

The second remark made in the letter with which I would like to disagree was "that there is no question of good material for nursing being lost to the profession because of educational standards". We have seen plenty of proof of it! I myself know plenty of people who have come to me and rung me and complained bitterly.

I ask again that those responsible for selecting trainees have a look at this question and not cast a blind eye to the pleas of so many people who have asked that the same educational standard be continued for those who want to be nurses. Trainees should not be considered as being unable to get through their nursing course, because this has been disproved many times. It is remarkable what persons can do when taking the course. They might do nothing at school, but when they get into something which they like, they will work harder, and pass the examinations, and make better nurses in many instances.

The final remark I would like to disagree with is as follows:—

A student who does not reach the educational standard for general nursing training can still train for the cadre of nursing aides and thereby have the satisfaction of nursing the sick and providing a valuable service to the community.

That is the way he dismisses the whole thing! That is the way the Chairman of the Nurses' Registration Board has dismissed our argument: my argument and the argument of many other people.

As I have said before, our nursing aides will be better than our nurses; and I make a final plea to the Chairman of the Nurses' Registration Board to instruct, or plead with—whichever it is—the senior matrons of the training hospitals to mark time on this academic advance and really forget about aptitude tests. While interviewing a girl they should really try to work out whether she wants to be a nurse, and for what reason. If the educational standard is satisfactory she should be given a chance.

Progress

Progress reported and leave given to sit again, on motion by Mr. Gayfer.

House adjourned at 10.55 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 3rd November, 1965

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

BILLS (3): INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Married Persons and Children (Summary Relief) Bill.
2. Foreign Judgments (Reciprocal Enforcement) Act Amendment Bill.
3. Strata Titles Bill.

Bills introduced, on motions by The Hon. A. F. Griffith (Minister for Justice), and read a first time.

QUESTIONS (3): ON NOTICE

TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

Great Eastern Highway and Coolgardie-Esperance Road: Number, Dates, and Main Causes

1. The Hon. R. H. C. STUBBS asked the Minister for Mines:
 - (1) How many traffic accidents have occurred on the Great Eastern and Coolgardie-Esperance sections of road between—
 - (a) Northam and Merredin;
 - (b) Merredin and Coolgardie;
 - (c) Coolgardie and Norseman;
 - (d) Norseman and Esperance;
 yearly, for the previous three years to the 30th June, 1965?
 - (2) How many have happened from the 30th June, 1965, to present date?
 - (3) What are the main contributing factors in the statistics as to the cause of the accidents?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

(1) (a) 1/7/62 to 30/6/63	....	74
1/7/63 to 30/6/64	....	52
1/7/64 to 30/6/65	....	72

Three year total 198

(b) 1/7/62 to 30/6/63	....	49
1/7/63 to 30/6/64	....	40
1/7/64 to 30/6/65	....	44

Three year total 133

(c) 1/7/62 to 30/6/63	....	23
1/7/63 to 30/6/64	....	11
1/7/64 to 30/6/65	....	15

Three year total 49

(d) 1/7/62 to 30/6/63	....	21
1/7/63 to 30/6/64	....	20
1/7/64 to 30/6/65	....	13

Three year total 54

- (2) Accident statistics are not yet available to the department to enable this information to be obtained.

	Accidents
(3) Drunken driving	.... 12
Excessive speed	.... 30
Failure to give way to the right	.... 9
Rear end collisions	.... 13
Overtaking improperly	.... 29
Not keeping left	.... 42
Negligent driving	.... 93
Falling asleep	.... 29
Tyre blowouts	.... 33
Defective vehicle	.... 16
Striking animal	.... 30
Other causes	.... 98

HOUSING COMMISSION HOMES

Cost per Square

2. The Hon. J. M. THOMSON asked the Minister for Mines:

- (1) What is the cost per square of building for the State Housing Commission for—

- (a) timber-framed homes; and
- (b) brick-veneer homes;

built in—

- (i) the metropolitan area;
- (ii) Northam;
- (iii) Narrogin;
- (iv) Albany;
- (v) Bunbury; and
- (vi) Geraldton?

Average Number of Squares

- (2) What is the average number of squares contained in State Housing Commission homes being built today?

Rentals

- (3) What rents are charged for—
 - (a) timber-framed homes; and
 - (b) brick-veneer homes;
 in the places referred to in (1) above?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) The cost per square of building for the State Housing Commission is as follows:—

	Timber-framed 3-bedroomed homes	Brick-veneer 3-bedroomed homes
Metropolitan	Not built	£283-71
Northam	£307-54	Not built
Narrogin	£353-20	Not built
Albany	£353-20	Not built
Bunbury	£333-10	£340
Geraldton	£357-91	Not built

Tenders were recently called for brick-veneer homes at Geraldton and Narrogin, but, on square rates of £393 and £450 respectively, were too high for acceptance.

- (2) The average number of squares in State Housing homes is:—

Timber-framed, 3 bedroomed, 9½ squares.

Brick-veneer, 3 bedroomed, 9½ squares.

(3) The rents charged are:—

	Timber-framed 3-bedroomed homes	Brick-veneer 3-bedroomed homes
Metropolitan	Not applicable	£4 6s. to £4 14s.
Northam	£5 1s.	Not applicable
Narrogin	£4 19s.	Not applicable
Albany	£4 17s.	Not applicable
Bunbury	£4 11s. 6d.	£4 19s. 6d. to £5 1s.
Geraldton	£4 19s.	Not applicable

COOLBELLUP SCHOOL*Additional Classrooms: Provision*

3. The Hon. R. THOMPSON asked the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Have tenders been called for additional classrooms for Coolbellup School to accommodate the estimated 150 pupils who will commence school in February, 1966?
- (2) If the answer to (1) is "Yes"—
 - (a) what is the number of classrooms to be constructed;
 - (b) when will they be completed; and
 - (c) what is the estimated number of pupils per classroom?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) an (2) No. Demountable classrooms will be erected to provide temporary accommodation for children in excess of those for whom orthodox accommodation is provided.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE**IRON ORE***Royalties on Exports from Cockatoo and Koolan Islands*

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Minister for Mines:

What amounts of royalty have been received on account of the export of iron ore from each of Cockatoo and Koolan Islands since inception?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

Royalties paid on iron ore ex Cockatoo and Koolan Islands to the 30th June, 1965—

	£	s.	d.
From 1951—Cockatoo Island	711,384	0	6
From February, 1965—Koolan Island	69,252	10	0
	780,636	10	6

FISH PROCESSING LICENSES*Minister's Remarks during Supply Bill (No. 2) Debate: Personal Explanation*

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (Lower West—Minister for Fisheries and Fauna): [4.43 p.m.]: Have I permission to make a personal explanation, Mr. President?

