(b) 2.29c per ton mile

402 kilometres (250 miles)

(a) January to June—\$6.08 per tonne  
= \$6.18 per ton

(b) July to December—\$5.12 per tonne  
= \$5.20 per ton

(a) 2.47c per ton mile

(b) 2.08c per ton mile

For the year ended the 30th June, 1973, the average haul for fertiliser was 176.5 miles for earnings of 2.86 per ton mile.

I do not know where Mr. Heitman obtained his information regarding rail freight charges, and his reference to a flat charge of 3.403c per ton mile is not fully understood. If he means the return per ton mile for an average haul, the figures for the 1971-72 year were 192.93 miles average haul for average earnings of 2.63c per ton mile.

For the rail cartage of superphosphate from Morawa to Geraldton, as referred to by Mr. Heitman, the current freight charges are—

Distance 204 kilometres (127 miles)

(a) January to June—\$4.47 per tonne  
= \$4.54 per ton

(b) July to December—\$3.76 per tonne  
= \$3.82 per ton

(a) 3.57c per ton mile

(b) 3.01c per ton mile

Under the super-bulk scheme the unloading charge by the operator is 50c per tonne as stated by Mr. Heitman but the delivery to farm under the scheme for 24 km. (15 miles) is \$1.60 per tonne (\$1.63 per ton).

The honourable member has also questioned the method of calculating the transport cost for superphosphate delivered to the lakes district. He asks why calculations are based on cartage from Bunbury instead of Esperance which is the present source of supply and which is much nearer. The reason for this goes back many years when farmers were promised railway extensions. Because those extensions were not constructed a guarantee has been given to the farmers that road transport will be subsidised so that they will not have to pay any more than they would had the promised lines been built.

The cost to rail over a distance from Bunbury to Newdegate and then on to Lake King, or other districts, is the limit of what the farmer pays. If there is anything extra, the Government pays it as a subsidy.

In recent years superphosphate has come from Esperance. If this works out cheaper for the farmer, because of the shorter distance, he receives the benefit. To take an example of a farmer situated eight miles east of Lake King, it would cost him from \$7.32 to \$7.82 per tonne, depending on the time of the year, if he had superphosphate railed from Picton Junction to Newdegate and then carted by road. The road charge would be the same whether or not maintenance charges were payable. It would affect the amount of subsidy the Government would have to pay but the farmer's cost would remain exactly the same.

Now that superphosphate can be obtained from Esperance the total cost to deliver to the farm by road is \$6.77 per tonne. Because this is less than the rate of over \$7.00 per tonne he would have to pay from Picton Junction, there is no subsidy involved. The farmer is liable for the full cost of road transport from Esperance and, therefore, any reduction of cost which would follow from abolition of road maintenance charges would be a benefit to the farmer.

Replying to The Hon. J. Heitman's view that there appears to be a very steep rise in the new license fees, it will be cheaper to operate all categories of vehicles in Western Australia than in the other States. We all know that to be factual.

In the case of light trucks, the rates in Western Australia would have to be increased by approximately 25 per cent. to bring them up to the average level of the other States because there are so many variations.

In the case of medium trucks the Western Australian rates would have to be increased by approximately 20 per cent. to bring them up to the average level of the license fees of the other States. It should be noted particularly that in Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland, medium trucks also pay road maintenance tax in addition to license fees.

Regarding heavy trucks, Western Australian rates would have to be almost doubled to bring them up to the average level of the license fees of the other States. Taking, for example, a Dodge truck type utility with a tare weight of 1 ton 14 cwt., and an aggregate weight of 2 tons 19 cwt., the average license in South Australia, Victoria, and Tasmania is \$61.08. In Western Australia the proposed fee will be down to \$46. That difference is shown right through the scale of charges.

For a Bedford table top truck with a tare weight of 2 tons 12 cwt. and an aggregate weight of 4 tons 19 cwt., the average license fee in the other States is \$94.93, whereas in Western Australia it will be \$89. The Western Australian figures which I am quoting will now be reduced by 5 per cent. as a result of the latest proposition put before members in this current Bill of 1973.

At page 2191 of *Hansard*, the 24th May, 1973, it will be seen that the comparative figures in respect of semi-trailers were given to the House in the Minister's second reading speech.

