

TAXI-CARS (CO-ORDINATION AND CONTROL) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR RUSHTON (Dale—Minister for Transport) [2.40 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill provides for three separate amendments to the Act. The first of these will make some changes to the requirements for determining the eligibility of an applicant for a taxi plate issued at a premium.

Recently, the Taxi Control Board wished to issue a plate at a premium for a service confined to hirings originating from within the boundaries of an outer metropolitan shire. However, the only applications received were from persons who could not meet the prescribed requirements.

To qualify, a person must—

- be registered as a full-time operator;
- have been engaged in the industry for at least the two years preceding his application;
- not hold a current licence; and
- not have transferred a taxi licence during the preceding five years.

In the case in point, although no one applicant could meet all of the conditions, one person who was not a registered full-time taxi-car driver was, nevertheless, considered to be a fit and proper person to operate a taxi.

The amendment will allow the Minister to authorise the issue of a plate in such cases.

The second amendment will raise the maximum licence fee for an unrestricted and restricted taxi-car from \$50 to \$100, and \$30 to \$60 per annum respectively.

The principle sources of revenue available to the board are from—

- premiums payable on the issue of new taxi-car plates—there has not been an issue of these since September 1974;
- fees payable on the transfer of a taxi-car licence—the number of transfers within the past 12 months have not met budget expectations; and
- fees payable on the issue of a taxi-car licence and a taxi operators' licence.

Whilst there is no intention to increase taxi-car licence fees within the foreseeable future, nevertheless, the maximum fees payable under the Act have now been reached and it is considered desirable that the opportunity should be taken to increase this maximum to allow for an additional source of revenue should the expenses of the board make this necessary.

In the past, the Act has provided that only the chairman of the board may impose penalties for breaches of the Act. Prescribed penalties include the cancellation or suspension of a licence or the issue of a warning.

It is considered that the board itself, which includes three elected industry members, should also have and be able to exercise these same powers, and the amendment before the House provides for this authority.

I would add also that any penalty imposed in this manner is subject to appeal in the local court.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr McIver.

BILLS (2): MESSAGES

Appropriations

Messages from the Lieutenant-Governor and Administrator received and read recommending appropriations for the purposes of the following Bills—

1. Agriculture and Related Resources Protection Amendment Bill.
2. Essential Foodstuffs and Commodities Amendment Bill.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: THIRD DAY

Motion

Debate resumed from 6 August.

MR TRETHOWAN (East Melville) [2.44 p.m.]: In speaking to the Address-in Reply, which was so ably moved by my colleague, the member for Mundaring, I wish to voice my concern for the continuation and strengthening of parliamentary democracy and the spirit of enterprise within this State. Firstly, let me add my congratulations to those of my colleagues upon your re-election, Mr Speaker. I am sure it is tribute to the manner in which you carried out that office in the last Parliament in upholding its authority and dignity. I take this opportunity to thank members from both sides of the House for the friendliness with which they have welcomed me and, further, I place on record my appreciation for the guidance and assistance that has been rendered to me as a new member by the staff and officers of this Parliament.

It is a great honour for me to represent the seat previously occupied by such a person as Sir Desmond O'Neil. Sir Desmond's distinguished career spanned nearly 21 years, commencing with his election to the seat of Canning in 1959. In 1962, following a redistribution, the seat of East

Melville was created, and he served as the member for that seat for the following 18 years.

Sir Desmond's record of parliamentary achievements is considerable—as the Minister for Housing and Labour from 1965 to 1971; as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition from 1972 to 1974; as the Minister for Works, Water Supplies, and Housing from 1974 to 1975; as Deputy Premier and Minister for Works, Water Supplies, and the North West from 1975 to 1977; and as Chief Secretary, Minister for Police and Traffic, Regional Administration, and the North West from 1977 until this year.

I congratulate Sir Desmond upon his recent Knighthood and understand that this is a public recognition of the service he has rendered to this State. I know that he will be remembered with affection in the electorate of East Melville. I am sure also that he will be remembered with respect in this House as a great parliamentarian.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Mr TRETHOWAN: It is my intention to follow as closely as I can Sir Desmond's example in carrying out his parliamentary duties with both dedication and integrity. Further, I express my best wishes to Lady Nancy, together with Sir Desmond, in their, I hope, long and happy retirement.

Although my electorate has been so ably represented for the last 18 years, I believe, as a new member, I can claim to have received two privileges which had not previously occurred. Firstly, I happened to be elected unopposed. Secondly, I believe I am the first person as the member for East Melville to make his maiden speech in this House, for as members will recall, Sir Desmond was the member for Canning when he made his maiden speech. I thank political fortune for one and Sir Desmond O'Neil for the other.

To enter Parliament at the commencement of a decade such as the 1980s is indeed an exciting, if a slightly daunting, experience. I can see before us one of the most exciting periods of great expansion, probably greater than we have seen in the history of this State. I believe it can be a time of great enterprise; a time for great industrial, social, and cultural achievement. However, this will be achieved only if we, the people of Western Australia, have the determination to make it so.

When we look outside this State and outside this nation, I think we see a picture which we can call, at the very least, unsettled, if not grim. We have a situation of escalating energy costs throughout the world, and this particularly concerns those countries which are totally

dependent for their energy needs on Middle East oil.