The **PRESIDENT** (The Hon. L. C. Diver): Yes.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: On the 19th October when speaking on the Supply Bill and in reply to Mr. Ron Thompson, I inadvertently misinformed the House. I stated the previous Minister for Fisheries had put forward a proposal to the fishing industry with regard to the proposed levy for the purpose of licensing processors. In this way I was confused with the actions I had taken myself and with subsequent correspondence.

The proposal for this levy was, in fact, put forward for a different purpose basically. It met with lack of support from certain sections of the industry, but not from the Rock Lobster-Crayfish Association, which, just prior to that, and accentuated by the endeavour to obtain this levy, actually had for some time endeavoured to secure a basis for the licensing of processors. Over a number of years it had pursued this aim for a variety of reasons—to mitigate against the proliferation of processing plants, to limit capitalisation, and to give better control.

My statement was made with more enthusiasm than, perhaps, judgment, and with some confusion about the two levies. My confusion probably arose from my planning for the levy and my reading of one or two of the files, and I did give the wrong interpretation to some of the actions which had taken place.

The levy was not, in fact, a move to license processors, although it is reasonable to suppose this might have arisen from it at the time. The present proposal did arise from it directly; but at that time it was a levy in order to undertake some research and to increase the policing activities associated with some of the less desirable aspects of processing.

From that time—and from even a little before—the Rock Lobster-Crayfish Association took up this question of process licensing, and that association has been the main mover in this regard over a period of years.

I trust this will correct any misinformation my previous remarks might have supplied.

**ADMINISTRATION ACT
AMENDMENT BILL***Report*

Report of Committee adopted.

**WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ACT
AMENDMENT BILL***Report*

Report of Committee adopted.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (Minister for Health), and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL

(No. 2)

Report

Report of Committee adopted.

Third Reading

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North Metropolitan—Minister for Mines) [4.50 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

I crave the indulgence of the House to explain a point raised by Mr. Wise last evening when the Bill was going through the Committee stage. The honourable member questioned me upon the reason for the deletion of the penalty of £100 which had previously been inserted in the Act and which applied when a lessee sold or disposed of a property without the permission of the Minister.

Subsection (2a) deals with the necessity for the lessee to obtain the approval of the Minister in writing before negotiating a sale in its various forms. When this subsection was inserted in the Act in 1960, a penalty of £100 was provided. This was not intended at the time; and, in any event, forfeiture is not able to be taken unless a conviction is first obtained. Consequently, forfeiture action is restricted at the present time, and it is necessary to take court action and obtain a conviction.

The purpose of this amendment is to remove the penal provision so that forfeiture action may be considered in the normal way if the approval of the Minister is not first obtained in writing where the lessee seeks to transfer the lease.

Additionally, I might say, it appears to the Minister that there is no purpose in obtaining forfeiture by having to take proceedings and obtain a conviction when, under the amending Bill, power and authority will lie with the Minister to approve of the transfer; and, unless the Minister gives prior approval, the transfer will not be effected, and the Minister will be able to exercise his authority to cancel the lease.

That is the reason for the deletion of the penalty. I regret I could not give it last night, but today I have had an opportunity to inquire into the matter, and what I have related is the explanation given to me.

THE HON. F. J. S. WISE (North—Leader of the Opposition) [4.53 p.m.]: I appreciate the explanation given by the Minister. Section 143 of the Act deals almost solely with the action requisite for the transfer of leases of all kinds. I can quite see that under subsection (2a), as it now stands, the imposition of a penalty, initially, would deter the progress that is necessary for the consideration of forfeiture. I can now see the reason for the deletion of the penalty; but, of course, it was obscure without the explanation.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BETTING INVESTMENT TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL*Second Reading*

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (North Metropolitan—Minister for Mines) [4.54 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The introduction of this measure is necessitated by the proposal to change over to decimal currency as from the 14th February next. A tax of 3d. is imposed under existing legislation where the amount of money paid or promised as the consideration for a bet does not exceed £1. The tax is 6d. where the amount of a bet exceeds £1. In order to anticipate the introduction of the new currency, which contains no exact equivalent of 3d., it is necessary to strike a new rate for bets not exceeding £1.

Members will be aware that the 6d. tax on bets exceeding £1 converts exactly to 5c so that there is no problem in that regard. Nevertheless, it is desirable to consider this rate in association with the amount to be paid in future on bets of £1 or less. The Treasurer, when introducing this measure in another place, pointed out that there was not "much rhyme or reason about the present rate of sixpence because it applies equally to bets of 25s., £10, £100, or for that matter, £1,000."

The idea, when originally conceived, was to tax the bigger punter at a higher rate, and it is doubtful whether the present dividing line of £1 between the lower and higher rates of tax separates satisfactorily the big punter from the small. Consequently, a number of alternatives have been considered, and this has been done bearing in mind that the total yield from the current tax is reasonably satisfactory. In considering these alternatives, it was thought desirable to minimise the impact on the decimal currency changeover on the Treasury and on the punter.

Roughly, seven-eighths of the bets made are for amounts of £1 or less. Because of this, the current tax yield on every eight bets is 2s. 3d. equalling 22½ cents. Were the tax on all bets, irrespective of amount, dropped to 2c, the yield on every eight bets would be 16c. This is considerably less than the present yield of 22½c and therefore could not be justified. On the other hand, were the tax on bets exceeding £1 left at the present equivalent of 5c, the overall yield would be only 19c.

A flat rate of 3c per bet, whatever the amount, on the other hand would yield 24c for every eight bets, and this would be a slight gain on the present yield. Were the

higher rate of 5c continued for bets exceeding £1, the total yield on every eight bets would be 26c, which is considerably higher than the present yield of 22½c.

Having regard for the purpose of the measure, it is considered that the rate of tax, to be levied with the introduction of decimal currency should be the one which would give a total return not significantly different from the present return. Simplicity of collection is also desirable. Considering all facts, it is proposed to fix a flat rate of 3c for all bets irrespective of the amount, and that provision is contained in this measure.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. W. F. Willesee.

ROAD MAINTENANCE (CONTRIBUTION) BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed, from the 2nd November, on the following motion by The Hon. A. F. Griffith (Minister for Mines):—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

THE HON. H. C. STRICKLAND (North) [4.58 p.m.]: This is another Bill to impose further taxes upon the community, particularly those members of the community who live in the furthest and most distant areas of the State. For that reason I must oppose it. The Minister has not told us—and we have not read anything to tell us—why measures such as this one should ever come before Parliament. They seem to me to be an ingenious method of extracting money from industry and from the community as a whole; and at the same time they cause an inflationary trend in the economy.