The Hon. L. A. Logan stated that it was his opinion that if an alternative system of raising finance were available he felt sure that one of the other States would have discovered it before now. I see no virtue at all in this argument. I would prefer to entertain the view that we have, in this State, departmental officers of at least equal capacity to those employed in other States, and it is no argument for the honourable member to assert that, in fact, because this State is first in reaching a solution that solution is untenable simply for the reason that no other State has been able to come up with an alternative. The Government, of which the honourable member was a Minister, was unable to come up with an alternative. Yet that fact in itself is no acceptable argument against the provisions made in this legislation.

The honourable member also put it to the House that another important aspect of the problem was that if the road maintenance tax were repealed and the new schedule of charges came into effect, the resultant finance would be paid directly into general revenue. I cannot fully understand the implication in that comment, when it is known that the subject of the Bill is to replace funds needed for road construction and maintenance.

In actual fact, if the new schedule of charges comes into effect, the resultant finance will not become part of general revenue but will be paid into main roads funds to be used for road purposes. An added bonus will be the elimination of substantial costs of collection.

So it can be seen that roads will not suffer. In certain circumstances the new method will be of great benefit because the present inequitable tax will be removed. This is something in which the Labor Party has always believed and as has been pointed out several times in the speech notes which I have just read it is still our policy. However, it would be foolish to say that we will not put something in its place. We have to raise finance to continue the intention of the road maintenance tax when it was first introduced; a form of revenue for the repair of roads.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: When I was a boy that was known as "Indian giving". Give something, and take it back.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The previous Government, of which the honourable member was a Minister, introduced this tax, and I am explaining the reason for its introduction.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: But the present Government did not say it would introduce something else when it went to the people.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: We did not say we would not introduce something, either. I think it is quite clear that this Bill will not be accepted by the Chamber. Irrespective of that, the Premier will shortly arrange for a complete and full inquiry into all the problems facing road haulage. Included in that inquiry will be the very vexed question of road maintenance tax. It is all very well for people to say that the farmers do not like using the railways, or that their goods are damaged by the railways. I do not think goods are damaged any more in the railway trucks than in motor trucks. It is unnecessary to make long hauls, as stated by Mr. Wordsworth. The railways open up the country and I think that any criticism of the railways is completely unfair.

Mr. Logan was the only member who said he did not want the road maintenance tax repealed. However, all members of the Government want to see this iniquitous tax repealed. Many members have been critical of the railways which have opened up the country, and which are most necessary for the carting of produce, particularly wheat. If greater use were made of our railways we might not have so many damaged roads. We find that the farming community is prepared to use road transport at every opportunity. We cannot have it both ways. It will therefore be necessary to increase license fees if we are to do away with road maintenance tax.

In all probability the inquiry has been announced by the Premier tonight. If it has not been announced, I have the autho-

rity to do so on his behalf. I hope this Bill will be given a second reading and a third reading and that we can proceed to repeal the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act. As I pointed out, the licenses for commercial vehicles would still be cheaper than in most of the other States of Australia. The van owner who uses his vehicle for private purposes will not be affected. Therefore, licenses could be increased at any time without bringing a Bill of this nature to Parliament. We all know licenses could be increased, and it would probably be easy to say, "We will increase license fees but we will have to do it across the board and not sectionalise it by increasing licenses for commercial vehicles only."

I trust the Bill will be given a second and a third reading, and that the repealing Bill to follow will be passed.

**THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH** (North Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [9.32 p.m.]: Ordinarily, I would not do what I now propose to do; that is, take the opportunity to speak to a Bill when a Minister has closed the debate. You know, Mr. President, that the right of reply goes to the member who introduced the substantive motion, which on this occasion is that the Bill be read a second time. Because of the change in the Ministry, the original mover of the second reading is not closing the debate. Therefore, on my interpretation of Standing Orders, it is open to me to make a few observations.

The PRESIDENT: That is correct.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I would not have taken this course had it not been for some of the outlandish statements made by the Minister who has just addressed himself to the Bill. I am interested to know the Government will hold an inquiry along the lines indicated by the Minister for Police a few moments ago—the Government having refused to carry out such an inquiry when the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly moved a motion asking for it. I conclude this is a matter of political convenience on the part of the Government.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: I asked this year for an inquiry, and the Minister said, "No."

