

I recommend that the Leader of the House look at Standing Order 36 of the Legislative Assembly, which says—

Bills may be introduced and taken to the stage that the Motion "That the Bill be now read a second time" has been moved before the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech has been adopted, but no other business beyond that which is of a formal character shall be entered upon. Provided, however, that the introduction of Bills under this Standing Order shall not prevent any discussion on the subject matter of any such Bill during the Address-in-Reply debate.

I think that is a very good Standing Order. The suggestion I now make is not offered in a critical sense but purely to be helpful. I suggest that the Standing Orders Committee might consider asking this House to include a similar provision in our Standing Orders, following which the legislation which, no doubt, the Government has prepared in the months that have gone by since the 20th February, could be introduced into the House and adjourned after the second reading speech has been made. Then the Address-in-Reply could continue, and in the days that are ahead members of the House, generally, would have more time to study the Bills which Ministers had introduced while the Address-in-Reply debate was in progress.

I suggest that Mr. Willesee might mention this matter to the chairman of the Standing Orders Committee, and if it meets with the approval of Ministers he might consider adopting the suggestion.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: Do you think we could introduce Bills during the Address-in-Reply debate?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes, I do. I do not think there is any harm in it.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: I have nothing against it. I did not know we could do it.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: When we were over there we did it by moving the suspension of Standing Orders. I would suggest that if Ministers have any Bills ready they might ask the House to agree to the suspension of Standing Orders for the purpose of introducing those Bills. If they are Bills of an important nature which will require a good deal of study, we would be glad to have as much time as possible for that purpose. The Leader of the House has foreshadowed a Bill in connection with his own portfolio. That is a Bill which will need considerable study. If it is ready now we would be glad to have it.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: It is far from ready now.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Finally, last year, when I was Leader of the House, I made some reference to the somewhat

tedious task I had to undertake of replying to the comments made by members during the Address-in-Reply debate. This requires a great deal of work. The various departments must put other things to one side in order to work on the questions that have been raised by members, and the Leader of the House has to occupy himself sometimes for an hour or an hour and a half in order to supply the information. I suggest, out of consideration for Ministers, that this practice be discontinued. It is only my own private thought, but I suggest that as a matter arises the Minister concerned might reply in writing to the member's question so that the member might use the information for whatever purpose he has in mind.

I think it would be a good idea if it obviates the rush to obtain the information and have it available before the Address-in-Reply is finished. However, I make one exception and that is where a member would like to be informed straightaway upon a matter. In that case he should say so at the time he is making his speech. For example, if I spoke this afternoon on a matter about which I would like the Leader of the House to inform me as soon as possible, I could tell him now and he would know that it is a subject about which I want an answer in the House. However, in regard to other matters I may raise the Minister could expect that I would be satisfied with a written reply.

Of course, members have other opportunities to raise the matters again and to complain if the written reply is not satisfactory. For example, generally two Supply Bills are brought to the Chamber, so that constitutes two opportunities for members to do so.

Finally, there has been some suggestion that Parliament might not be called together in the strict, formal manner which has been followed in the years since responsible Government in this State. Personally, I am not too sure that we should have merely one opening of Parliament and one Governor's Speech. I think if that were done we might be inclined to lose contact with the people we represent. I am still a little touchy about the charges of secrecy that were levelled at my Government allegedly because we would not tell everybody what we were doing—that we were doing things in secret. I would not like that charge to be levelled at the present Government.

I do not think the Governor should be brought here to deliver a speech to this Chamber without anybody else being present. There may be a happy compromise in this matter; it is not my task to investigate it. I merely mention it because the subject has been raised in the Press.

THE HON. W. R. WITHERS (North) [5.48 p.m.]: Mr. President, I congratulate you on your re-election to preside over this



Chamber and I also congratulate all members of the Council for the respect paid to them by their electors. I pray that I will be able to represent my province with the dignity shown by my predecessor, The Hon. Frank Wise. It is my pleasure to be humbled by the dignity of this House and I trust that I may well serve the State Parliament through my representation of the people in the North Province.

I thank all members for the friendly assistance and guidance offered to me since the elections. In my short time as a member I have been greatly impressed by the efficiency of the staff and officers of the House, and with the sincere manner in which they perform their duties. I take this opportunity to express my thanks for the assistance given by those ladies and gentlemen.

It is now my wish to introduce certain thoughts to members of this House. Within this gigantic State of Western Australia we have almost unlimited potential for continued development if we plan rationally. I refer specifically to the isolated areas of Western Australia, and in particular to the area above the Tropic of Capricorn which represents 36 per cent. of our State's land mass.

This northern province has already received some of the investment required to farm its great resources, and it will prove to be a compound interest bearing deposit for those persons who are willing to work and invest towards the aims and requirements of all industries that will in the future benefit the State and the nation. The income from this region has helped to bolster the State's finances at a time when the downturn in rural economy has caused so much hardship in rural areas. This hardship would have been transmitted to an even greater cross section of the community had it not been for the income from the far distant regions of our State.