We have, on the one hand, very much news and talk about holding prices stable and keeping costs down, particularly those of manufacturers interested in overseas markets; but, on the other hand, we find those who are most vocal and voluble in connection with these various essential items of the economy are the first to suggest further imposts which do nothing else but increase the cost of living and inflate costs generally. They can have no other result.

So one must be surprised at a Government which follows the trend which has already been set in other States of the Commonwealth and which seems to enjoy introducing one tax after another and making increase after increase in costs which have to be borne by the people of this State.

I believe that measures such as this are not necessary, because this is more or less a sectional tax which will hit those who can least afford to pay it. On the surface it appears to be a tax that will be imposed on road hauliers only; but, of course, although it is a charge imposed

upon road hauliers, inevitably they must pass it on and, in the ultimate, it will be borne by the consumer of goods. Therefore this seems to be a peculiar policy to be followed by a Government which is always crying poverty when any section of the community seeks an increase in wages. It does so on the score that any increase in the wages of workers would upset the economy and start an inflationary spiral. However, the number of inflationary measures we have already passed this session and those which we have heard will be placed before us in the near future are a sad reflection on a Government which preaches one policy, but practises another.

As I said before, the method of taxing in this Bill is an ingenious one. It is a method that was initiated by the Menzies Government in order to subdue some of the criticism from Governments in other States on the distribution of funds from the Federal aid roads grant: the money collected from the tax of 1s. 3d. on every gallon of petrol. Whether they be affluent or not, Governments appear to act like the donkey; they reach for the carrot that is held in front of their noses. I was hoping that the Western Australian Government, being the last of the States to take a bite at the carrot, would have resisted the temptation of being cajoled into imposing this tax to meet the matching money of the Commonwealth.

When introducing the Bill the Minister said the measure is absolutely essential if the Government is to receive matching money from the Commonwealth Government; the money which the Commonwealth Government is holding out in the shape of a carrot in front of the donkey. The Minister also said that because loan funds would not be available as they have been in the past for use on road maintenance, and thus earning matching money from the Commonwealth, this method must be used. The Government would have been better advised to use its influence and efforts in many other directions in an attempt to save wasted expenditure of loan funds which obviously is occurring year after year. That can be seen from a perusal of the public accounts and statements.

Surely, instead of the Government allowing this waste of money to continue it should investigate the position, perhaps even with the formation of an all-party committee such as the Commonwealth Government has established. This committee is most necessary if the Ministers cannot find time to keep a watch on this wasted expenditure; because it is a very unsatisfactory state of affairs when we find large discrepancies between original estimates of costs and current estimates, and the duplication of work that is being done with the expenditure of loan funds. It would seem that there is no control whatsoever over the expenditure of this money in recent years.

I can remember asking a question in this House on the cost of the housing at Kununurra and the cost of the administrative block of the Ord River Club. The member for Kimberley asked a similar question in another place. The reply given in both Houses was that there were only figures available for the total cost of the buildings constructed at Kununurra and that there was no segregation of costs. If Ministers and their officers administer their departments in that fashion is it any wonder they are running short of loan funds? In fact, it is surprising that they continue to obtain loan funds if they spend the money in that fashion. They seem to throw it around with both arms without any control whatsoever.

So when the Government tells us that, because of lack of loan funds, it is necessary to impose this tax on only some sections of the people in Western Australia and on only some sections of industry, I think it is becoming a little fallacious in its statements on its financial dealings, and it should take steps to arrest this wasteful expenditure. I will cite a few examples of discrepancies in estimates and expenditure in recent years. The original estimate for the construction of the Mitchell Freeway was £4,500,000, but the 1965 estimate is £8,500,000. For the Exmouth Gulf townscape project the original estimate was £1,130,000, and the latest estimate, given only a few weeks ago, is £2,768,000; more than double the original estimate.

This trend of drifting expenditure is a severe reflection on those who prepare the estimates for these projects, and it shows a lack of control over the expenditure of the money and the segregation of the individual items. Another major project in which there is a considerable discrepancy between the original estimate and the current estimate is the standard gauge railway scheme. The original estimate was £41,210,000, but the latest estimate is £55,129,747.

We read a great deal about the excessive expenditure on the Sydney opera house and the misuse of the moneys provided, but I think it is about time we let the taxpayers of this State know what is happening to some of their money.

The deviated route of the standard gauge railway project between Spencers Brook-Northam-Toodyay-Bellevue was originally estimated to cost £7,496,000, but the most recent estimate is £9,674,000. Someone must have been well and truly astray when preparing the original estimate, so surely it is time an officer or committee was appointed to investigate the expenditure of some of these departments to obtain a true picture of what is happening to the money. If this unwarranted expenditure of large sums of money is to continue, the imposition of taxes will never cease or taper off. When is a person to know what he will pay in tax and budget for twelve months ahead? How can a haulage contractor

continue with his operations when he accepts a contract and then is confronted with this tax before he completes it?

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You know, it is a funny thing, I can recall saying exactly the same when your Government was in office.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The Minister could make many statements then, but he did not have the figures to back them up, which is a different matter altogether. It is all very well to bark, but it is no use barking if one cannot bite.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You are doing the barking now.

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver): Order!

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I will keep in order, Mr. President. Another strong reason against the imposition of this tax is the opinion of the High Court, which has nothing to do with the need for the money. I think the decision of the court was on the distribution of tax, and not the need to impose it. Another reason advanced by the Government for the introduction of this tax was that the interstate hauliers contribute nothing towards the maintenance and construction of roads in Western Australia. That is absolute tommy rot! I think the desire of the Commonwealth Government to obtain this matching money was as a result of a great deal of dissatisfaction expressed by Premiers at Loan Council meetings and Premiers' Conferences on the large amount of money that was being allocated to Queensland and Western Australia from the Federal Aid Roads Fund which had been collected by way of a tax of 1s. 3d. on every gallon of fuel. That is a fact.

It was Mr. Bolte, I think, as Premier of Victoria, who, at each Premiers' Conference during his first four or five years, never resisted the temptation, nor missed the opportunity, to bring the subject up and to complain bitterly about the amount of tax being collected in Victoria, and the unequal distribution of the moneys in the fund to States other than Victoria, including the adjoining State of New South Wales. I think that may have been the atmosphere in which legislation such as this was born.

I asked some questions in this House as to how this money was distributed which, as I have said, is obtained purely from the imposition of a tax on fuel.

By way of question I asked the Minister what moneys were received by Western Australia from the Commonwealth Aid Roads Fund from the 1st July, 1959, to the 30th June, 1964. The Minister gave me the correct answer, which was £44,241,788. I also asked how it was made up under the formula. The formula for distribution is one-third on account of population; one-third on account of area; and one-third on account of motor vehicle registrations. In those

five years Western Australia, out of the £44,250,000, received £32,100,000 by virtue of its area. The area of Western Australia, of course, is within a few miles of being one-third of the total area of Australia.