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am coming to that. In this Chamber, my colleague Mr. Clive Griffiths made efforts to have an inquiry held and these were brushed to one side by the present Leader of the House. But because there has been a strike and, to say the least, a fair amount of trouble in the transport industry, the Government will now conduct an inquiry. How convenient that appears to be!

Another reason for my speaking is that the Minister appeared to me to be trying to tell us Mr. Heitman indicated something he did not indicate. The Minister

tried to tell us that Mr. Heitman said in his speech that he was with the Premier when the people from the lakes districts were received in deputation by the Premier.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I, too, heard Mr. Heitman.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I will tell the Minister something. Mr. Heitman told me that in the course of conversation with some farmers from the lakes districts he had been informed by those persons that the Premier had made to them a statement to the effect that if the Bill we are now discussing were defeated in the Legislative Council and the next Bill on the notice paper today—the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act Repeal Bill—were passed by this House, he would proclaim that Bill. I immediately suggested to Mr. Heitman that he ask a question about the matter, so Mr. Heitman asked his question and when he spoke to the second reading of this Bill he opened his remarks by saying, as reported on page 2505 of the current *Hansard*—

I would like to point out that in the first paragraph of the second reading speech made by the Minister he said—

This Bill is complementary to the Bill to repeal the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act, and unless this Bill is passed the Government will not proceed with the other and it will not become law.

Yesterday I asked a question without notice on this aspect of the legislation because I recall quite well that when the Premier introduced the Bill in another place, together with the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act Repeal Bill, the opening paragraph of his second reading speech was exactly the same as that made by the Minister in this House. After a deputation from the Lakes district yesterday morning waited on the Premier, I asked the Leader of the House a question without notice, and he agreed to interview the Premier and convey the information he received from him to me and to other members on this side of the House; because the Premier, after meeting the deputation had intimated that if the Traffic Act Amendment Bill (No. 2) were not passed, he would still proclaim the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act Repeal Bill following its passage through Parliament.

As I have stated, I asked a question without notice, but unfortunately the Leader of the House did not have the question before him in the same terms as I had asked it and, as a result, the answer from the Premier was, "No". The question I asked pointed out what the Premier had said to members of

the deputation but, actually, another question without notice had been asked before that.

I put it to the Minister for Police: Could he possibly read into that that Mr. Heitman was asserting that on the previous day he was at the deputation with the Premier?

The Hon. R. Thompson: I heard him ask the question.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: From that, can the Minister assert that Mr. Heitman was trying to tell him or his Ministerial colleagues that he was with the Premier?

The Hon. R. Thompson: Now read the question without notice.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Irrespective of the question without notice. On what page is it?

The Hon. R. Thompson: It was on the Wednesday—page 2351.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The question without notice reads—

This morning the Premier received a deputation of farmers from the Lakes district in regard to legislation to abolish road maintenance tax and its effect in that area. The Premier promised that if the Traffic Act Amendment Bill (No. 2) were not passed and the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act Repeal Bill were passed, he would still proclaim the Bill to abolish road maintenance tax. As this point will have a big bearing on our comments in connection with the two measures, will the Leader of the House confer immediately with the Premier to ascertain the truth of his remarks? When the Premier introduced the Bills in another place, he said that he would not proclaim the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act Repeal Bill if the Traffic Act Amendment Bill (No. 2) were not passed.

I put it to the Minister again: Can he possibly—

The Hon. R. Thompson: I am using the uncorrected version.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I do not care a continental hoot what the Minister is using.

The Hon. R. Thompson: This is the way the question was asked, and it said—

The PRESIDENT: Order! Order!

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: For some extraordinary reason, the Minister is drawing a red herring across the trail and trying to indicate that Mr. Heitman was falsely claiming that he was at the deputation, and the Minister is making that a reason or an excuse for the fact that the question was asked and the answer was given. It is unequivocal and clear. It is clear to my mind what took place on the very day because, I repeat, Mr. Heitman



told me that the people from the lakes districts had been informed in those words by the Premier. I said to him, "You should ask a question." I was motivated in suggesting he ask a question by the varying answers we had previously received—"I will", "I won't", "I will", "I won't."