It is now my duty to present some facts that are well known to my electors but unknown to many of our citizens in the more urban areas of our State. I refer to the fact that many of the people who are participating in development by decentralisation are faced with problems that should not be experienced by a modern society such as ours.

One finds that whole communities and towns in the north are over 1,000 miles from the nearest senior State high school. The parents are faced with the exorbitant cost of sending their children to the cities for an education that costs up to 400 per cent. more than the maximum allowable income tax deduction. The only alternatives lie in education by correspondence or, in the case of a few towns, education to the Junior level with a limited curriculum which prevents most students from entering a selected tertiary study.

To give members an example of the situation, I advise that the nearest senior State high school to Wyndham is at Geraldton, which is 1,527 air miles away. The hostel there has no vacancies and there is a waiting list.

In February, 1972, a senior high school will be built at Tom Price. This will mean that a Wyndham senior student will save 1,000 miles travel per day if he wishes to attend the nearest State high school. I mention 1,000 miles travel saved per day because no residential hostel is contemplated for the Tom Price school. I might mention that Tom Price is still 1,000 air miles from Wyndham.

Another senior high school will be completed at Carnarvon in February, 1972, but this school will still be 1,250 air miles from Wyndham. At the moment there are no vacancies at the hostel, and no future additions are planned.

I have used Wyndham as a measurement point, but these facts can be applied to the northern communities in greater or lesser degrees. To further emphasise these facts by parochial comparison, I ask that members visualise the residents of Perth sending all senior high school students to Adelaide for their secondary education. If this ludicrous situation can be visualised, then contemplate the situation of the East Kimberley student who, at the moment, has to travel even greater distances than that—to be specific, a further 200 miles. This situation forces many valuable settlers to leave the area, and this limits the development of the area as well as the financial return to the State.

One finds that the cost of power in many areas prohibits the use of air conditioners in climates that make them a necessity and not a luxury in classrooms and homes. Some towns supplied by the State Electricity Commission are subject to power costs up to 350 per cent. above Perth metropolitan costs. Such power costs limit and sometimes prevent the development of industry close to the source of minerals and deep water ports. Of course, members can imagine the effect this will have on our future. Unless we take advantage of our minerals and our ports the development of the State will suffer. We must be able to compete in the world markets, especially now that we are going to lose some of our trade with England.

A survey on the cost of living in the East Kimberley made in 1970 showed that a family would have to pay \$2,670 per annum more than its metropolitan counterpart in order to live at a similar standard. The survey showed some startling penalties which are imposed on the northern dweller.

I will quote one item from that report, which will be quoted fully at a later date. The summation of the Kimberley costs above metropolitan costs in sections 2 to 12 of the survey shows that it costs the Kimberley householder \$2,671.42 more than



his Perth counterpart to live up to similar standards. If we assume that the Perth householder has a taxable income of \$2,500, then he will pay \$331.58 in personal income tax, leaving a net income of \$2,168.42.

To live up to this income, without saving, the Kimberley householder must have a net income of \$2,168.42 plus \$2,671.42, totalling \$4,839.84 or \$4,840 in round figures. To achieve this net income he must now earn a taxable income of \$6,599 with a tax of \$1,759. It can be seen that a Kimberley householder pays \$1,427.42 more income tax than he should do to live at the same standard as his Perth counterpart, and for this he receives fewer services.

In the training of our Aborigines, one finds the inadequacies of State and Federal planning. The situation is further confused by enthusiastic lay organisations which may offer advice without knowledge or, on the other hand, give knowledgeable advice diametrically opposed in ideas and ideals to that of other organisations.

A situation has developed in which sincere departmental workers have become paper slaves and public pressure and the advice of lay organisations have committed our Federal Government to a policy of discrimination against the non-Aboriginal Australian.

I refer to the Commonwealth allowances which provide free secondary education for an Aboriginal and not for a non-Aboriginal in an isolated area. This can apply even in a situation where an Aboriginal family can have a greater family income than a non-Aboriginal family. Present planning is providing some Aboriginal homes that are bigger and better than the most senior public servant's home in the town, and the Aborigines' rent is subsidised.

I wish to make it quite clear that I am in favour of high standards and allowances; but they should be available also to the non-Aboriginal Australian so that there is equality without the discrimination that can cause so much ill-feeling between different racial and social backgrounds. The Minister for Community Welfare has my sincere sympathy and best wishes in regard to the problems he is going to encounter.

Isolated areas always have a freight problem, but in the case of the north the situation of inadequate port facilities and high freight costs has led to a State-wide problem. I refer to the loss of intrastate trade to interstate suppliers who can supply fruit, dairy products, meat, groceries, and other goods to the north in better condition and at lower prices because of the inability of our transport systems to compete in the parameters of cost, time, and refrigeration with those offered by interstate interests.