Therefore, out of the £96,000,000 distributed for area amongst the States over the past five years, Western Australia has received £32,000,000. The North Province up to and including the years referred to had, within its boundary, an area of slightly more than half of Western Australia. Therefore, because of its area, the North Province earned £16,000,000, in round figures, out of the £32,000,000. I am not taking into account the proportion of population and the number of motor vehicle registrations, as they would be small. If the figure were £500,000 over the five years, that is as much as it would be.

Mr. Brand asked a question earlier in the session in connection with what amounts from this fund were spent north of the 26th parallel which, to all intents and purposes, with the exception of a couple of hundred miles of road, is the North Province. The couple of hundred miles of road from the Murchison River to the 26th parallel would be the only road outside the province where money would be required to be spent. The figures with which Mr. Brand was supplied showed that in the same period of five years—1959-60 to 1963-64, inclusive—£8,041,000 had been spent in the North Province. So we see that although the northern half of the State brings half of the road funds here—

The Hon. F. D. Willmott: Only on an area basis.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: That area brings £16,000,000 out of £32,000,000.

The Hon. F. D. Willmott: You are talking only of area.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The honourable member can correct me later if he wishes. So while the North Province has brought in £16,000,000 in the past five years—it will increase each year—only half has been spent in the region; and now the Government is saying, "We are going to impose a tax on you people up there and make you pay more so you can bring in some more money to spend on other roads."

On what roads is the money being spent? The figures show that the Government is spending money in the southern portion of the State. Admittedly it has spent a lot of money in the north, but a lot of it is wasted. I have said time and again: What is the good of pushing sand about this year and pushing the same sand about next year? The same thing applies in the spending of hundreds of thousands of pounds doing the roads up; and whether transport uses those

roads or not, they will deteriorate by the elements during the dry weather with hot winds, and in the wet when it comes. The only answer is to seal the roads.

Incidentally, the road from the Murchison River to Carnarvon was sealed by the Hawke Government and should have been named the Hawke Highway. It is a perfect road and has cost nothing in the way of maintenance. I understand the road between Perth and Geraldton is under constant repair. Admittedly, it is an older road and was not laid down by the scientific methods which were used for the road between Geraldton and Carnarvon. Nevertheless, I say that when one is on a good thing stick to it; and those in charge should carry on with that type of work throughout the north and save further expenditure. But that is not done.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: Do you think the interstate hauliers should get off scot free?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: No, I do not; but it is wrong to say they pay nothing; because everybody in Australia, bar some primary producers, has to pay a fuel tax of 1s. 3d. per gallon. They all contribute to the roads; and the amount of tax collected in Western Australia, in view of our population and motor vehicle registrations, would not amount to anything like the money we receive on account of our hundreds of thousands of square miles of waste lands. It is these waste lands that are earning a lot of money by way of road funds. It is a good thing; and that has been the case since 1923. But I say it is wrong to say that the hauliers contribute nothing. However, if it is the interstate hauliers the Government wants to tax, why not tax them and them only?

The Hon. F. D. Willmott: The Constitution will not allow it.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The Constitution is a marvellous thing; but if the Government can tax in this fashion, why is it not unconstitutional?

The Hon. H. K. Watson: This is the only way.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Why is it constitutional to tax only one section of Western Australians under this legislation? It is a rather strange thing that a coalition Government here, several years ago, instituted a freight scheme on the railways known as the telescopic system. Under that system, the further a person lived away from Perth the less he paid per mile. That was instituted by a coalition Liberal or National-Country Party Government. In this case, just the opposite has happened.

This Government has no compunction about taxing the people who live the other side of Halls Creek, at Fitzroy Crossing, on the Eyre Highway, or anywhere else. This Government simply says, "Because you live

out there you will pay more. You are more miles away so you will contribute a greater amount of money." Yet, as I have said, because of the large area in which they live, they are responsible for bringing in so much money to our road funds. Surely the whole thing is upside down! Surely it should be the other way round! The people who live in the remote isolated areas should be treated with much more sympathy than is being handed out to them by this particular legislation.

It is said the legislation is necessary to raise something like £500,000 more in taxes in order to make up the required amount to earn something like £1,000,000 in total for the next four years. That might be; but, as I said before, why go chasing this money in this particular way when there must be loan funds or other funds available? I asked the Minister a question without notice earlier this afternoon and was told that over £1,000,000 has been received by way of royalty from the iron ore project at Yampi, in the North Province. This money has come from two islands which cost the Government nothing. Do you know, Mr. President, how much these islands cost the Government? The Government has a school teacher on each island and one policeman for the two islands!

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Would you give us the total figure I gave you this afternoon?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I have added them together.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Just remind me.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I did not get a copy of them. I will have to think of what the Minister gave me. It was £780,000.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You stretch the cord until it breaks when it suits.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I am glad the Minister drew attention to this, because I went to the trouble to find out what this coming financial year's shipment was expected to be. For the coming year, the contract is for 3,000,000 tons, which means another £225,000, which, added to the £780,000 the Minister gave us, totals over £1,000,000.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The £780,000 is since 1951.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: If the Government would contribute the £225,000 for this coming year instead of imposing a tax on the people up there, it would be doing something in connection with the policy it talks about at election time and at every other time through the Press in connection with the north.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You know that all royalties go into Consolidated Revenue.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The Bill provides for all sorts of contingencies; and one that pleases me is that the iron ore

company at Yampi Sound will not be required to contribute. It will be shifting something like 5,000,000 tons of dirt to get 3,000,000 tons of ore for shipment; and it would be a shocking state of affairs if that company had to contribute, since it built its own roads and no public vehicles travel over them. Because they are not gazetted roads, the company will not be required to contribute under the provisions of this Act.

There may be other companies in the same category, but I cannot think of any. I know that some years ago the manganese transporters constructed—I should have said "blazed"—their own track for at least 100 miles, from Coongan to the Ragged Hills quarries to enable them to shift the manganese. They are still using that 100 miles as part of a 200-mile journey. How are they going to fare? Are they going to pay? Or will the Government be fair and say, "You built that road yourself so we will not charge you." On the other hand, we have big enterprises at Wittenoom—the Australian Blue Asbestos Company—where there is a population of 1,000 people, all dependent on the one project. Of course they cannot be exempted, because they travel on a gazetted road. So there will be no let-offs for the people up there.

We find that there are some anomalies. As I said before: If it is unconstitutional to tax some hauliers, why is it not unconstitutional to tax the lot or relieve some? We cannot have it all ways; it must be constitutional or unconstitutional.