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Four different answers.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Those very words were used in the question I asked when the Bill was before the House, because the Premier had changed his mind about the situation. There is no question that the present debate originated from these words under the heading "The Road Maintenance Tax" on page 12 of the Labor Party's policy speech given on the 20th February, 1971—

The Road Maintenance Tax, designed to make interstate hauliers contribute towards the upkeep of roads, has in practice turned out to be mainly a tax on people in the country. The more remote such people are from the metropolitan area, the heavier the burden they are obliged to carry. For example, people living in the Lakes Districts of the State who have not the advantage of subsidized transport available to others, are the hardest hit.

We undertake to abolish this most inequitable tax.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I quoted that in my reply.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I will put it to the Minister again so that we both understand it. When that policy speech was given, were not the people of Western Australia entitled to believe that if the Labor Party were elected to the Treasury benches road maintenance tax would go and that would be the end of it? We now have the Minister saying it would be foolish at this point of time to suggest we should not put something in its place. My word! I have heard some stories.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: That is the same as the free school books. The pupils could have them but the students could not.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I have heard some stories. It is capped by the Minister saying on behalf of the Government, "The Opposition had its chance last year to defeat the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act Repeal Bill. That chance has gone and the Opposition will not get another one." Of all the devious and specious arguments I have ever heard, that one most raises my blood pressure.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You did have a chance to throw it out without any strings attached, and you would not.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Mr. Ron Thompson is a new Minister—very new, otherwise he would not have said some of

the things he has said tonight. Does he mean to tell me the Government would have been glad had the Traffic Act Amendment Bill introduced last year been defeated—

The Hon. R. Thompson: We gave that undertaking at the time.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: —and this Chamber also opposed the Traffic Act Amendment Bill (No. 2) so that the Government would have had no revenue to replace the road maintenance tax. Is that what the Minister means?

The Hon. R. Thompson: That was the Government's undertaking at the time.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Well, why did it introduce another taxing measure to replace the road maintenance tax?

The Hon. R. Thompson: This is the new proposal.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It was not new last year.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You rejected it previously.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am telling the Minister that his Government is acting dishonestly in this matter.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Everybody acts dishonestly in your opinion.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: It is acting very irresponsibly.

The Hon. J. Dolan: His master's voice!

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: It is not a bad record.

The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs: Yes, you have it on pretty often, don't you?

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: It must be getting under your skin.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am waiting for the Ministers to sort themselves out and to decide who will make the next interjection.

The Hon. J. Dolan: The last one came from your side.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Well, the member who made it is not a Minister yet; the Ministers opposite will remain in office for a short time yet.

The Hon. J. Dolan: That is a matter of opinion; although I for one will be here only for a short time.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I think this Chamber has demonstrated on more than one occasion that it acts in a responsible manner; and Mr. Ron Thompson knows as well as I do that after the Traffic Act Amendment Bill (No. 2) introduced by his Government was defeated, on behalf of the Opposition in this Chamber I got up and said that, born of a sense of responsibility in view of the fact that the Government needed funds to carry on the affairs of the State, we would not oppose the Bill to

abolish road maintenance tax because if we did the Government would be without money.

For the Government now to turn around and try to sheet that blame onto the Opposition in this Chamber with the statement that "You had your chance to defeat that Bill" is not only very unreasonable, but is stupid in the extreme.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Wasn't that guarantee given by the Minister at the time?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The guarantee to the electors of Western Australia was contained in the Premier's policy speech, which stated that road maintenance tax would be repealed because it acted—in the opinion of the Labor Party—in an inequitable manner, particularly as far as those people who live in the lakes district are concerned. Those are the very people who, apparently by mistake, thought the Premier said that he would go ahead with the Bill to repeal road maintenance tax whether or not the Bill presently before us is passed.

I asked the Leader of the House a simple question the other night. I asked whether he would place the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act Repeal Bill ahead on the notice paper of the Bill we are now discussing, so that we could debate the former Bill first, and he replied "No."

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: That touched a sore spot.

The Hon. J. Dolan: When I gave that answer I was acting on behalf of the Government.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Forgive me; I am not suggesting that the answer was one I did not expect. However, I merely asked the question.

The Hon. J. Dolan: And I gave a simple answer in one word.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The Leader of the House did indeed. I think it would have been better had he, rather than his colleague, replied to the debate.

The Hon. J. Dolan: I understand the debate is not finished yet.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: No, the Leader of the House may have a go. As a matter of fact, anybody who has not yet spoken may still speak.