It is to be hoped that highway construction and the planning of the State Shipping Service in conjunction with port planning will solve the existing problem.

Local Government authorities in developing areas are facing problems that will require financial assistance in order to cope with the area requirements, particularly in roadworks. Council plant hire rates to the Main Roads Department need to be much higher than the existing 20 per cent. above metropolitan rates.

In some northern towns flooding can completely isolate groups of towns from surrounding areas, and further isolate one town from another for periods long enough for the towns to be troubled by food shortages. A good example is the Wittenoom, Tom Price, Paraburdoo area. There are, of course, other towns with this problem, and it can be prevented by upgrading the road systems.

It has been reported in *The Sunday Times* of the 18th July that Western Australia will probably hold out against daylight saving. If this does prove to be the case, I hope the Minister for Local Government will consider the request of the Kununurra Chamber of Commerce and the Wyndham-East Kimberley Shire Council, who have previously been denied a request for an East Kimberley time zone to align with South Australia and the Northern Territory.

At this time there are only 22 road miles between Kununurra and a 1½ hour time change. If South Australia should advance the clock by one hour we will then have a situation where a motorist can leave the eastern edge of the Ord River scheme, drive to the administration centre in Kununurra, and arrive 2 hours and 10 minutes before his departure time!

In some pastoral areas where towns are in the process of developing, one finds the odd case of these towns affecting station properties to a point where they are no longer viable as station properties. I feel that compensation should be made for such loss.

To initiate planning to solve some of these problems, I now ask the Leader of the House to make representation—

- (1) To our Federal members for the implementation of a realistic zone allowance with realistic zone boundaries;
- (2) To the Minister for Education for implementation of school and travel allowances to all students so that country students may receive secondary education for entry to tertiary level without paying more than is paid by metropolitan residents. If the Minister cannot implement this system by the first school term of 1972 I would ask the Leader of the House



to make representation to our Federal members for the purpose of granting equal rights for non-Aborigines under the Aboriginal grants scheme;

- (3) To the Minister for Local Government to increase the northern margin on plant hire rates to the Main Roads Department;
- (4) To the Minister for Works to implement uniform power costs throughout the State; and
- (5) To the Minister for Lands and Agriculture to make available adequate compensation to stations affected by developing towns. I refer particularly to Boodarie and Pippingara stations in the Port Hedland area.

There are problems and paradoxes evident in many other fields in the northern area of the State, and I refer particularly to such things as water and sewerage, land lease and purchase, tariffs, housing grants, social services, gaols, the judiciary, communications, and export facilities, to name but a few. There are others, but I will leave the matter there for the moment, and conclude my remarks by offering my thanks for the attention shown by members to this my maiden speech. I would also like to congratulate The Hon. Lyla Elliott for the confident way she moved the Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's Speech. I support the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. S. J. Dellar.

#### COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION

##### *Assembly Personnel*

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying the personnel of sessional committees appointed by that House.

*House adjourned at 6.05 p.m.*

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## Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, the 20th July, 1971

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

#### CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

##### *Appointment*

MR. J. T. TONKIN (Melville—Premier) [4.31 p.m.]: I move—

That the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Norton) be appointed Chairman of Committees.

Question put and passed.

#### DEPUTY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

##### *Appointment*

THE SPEAKER (Mr. Toms): I wish to inform the House that I have appointed the member for Canning (Mr. Bateman), the member for Bunbury (Mr. Williams), and the member for Roe (Mr. W. G. Young) to be Deputy Chairmen of Committees during the present session.

#### DARLING RANGE

##### *Erection of Powerlines: Petition*

MR. I. D. THOMPSON (Darling Range) [4.32 p.m.]: I wish to present a petition addressed as follows:—

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia, in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned residents, in the State of Western Australia, do herewith pray that Her Majesty's Government of Western Australia will intervene and direct the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority and the State Electricity Commission of W.A. to NOT proceed with the proposed erection of high voltage power lines across the foothills of the Darling Range.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that your honourable House will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

The petition is signed by 5,371 people, and I certify that it is in accordance with the rules of the House.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

#### HELENA VALLEY AND PIESSE BROOK

##### *Construction of Pylons: Petition*

MR. I. D. THOMPSON (Darling Range) [4.33 p.m.]: I have a second petition addressed as follows:—

We, the undersigned wishing to preserve the great natural beauty of the Helena Valley and Piesse Brook, which, if preserved will be of immense value to all present and future citizens of the Metropolitan Area, express the strongest possible objection to the construction of a 5 chain swathe with 140 foot high steel power transmission pylons through these valleys, and your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

The petition bears 4,510 signatures, and I certify that the petition is in accordance with the rules of the House.

The SPEAKER: I direct that this petition also be brought to the Table of the House.