However, I cannot for the life of me agree with the Government in connection with this matter; and, of course, I am not the only one. There are a lot of people who are interested in this vital matter. Before I finish with the subject of roads I would like to read an article from the *Northern Times* dated the 28th October. It is a paper which circulates in the north, and the statement I am about to read was made by the secretary of the W.A. Transport Association. It reads as follows:—

Heavy haulage rates to centres north of Carnarvon have been increased by about 10 per cent.

Mr. W. Pellew, secretary of the W.A. Transport Association said the new rates would operate immediately.

The new rates were made after a survey of road conditions in the north. Many of the roads in the area had been found to be sub-standard, he said. Labour costs, heavy capital costs, maintenance and depreciation, also had been responsible for the increase.

Haulage costs might have to be reviewed again when the government's proposed road maintenance levy came into effect, later this year or early in 1966.

Increases in license fees and the road maintenance levy had not been considered in the present review.

Another reason for the increases was the need to provide heavy equipment which was costly to buy and expensive to maintain in the present road condition.

The association did not try to anticipate costs. It considered them as they arose.

Before June, there had never been set cartage rates in the North West. The rates were introduced as northern development expanded.

And the charges, of course, are outlined. The 10 per cent. increase has meant that the freight to Port Hedland has gone from £26 19s. 6d. to £30 10s. a ton. I understand from hauliers carting in the area that it can be expected that another 60s. will be added as a result of this tax if it becomes law. That will be just after the recent increase of 10 per cent. It looks as though another lot will be heaped on.

As I said earlier, it will increase the cost of living of the people in the north. Port Hedland is the centre of the north. I understand that the increase at Carnarvon will be 15s. more. Carnarvon, because of the splendid road, enjoyed a remarkable reduction in the cost of foodstuffs over the past seven or eight years. That is a remarkable reduction as against what costs were. I am not saying the costs are not higher, but the costs today in proportion to the basic wage and the value of money are certainly much lower. In fact, food prices in Carnarvon are lower than at Geraldton, and that is because of the excellent road and transport service which is available. However, the people are going to lose that advantage.

In a recent statement to the Press, the Minister for Transport said that the cost of haulage to the north could be expected to decrease. I cannot see how he works that out when he himself is adding 30s. a ton to the cost. It is very misleading. It is all very well for the Minister to make such statements to the Press, perhaps with a view to misleading the public, but there is not the slightest doubt that with another 30s. added to the haulage costs, it will be passed on to the consumers through the commodities which they purchase. It does not work out, as the Minister for Transport says, that the sealed roads and better roads will reduce costs. The costs to Carnarvon have been rising steadily ever since the sealed road has been constructed. Hauliers' costs have risen because of dearer vehicles; higher labour costs; and higher cost of petroleum products.

So we cannot agree with the Minister for Transport when he makes statements to that effect. He should really have a

good look at the situation and tell the people why he is going to charge another 30s. a ton if the cost is to be decreased. The increase to Port Hedland will be 60s. and to Wyndham it will be 120s. That is about the ratio.

Apart from heaping the charges on those who live in distant parts of the State by this increase, primary producers are also going to get it in the neck. Some of those who can least afford it, in the shape of the agricultural community at Carnarvon, must send their goods by road to market because they are highly perishable. Of course, those producers will be subject to increased freight rates. Whether they will be able to survive the increases I do not know, but they must pay them. They have to depend upon the market price for their products to get a return. Whether it will be profitable enough if the Government continues to raise these charges and heap them on primary producers I do not know. It is very unlikely that they will survive.

The same could apply to small mining concerns operating in the north. The large companies could not care two hoots about the tax. A few more pence would mean very little to the big organisations operating with iron ore; those concerns will not worry so much about costs until they go into production. Then it will be a bit different.

As another illustration of the effect on the north, I would like to read to the House the costs which this tax will throw upon cattle producers in the Kimberleys. Taking as an example a road train operating to the Broome meatworks, the costs are as follows:—

A road train, consisting of a prime mover and two trailers weighs empty approximately 30 tons. Each train is capable of lifting approximately 70 head of cattle. Allowing 1,000 lbs. weight per head per beast, a total load capacity would be 31 tons.

The new tax raised on the tare of the vehicle plus 40 per cent. of loading capacity, means that 43 tons becomes taxable over the empty and return loaded journey. 43 tons at one-third pence per mile equals 1s. 2d. per mile per train, or £5 16s. 8d. per 100 miles per train.

Fitzroy Crossing to Broome, a distance of 250 miles, equals a 500-mile journey taxable at £29 3s. 4d.

The new tax will increase the cost of that trip by £29 3s. 4d. To continue—

The distance from Halls Creek to Broome is 450 miles and a return journey of 900 miles would be taxable at £52 10s. Allowing that freight rates will remain at the 1965 level, the added cost of landing cattle at the Broome meatworks from the above points will be:—

Fitzroy Crossing £227 15s. 10d. per train, tax added £256 19s. 2d. Increase of 8s. 3-4/7d. per head.

Halls Creek £409 1s. per train, tax added £461 11s. Increase 15s. per head.

Overall, taking this year's figures, approximately 62,000 beasts were transported by road train into ports from the Kimberleys. This new tax will mean that approximately £9,552 will be added to the cost of the cattle industry. Of the 62,000 head of cattle transported by road, 10,000 went overseas and 4,000 came to Robb Jetty.

This is not a good time to add taxes. Things are not in good shape. I want to point that out to the Government so that it will know what it is doing. I think the Government gets a lot of money out of the north and it wants to take every penny that is in the north.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Are the figures you quoted applicable before or after the concession?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: After the concession; what concession?

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: If you do not know what concession, I know the answer to the question.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I know what the Minister would say if I asked him a question.

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver): I think the honourable member had better address the Chair.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I suppose the Minister referred to the refund of half the license. I said that this was an ingenious Bill, and believe me, it is. I shall show that later on. The concession, as I understand it, is something like £170,000 to catch half-a-million pounds. In other words, a sprat to catch a mackerel.

I have explained just what would happen to the industry in Carnarvon, Port Hedland, and the Kimberleys. I am not *au fait* with all the costs this side of the North Province. Like all other members, I received a circular from the Farmers' Union of W.A., and with your permission, Mr. President, I would like to read it in case some of the members omitted to do so. The letter was addressed to each member of Parliament, and is as follows:—

Dear Sir,

Road Maintenance (Contribution)
Act, 1965.

Our General Executive is most concerned at the Government's move to bring in legislation under the above heading because of the effect it will have on Primary Producers costs right throughout the State.