The Hon. J. Dolan: You are not telling us something we do not already know.

The PRESIDENT: I direct the attention of the Leader of the Opposition to the fact that Standing Orders still prevail.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes, Mr. President; that is why I am on my feet at the moment.

The situation is plainly and simply this: I do not appreciate—and I am sure the other non-Labor members of this Chamber

do not appreciate—the insult to my intelligence that has been attempted by the Minister for Police tonight when he told us that we had our chance to pass the Bill to repeal road maintenance tax last year, and to defeat the Traffic Act Amendment Bill (No. 2) so that the State would be without road maintenance tax and the Government would be without a considerable amount of revenue.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Many millions of dollars.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Surely the Minister does not expect the people to accept the fact that because we defeated the Bills last year we will not get another chance to do so. That sounds like petty schoolboys' talk.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Well, you wanted something put in its place last year. The basis of your argument was that nothing was to be put in its place.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The basis of the argument last year is in fact the same as the basis of our argument at present; that is, that when the political party to which the Minister belongs was doing its level best to get into government it hoodwinked the road hauliers into thinking that if they voted Labor road maintenance tax would be abolished, full stop. I defy the Minister for Police or his ministerial colleagues to tell me that there is the slightest suggestion to the contrary in the words of the policy speech, or that anybody could interpret the speech to mean anything more than was written into it.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: And now they propose a measure far worse than road maintenance tax.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: If it were intended when those words were spoken on the 20th February, 1971, that the Government would put something else in place of road maintenance tax, then all I can say is that the policy speech was very dishonest.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Did your Government say in its policy speech that it would introduce legislation to impose road maintenance tax?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: In fact, I do not think we did.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I am sure you didn't.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: If we did not it was because we were elected in 1959, and the Commonwealth Government to the best of my knowledge laid down the basis of matching road moneys at a much later date. So Mr. Thompson should not get smart about something about which he knows nothing.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I know about it.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The five-year agreement was one to which we had to be a party; if we were not a party to it then we simply would not have received the matching money. That is a simple fact. So the answer to Mr. Thompson's question is: To the best of my memory we did not say that we would impose road maintenance tax because the matter did not arise. However, in the case of the present Government not only was the policy stated, but the matter did arise. The Government said, "Let us get rid of this inequitable tax, because it was intended to be a tax on interstate hauliers." But what is the Government doing? It is letting the interstate hauliers off every penny they are paying under road maintenance tax. They will not pay a sou. So I repeat: This was a very dishonest policy speech. I will not labour that point any more except to say to the Government that I am intensely displeased with the efforts of the Minister tonight when he attempted to draw red herrings across the trail and to make my colleague, Mr. Jack Heitman, appear to be not an honest person because the Minister happened to think that he was present at a deputation, when he had no intention of conveying that impression.

The Hon. R. Thompson: It sounded very much like that to me, and I heard the question.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Well, I knew the circumstances.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Well, it didn't come over that way.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: So the Minister is still not satisfied?

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: It is recorded that way in *Hansard*.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It is recorded absolutely in *Hansard*; and what makes me more displeased is that the Minister is persisting and will not accept my word on the circumstances. I repeat for the third time that Mr. Heitman told me what the persons had told him, and I suggested that he arrange to have a question placed on the notice paper in another place to find out the circumstances. Frankly, I do not care a hoot in hell whether or not Mr. Ron Thompson believes me; but that is what happened.

The other thing I do not appreciate is the fact that Mr. Ron Thompson is now trying cleverly to turn this around on the Opposition and to say, just like a petulant schoolboy, "You had your chance last year to relieve the taxpayers of this burden, so you will not get another chance." I say to the Government: If it is not satisfied with this, why does it not go to the people? Why does the Government not call an election straightaway and correct

the dishonest words of its previous policy speech? I well remember how only two or three weeks ago it pleaded with us not to force an election.

The Hon. J. Dolan: Who pleaded?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The Leader of the House knows as well as I do that the Government pleaded.

The Hon. J. Dolan: With whom?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: If the Leader of the House did not plead, his Premier did. His Premier pleaded with the populace at large. However, putting that aside, I challenge the Government to go to the people on this or any other issue it likes to name.