This situation has been accompanied by a serious rate of inflation, a downturn in international trade, in recessionary conditions, and an increase in the general rate of unemployment. In addition to this economic instability, there has been a widespread and very serious increase in political extremism and urban terrorism. If we couple this with the rapidly increasing rate of expansion, both politically and militarily, of one of the world's major totalitarian and imperial powers, the Soviet Union, I do not believe it is an understatement to describe the current world outlook as grim.

We in Western Australia cannot afford to overlook the effect of all these factors and the degree to which they will influence our future.

We must remember that the wealth of this State is principally dependent upon our primary industries of mining, energy production, and agriculture. Our wealth is based on our ability efficiently to extract and export those commodities.

If we, as a community, allow unrealistic wage demands to price our products out of the international market, if we allow irresponsible strikes to destroy our reliability as an exporter, and if we allow extreme minority pressure groups to inhibit the normal development of any major concerns within our commercial life, not only will we be putting at risk the potential we see for the future, but we will also stand to lose much of that which we have already.

It is likely that over the next 10 years many countries throughout the world, particularly those which do not have indigenous sources of energy, will have to fight for their economic survival. This will produce a degree of competitiveness in international trade which will be exceptionally fierce. If we are to achieve an adequate rate of growth and productivity, we will have to have the necessary determination and strength to compete in this environment.

Western Australia is very fortunate in its abundance of raw materials and natural resources; but if they remain undeveloped, unexported, or unsold no jobs will be created and in fact we will have an extremely difficult time even maintaining our current standard of living.

It is now time that we, as Western Australians, take stock of our economic strengths and weaknesses. It is time for us again to rely on that spirit of enterprise which has brought us great prosperity over the last 150 years and to ensure

that, once more, it becomes the main spring to this new period of growth.

We in Western Australia are most fortunate in another area. We have one of the most successful systems of parliamentary democracy in the world today. Each of us can claim a greater degree of political, economic, social, and religious freedom than citizens in almost any other country of the world. Our freedom seems so secure that it is well for us to remember that, even at this very time in other parts of the world in other countries which are less fortunate with their political systems, men and women are being tortured and are dying in an attempt to win or defend the basic rights which we in this country take so much for granted.

If we do not value our basic rights sufficiently, they will slowly but surely be eroded by those forces whose objective is to replace our current political system with that of a totally alien political philosophy. It is interesting to see how attempts are made to bring about such change in other parts of the world. The steps seem relatively clear: firstly, the objective seems to be to bring about economic disruption and a debasement of the rule of law. The next step appears to be the promotion of antagonism and hatred between different sections of the community. This is then fuelled through the action of urban terrorism. This process is supposed to, and in fact sometimes does, lead to a situation of such instability that revolution takes place and an all-controlling totalitarian Government replaces the previous system. In doing so, it exerts such strength of control that it removes virtually individual freedom.

Our principal protection against such a downhill slide—the most effective guarantee which will allow us to retain our present degree of freedom—is the repute and stature of this Parliament. The laws passed by this House represent a framework of guarantees. They guarantee the rights of every individual within our community. Therefore, no section of our society should seek to set itself above the law, either through its economic power or as a result of racial or religious origins. If such an attempt is made, the section of society concerned seeks to set itself apart from the rest of the community and, in doing so, it seeks privilege, not equality. Any achievement of such privilege is contrary to the democratic freedom of the whole community. In addition, it provides the basis for dissension and hatred, the fuels of revolution and human misery.

However, Sir, it is interesting to note that many of those who protest about alleged injustice and inequality also profess a political philosophy which, where it has been put into practice

elsewhere in this world, has produced totalitarian and repressive regimes whose citizens are virtually devoid of all human rights and freedom.

We should be very careful of the superficial persuasiveness of such wolves in sheep's clothing. We must be very careful that, in grasping for that little bit more, we do not stand to lose most, or all, of what we have now.

It is the responsibility of this Parliament in representing the people of Western Australia to ensure that we progress through the 1980s on the strong foundation that we now have and, through leadership and good government, achieve for this State the true potential which lies before us.

[Applause.]

MR BRIDGE (Kimberley) [3.01 p.m.]: Before proceeding to take part in this Address-in-Reply debate, Mr Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to express to you personally my congratulations on your being re-elected to the very high office that you hold.

On the first day of Parliament I was told that it was the first time for a very long time that a ballot was used for the purpose of determining the position of speakership. Having gone through that ballot so successfully is evidence and a source of satisfaction to you to know that the House indeed holds you in high esteem. The House has accorded you its confidence.

I would also like to thank other members of this Parliament most sincerely. When I first came to this Parliament I was met by a great number of people from all parties and the warmth and kindness that has been extended to me on the few days I have been here is something I shall remember for a long time.

It is not an easy task for a bushman who comes to town and to a place such as this and suddenly finds the surroundings unfamiliar. It was indeed a great satisfaction and a comfort for me to have such friendly people greeting me as has taken place over the last few days.

I also extend my appreciation and thanks to the staff of this House. Again, like other members of Parliament I have had a great deal of support and encouragement from all members of the staff in this House, particularly the gentlemen at the front entrance. They have always been kind to me and given me assurance, especially when I came into this place for the first time. I appreciate the support and encouragement which has been extended to me by all the members in this House.

I would also like to thank my wife for the support and encouragement given to me through