A specially appointed committee has investigated all aspects of the problem from our point of view. Representatives of this committee have already waited on the Hon. Minister for Transport. We requested that Government legislation follow some of the principles incorporated in the Victorian

legislation. We asked for exemption from the Act for all primary products. In addition we asked that the exemption also apply to the cartage of grain and fertilisers.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Who is that letter from?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: It is from the secretary of the Farmers Union of W.A. To continue—

The Government has so far not agreed and because of the importance of this matter we are now advising Parliamentary representatives in all rural electorates and asking for their support to our request for this exemption to be provided for.

We ask that you will assist us to have these exemptions provided for in the legislation.

Your comments and opinions will be very much appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

T. E. SULLIVAN,

General Secretary.

The letter was dated the 29th October, 1965. I must correct myself. I said all members had received a copy of that communication, but I notice it says it has been distributed only to rural members. I also found on my desk a further contribution from the Farmers' Union in the form of a Press statement. I do not know whether it really is a Press statement, because as yet I have not read it in the paper.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: It was in.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: However, with your permission, Sir, I shall read it out. It is headed, "Farmers' Union Press Statement on Road Tax Contribution," and it reads as follows:—

"That farmers are becoming increasingly alarmed by the all round rise in their costs is emphasised by the number of complaints being received from members at Head Office," said Farmers' Union Acting General President, Mr. L. R. Forrester.

"Recent rises in fuel tax, freight, motor vehicle insurance, traffic licenses, drivers' licences and the limiting of concession licenses under the Traffic Act are now being added to by the proposed road tax which is at present before Parliament. These rises apply only to primary producers' transport costs. He is confronted with additional rising costs in all aspects of primary production.

The Hon. J. Dolan: They have not missed much, have they?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: It continues—

"If this Act is passed it will impose road tax of ½d. per ton on all vehicles with a carrying capacity in excess of 8 tons, whether travelling empty or laden.

"This will mean heavy increases in freight, especially for livestock, to those members of the farming community who can least afford it, i.e., the ones who are farthest from their markets and who in most cases are in the process of developing new land."

Mr. Forrester said—"the Government should seriously consider every possible easing of the cost burden of the primary producing section of industry which make a valuable contribution to the earnings of foreign exchange, so vital to the State as a whole."

The Union has placed its views before the Minister for Transport and requested that provision be made in the legislation to exempt the cartage of certain primary produce as well as the cartage of grain and fertiliser.

We believe that a healthy agricultural industry is the greatest asset that this State can have and evidence has been provided by different sections of our industry of an efficiency and productive ability which yet has to be matched by any other section of the community. A noteworthy example was in the extension of the Wheat Stabilisation Act when the cost of production was found to have decreased by 1/5d. per bushel although costs had consistently risen.

I do not know whether that is one-fifth of a penny, or 1s. 5d. The statement continues—

In the Vernon Report to the Commonwealth Government, a projection of agricultural production to 1975 indicated an increase of 50 per cent. in production with a decrease of 12 per cent. in the work force employed. Nevertheless such efficiency needs continually expanding use of money, and restricted returns from any cause could see a lessening of efficiency in the industry and an overall loss to the State and the Commonwealth.

"The importance which the Union attaches to this matter is indicated by the fact that its views have now been sent to all State Parliamentary representatives in rural electorates and they have been asked to support alterations to the proposed legislation," said Mr. Forrester.

Those are the views of the Farmers' Union which, I understand, is the official organ of the bulk of the primary producers of Western Australia, and it should know what it is talking about. I understand the Farmers' Union is still having further conferences with the Minister, or with some Ministers in connection with the matter, and perhaps they will find ways and means of doing something about it.

In any case, before receiving these statements I have read, I had in mind embodying in the Bill such requirements as the Farmers' Union has asked for, and to that end I had certain amendments placed on the notice paper. I hope they will not be treated lightly, because members representing primary producers are certainly large in number in this Chamber. They should know the position, and I hope they will give the amendments very close consideration. Perhaps in the lower half of the State, particularly where wheat is grown, this impost will not hit the wheat farmer very hard, and probably those who do have to use big transport will be able to have the costs passed on through their costs of production. If that is the case it is a reason why there does not seem to have been a hue and cry from the wheatgrowers about this proposition. The Bill has been before Parliament for some time and I have read nothing in the Press to indicate that the wheat farmers are complaining about it.

However, surely they should realise the conditions under which people in the farming areas of the State have to live; they should have some sympathy for the costs involved in living in those areas and realise what a heavy burden this further impost will place on those people. As a matter of fact, all members of Parliament should be taken to Wittenoom in December or January to give them an idea of the conditions under which the people there actually exist—

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: And work.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: —and the cost of commodities in that area. There is a terrific turnover of labour at Wittenoom. The employees there stay only as long as it takes them to get enough money to get out of the place.

The Hon. E. C. House: The Farmers' Union letter included a reference—

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: That is a fact. People employed there stay only for a short time and that is because of the conditions under which they have to live—that is, living conditions and climatic conditions. Wages paid in those areas are not sufficient compensation to reimburse people for the high living costs. These costs also have to be borne by those who live on the stations in the north and by people at places like Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing, Nullagine, Marble Bar, Mt. Tom Price, and so on.

In addition, many new towns will be established in the north in the near future and the people who will be living there will not enjoy the conditions under which they have to live; and they certainly will not enjoy having further costs, by way of extra transport charges, superimposed on those they now have to meet.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Do you know any section of the community that likes taxes?

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Yes; the Government.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Said by an ex-Treasurer!

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That is so; the most lenient of all time.

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver): Order!

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Referring again to a statement recently made by the Minister for Transport in the Press, I do not know who he was trying to mislead, or what he was trying to get around, because he said that this tax would be imposed only on goods transported from a port to the hinterland. He referred to Port Hedland and said that goods would go by ship to Port Hedland and would be transported from Port Hedland to Marble Bar, a distance of 114 miles, and to Nullagine, nearly 200 miles, by road, and the people there would have to pay these increased costs only on the haulage from Port Hedland to those places.

Heavens above; does he expect this extra charge to be levied on the ship transport as well! What is the point of that statement? What is he trying to say? Everybody knows that this tax will not be levied on the sea transport, but we do not want it to be imposed on the road transport either. Perhaps my amendments could be pulled about a bit to fit in with the legislation.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: What is the estimated revenue involved in your amendments?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I have no idea what affect my amendments will have on the revenue. However, when the Minister replies I hope he will endeavour to tell us just what affect they will have; but I doubt whether the information is available.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You put amendments on the notice paper, and yet you want me to find out what they will cost.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Another honourable member wanted to know that; all I am concerned about is the welfare of the people whom I am trying to protect.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That is a really responsible amendment!

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I am not worrying about the Minister and his department having to find out these things. As I said earlier today, laxity, a don't-care attitude, and wantonness is the style of the department; and service is the last thing one can expect from it.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I am sorry to say that is nonsense.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Is it a dreadful thing to expect the Minister to find out anything? After all, why does a Minister take his various oaths? What is he responsible for?