THE HON. J. DOLAN (South-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [9.57 p.m.]: When I was the Minister for Police I introduced the Bill we are now debating and I would have been quite prepared to carry it through and to make the reply made by the present Minister. I will make only one comment, and I am not trying in any way to draw a veil over the question without notice asked by Mr. Heitman. He asked me whether I knew the circumstances surrounding the deputation, and whether I would see the Premier and confirm or deny what was said. I said that was the first I had heard of it and that I would obtain an answer with all expedition.

However, the way Mr. Heitman spoke suggested that he knew everything that had happened; and because I thought he was unintentionally speaking in an ambiguous fashion, I deliberately asked him whether he was at the conference.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What did he say?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: He said, "No."

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Well!

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I would not have asked the question unless I was in some doubt whether or not he was there and had heard the conversation that ensued. I wanted to be absolutely sure so I asked him whether he was at the conference. Mr. Ron Thompson might not even have been sitting here when that conversation went on. I told Mr. Heitman I would find out just what the Premier had said and, as is recorded in *Hansard*, I brought back the answer in the Premier's own writing and showed it to the Leader of the Opposition. I will not be in this House for many more months, but in the time I am here I will certainly not on any occasion deceive the House in any way whatsoever.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: There is no suggestion you did.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: If I am asked a question I will answer it, and when Mr. Heitman asked me this question I

indicated I would get the information for him. I did so and obtained it in writing and presented it to the House. Some doubt was expressed and that is why I asked Mr. Heitman whether he was at the conference, and he told me he was not. I was not able to contact the Premier at the time and I said to Mr. Heitman, "Let us get it clear. You were not at the conference when this happened"? He said, "No". I said, "Is it not quite possible that you have it secondhand and that you have got it wrong"?

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What a revelation this is!

The Hon. R. Thompson: Did you ask him this in the House?

The Hon. J. DOLAN: No. I asked him privately when I could not immediately get the answer from the Premier. I said, "You were not there"? He indicated he had not been and so I said, "You got it secondhand"? He said, "Yes; that is right".

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: And yet Mr. Ron Thompson can get up and make the assertions he made tonight.

The Hon. J. DOLAN: I am not going to go over the facts again. The Bill has been thoroughly debated, and because I was the person who introduced the Bill I have the right to close the debate. I therefore commend the Bill to the House.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Mr. President—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The debate has been closed.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

## Ayes—8

Hon. R. F. Cloughton	Hon. R. T. Leeson
Hon. S. J. Dellar	Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs
Hon. J. Dolan	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. J. L. Hunt	Hon. D. K. Dang

(Teller)

## Noes—16

Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. I. G. Medcalf
Hon. G. W. Berry	Hon. T. O. Perry
Hon. V. J. Ferry	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. A. F. Griffith	Hon. F. R. White
Hon. Clive Griffiths	Hon. R. J. L. Williams
Hon. L. A. Logan	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. N. McNeill	Hon. F. D. Willmott

(Teller)

## Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Hon. L. D. Elliott	Hon. J. Heitman
Hon. W. F. Willesee	Hon. C. R. Abbey

Question thus negatived.

Bill defeated.

House adjourned at 10.05 p.m.

# Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, the 11th September, 1973

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

## BILLS (2): ASSENT

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

1. Weights and Measures Act Amendment Bill.
2. Supply Bill.

## QUESTIONS (33): ON NOTICE

### ARTS

#### State Allocations

Mr. A. A. LEWIS, to the Minister for Cultural Affairs:

In view of the 100% increase in the allocations to the arts announced in the Federal Budget, does he anticipate a similar increase to the arts in Western Australia in his forthcoming budget?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

The amount to be allocated in 1973-74 to cultural organisations will be announced when the Budget is brought down.

### 2.

### LAMBS

#### Export Sales: Price Guarantee

Mr. A. A. LEWIS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

Further to my question 20 on Thursday, the 23rd August, 1973, would he say at what price the agreement was made on the 12th July, 1973, regarding the price guarantee for export lamb sales?

Mr. H. D. EVANS replied:

No. This is a trading matter which the board is not required to disclose.

### 3.

### STOCK

#### Inspection of Carcasses

Mr. NALDER, to the Minister for Health:

What numbers of cattle, calves, sheep, lambs and pigs slaughtered were inspected by—

(a) Public Health Department Inspectors;

(b) Department of Primary Industry Inspectors,

during the years 1969-70, 1970-71, 1971-72 and 1972-73?