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You should know; you took them.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I did take them and I carried them out.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: And you think nobody else is doing the same?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I am not thinking anything of the kind.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You are not thinking.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The Minister does not know what I am thinking, but there is one thing about which I am sure: I did endeavour to find out the tonnage of goods going by road into and out of the area beyond the 26th parallel. I also endeavoured to find out from the Transport Department the number of vehicles concerned, but the information was not available. It was not that the department did not want to make the information available, but it could not get it for me. It does not have that information.

Also, it must not be forgotten that every load which goes to the north is expected to have the permission of the Transport Department and, of course, for that permission the transporter pays a fee based on the tonnage carried. Therefore, apart from the impost which the people in the north already have to bear in the way of a cartage fee, this Bill will impose a further burden on them by way of a tax. For those reasons I oppose the measure.

THE HON. G. E. D. BRAND (Lower North) [5.58 p.m.]: In rising to support the Bill, I am both happy and unhappy—happy at the thought that we can extract an amount of approximately £3,500,000 from the Commonwealth Government, in the form of grants for roads; and unhappy at the thought, as Mr. Strickland has said, that someone has to pay for it and therefore the transporter is to be loaded with further costs. In most cases, however, this charge will be passed on to the consumers; but, in cases where cartage contracts are competed for, I am afraid the cartage contractor will have to absorb the charges himself.

If transporters would stick to a regulation charge for work performed, all would be well; but, unfortunately, when newcomers start in this game they usually commence by cutting prices. This means, of course, that the contractor who is quoting for a job to cart produce to the north has to absorb the charges himself.

However, it will be some recompense to operators to know that this extra money which we are to get from the Commonwealth will be available for improvements

to the roads generally. I am thinking of roads and highways to the north of Geraldton and Carnarvon, and to Onslow and beyond. I have been as far north as Exmouth Gulf and the Cape, and I can assure members that I look forward to the day when money will be used to make all roads weatherproof and also kangaroo-proof.

It is a well-known saying in the transport world that one's expenses really start when one gets off the bitumen. I heartily agree with that statement, and therefore I believe that any hard feelings arising from this tax will be tempered by the knowledge that the black strip will be laid more quickly than was expected and that it will have been worth while after all.

When I was last in the lower north, the bitumen was being sprayed on the road to the cape and the upper north. The intended end of the sealing was the Manilya turnoff, but I hope it will be continued as soon as possible right up to the areas which will appreciate it most, having been without it for so long.

Of course the type of earth and soil in this district generally does not lend itself to road-laying. In Kalgoorlie we have a good type of gravel, and we have road metal where it might be required.

In the area I am talking about, however, the country is a mixture of clay and sand, and although it grades well it is susceptible to erosion from flowing water. Apart from that, this type of soil does not provide a good foundation for wet weather travelling by heavily laden vehicles. It is well known that on the road from Alice Springs to Darwin heavily laden trucks will bog down after the wet weather. In the northern area, the nearest material that is suitable for laying roads is about 40 miles away. I do not know how far it is necessary to travel before road metal can be secured, but I believe that it costs £5 a yard plus cartage.

People who have never been off the sealed road are usually amazed at the wear and tear caused to big vehicles while travelling on rough roads. Springs, tyres, shackles and bolts, bodies, lights, etc., all suffer from the bumping and buffeting received while moving on tyres with a pressure of 100 lb. to the square inch in them. The last time I was in Carnarvon I watched a man replace nine tyres costing about £60 each, and this only after a few trips. They could not be used again on those roads. I am sure that man will be glad to pay a little extra when the time comes so that he might have bitumen roads to run on.

I realise that the other States, particularly New South Wales and Victoria, are somewhat jealous of the progress that has been made in this State and of the amount of loan funds that have been made available to us. We are very thankful to the Loan Council for the money it gives us, in its wisdom. We all know that we are

growing up very quickly in this State, particularly in the north; and this area needs constant nurturing with the right sort of fertiliser—and by that I mean money.

I would like to place on record our appreciation for the money we do receive from the Loan Council, and it can be assured that we can spend all it would like to allocate to us.

The Minister has given us a resume of the Bill and the reasons for its various facets. One item which pleases me personally is the fact that only vehicles over eight-ton capacity will be affected.

The Hon. R. Thompson: What do yours go up to?

The Hon. G. E. D. BRAND: Mine go up to five tons with a 30-ton cubic capacity. That is the best I have. Most owners will be grateful, I think, to be relieved of 50 per cent. of the normal license fee. This will be a help and a tranquilliser.

As a goldfields transport operator I have recognised that we in that region have been fortunate so far as good sealed roads are concerned. One of the first things I noticed while touring within my electorate, both before and after the last election, was the vast distances to be traversed on either gravel, clay, or sand. These roads are beautiful after they have been graded, but unfortunately they do not last very long. After the rains they are very dangerous roads; they become boggy, sticky, and slippery. I look forward to the day when these roads will be in A1 condition.

It has been a constant source of wonder that transport operators from the east have not been called on to contribute to the maintenance of our highways. For some years now these huge vehicles have been arriving at Parkerton with 20 to 25-ton loads on their way to and from South Australia. It has been obvious to those of us who are regular users of the roads that they cause great damage. Once moisture penetrates the surface of the road, the constant pounding of some 10 to 20 vehicles on one soft spot causes a depression to form, and it gradually becomes deeper until it becomes a menace. These heavy vehicles cause a great deal of damage to the bitumen roads while they are on their way to Perth. I have had a look at this highway and I find it has become quite undulating. At one time it was nice and level, but where the water has seeped through, the undulations have become deeper and deeper. The department has a term for this sort of thing, though I cannot recall what it is at the moment. I do know, however, that the department is not very happy about it.

It is the regular pounding which the road gets that causes these depressions. They need constant supervision. I would point out that the Eastern States' drivers agree that the roads in Western Australia are by far the best in the Commonwealth, and that we can be proud of them. That being so these people should be glad to

provide some of the wherewithal to keep them in that condition. Some inconsiderate drivers from the east, and from other places, often make a reasonable road into an impassable quagmire by gouging their way through. Having followed behind one of these heavy transport vehicles in a car I am filled with dismay. Being civic-minded I become annoyed to think that these roads which have been looked after so well by the shire councils should receive this rough treatment.

I do not know what the Government proposes to do to check these vehicles coming from the Eastern States. Perhaps check points could be set up along the east-west road at Parkeston to pick up vehicles going through Kalgoorlie. A checking station could also be set up for the purpose of detecting weeds, etc., that might enter through Norseman. We have heard some complaints from people who say they will have to pay for empty running, but we have already heard Mr. Strickland on that aspect. I find the formula on which the tax is to be raised covers the matter reasonably well. One-third of a penny per ton mile is to be levied on the tare weight of the vehicle, plus 40 per cent. of the maximum carrying capacity of that vehicle. This seems to be a satisfactory answer to the problem.

The use of a log book will create the usual problems. In the Eastern States the truckies have their own system of not doing the right thing, but I do not think they will get away with anything here.

I feel that the genuine members of the transport fraternity will realise that this tax will enable the Government to secure matching money from the Commonwealth, thus enabling us to secure the type of sealed road that we require. We will then be able to proceed with our ambition to have all our roads sealed and in top condition.

The Minister is no doubt grateful to the transport authorities in the Eastern States for information on the different methods used to avoid payment. The disappearing company is one I had not thought of. It may be useful in the future.

I hope the transport people, generally, will realise that this is essential legislation to enable us to collect our matching money for the purpose of bringing our highways to the highest pitch of perfection possible. It will, at the same time, ensure that the transport operator has no holdups or excessive wear and tear to his vehicles. These are both huge problems. The question of adding extra expense to people here does not appear to be so bad. Up north, however, we are concentrating somewhat on decentralisation, and it seems unfortunate that somebody else must dip a little further into his pocket for this purpose. But those of us who

are genuine realise that if we pay something extra we will get our bitumen roads up north, and that will make us quite happy.

I do wonder how it is proposed to police the cartage of an ordinary truck and trailer, but I shall ask the Minister that question later. I support the Bill.

Sitting suspended from 6.10 to 8.10 p.m.

THE HON. J. HEITMAN (Upper West) (8.10 p.m.): I rise to support this Bill. I feel the whole measure hinges on the matching money grant instituted by the Commonwealth Government in 1958-59 when it allocated £30,000,000 to all States, Western Australia's share being two-thirds of the amount it received in the second allocation from 1963-64, which amounted to £45,000,000 amongst all States. Our share in this is some £530,000 per year.

To be able to get this matching grant, several things have to be done. Over the first five years there was an increase in license fees on the base year of 1958-59, and the increase in license fees, together with new licenses, was allowed as a matching grant. In those years, the Government had to spend quite a few pounds of its loan moneys in order to take up the amount that was Western Australia's share of the grant.

Since then the amount of matching money has risen by one-third to £530,000 per year, and it is impossible on the base year of 1963-64 to match this grant from the new license fees and the increases that have taken place over the last year or two. I think the same position has applied in every other State; and in Queensland a similar measure to this one was brought down and it provided for vehicles carrying more than four tons to pay one-third of a penny per ton mile. New South Wales followed; then Victoria; and, last year, South Australia, each State putting forward its own thoughts on the matter.

The States of Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria, based their charges on vehicles carrying over four tons. In South Australia the legislation is based on vehicles carrying over eight tons; and I understand that in this State, if this Bill is passed, all vehicles carrying in excess of eight tons will pay one-third of a penny per ton mile. In this State the position is slightly different from the others as there will be a 50 per cent. rebate on license fees. This concession will assist those concerned to pay the one-third of a penny per ton mile.

The executive of the Local Government Association did its best to have concession licenses abolished in order to raise another £700,000 per annum to spend on road maintenance throughout the country areas. However, in its wisdom the conference decided by 88 votes to 80 that it

did not want to abolish concession licenses, and agreed on that occasion to limit the concession to one vehicle of 30 cwt. or over.

This will bring in a great deal more finance to local authorities in country areas from the matching grants, but it will not be enough to obtain the money that is available. I feel sure that where money is free—with the exception that we have to match it—we should not on any occasion endeavour to try to leave it unmatched. I do not know of any local authority in Western Australia that has enough finance to keep its roads in good running repair.

Therefore I feel this measure will do a great deal to assist everyone throughout the country, and the Government itself, in the upkeep and repair of the roads that are used by heavy haulage. In addition, it will make all the interstate carters pay their just fees towards road maintenance. In the past they have been very fortunate; they could, because of section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution, come to this State and not have to pay license fees or any other fees, other than the tax on their diesel fuel or petrol, towards the upkeep of the roads. I understand that because of this measure at least 20 per cent. of the fees to be collected will come from the interstate hauliers.

We have heard a good deal about how this tax will affect the north-west and other parts of the State. The haulage of goods from Perth to Port Hedland by road amounted to something like 800 tons for the quarter ended the 31st October. The haulage from Geraldton and Meekatharra brought the total to 2,000 tons. Twelve thousand tons of freight was sent to Port Hedland from Fremantle. Those figures show that only one ton in six is carted by road to Port Hedland. But here again, all the money that is collected will be spent on the roads in the north; and, as everyone is aware, the roads in that part of the State badly need much more money spent on them than is available from the Commonwealth road aid grants.

The road aid grants to all States for the next five years will be something like £375,000,000, or near enough to £62,000,000 per annum. Of this amount, Western Australia will receive £11,000,000 or 17 per cent. Western Australia is very fortunate to receive, under the present formula, the amount it does, because of the population it has. But even with this amount of money—£11,000,000—that is to be spent throughout the State, it is still not sufficient to keep the roads in good repair.

We need only take the road from Perth to Geraldton. Since very heavy haulage has been using this road it has gone to rack and ruin. Some heavy hauliers tell me they would rather travel on a dirt road than on some sections of the road from Perth to Geraldton. It has gone to the pack only since heavy haulage has used it.

Therefore when we have trucks carting in competition with the railways, it is only fair they should contribute their portion to the upkeep of the roads they use; and the Bill will ensure just that.

License fees on cars and utilities will increase, with one exception—a 30-cwt. vehicle or over will receive a half concession—and will help the local authorities in the country districts in regard to matching money to keep their roads in repair.

I would like the Minister to have a look at this point; namely, that a number of local authorities through having to give a concession on heavy haulage vehicles—a concession up to 50 per cent.—should be recompensed for the finance they lose in regard to the Commonwealth aid road grants. That is only fair because, as Mr. Strickland pointed out earlier today, in Carnarvon alone an amount of £7,000 will be lost because of the concession to heavy haulage. In giving this amount of £7,000, the local authority will lose that much, or a portion of it, in matching money. The Minister should look into this matter. I hope he will recompense the local authorities for any loss of revenue in this regard.

I would like to mention one other point to the Minister. I have been a member of a local government for many years, and, because the local authorities receive only 15s. in the pound of the matching money that is allocated to this State, I have never really been happy. Because of the increase, they should receive a larger amount—somewhere in the vicinity of 18s. for every pound they raise during the past year. Now that we will have this road haulage tax, this matter could be looked into and another 3s. in every pound could be added to the local authorities' contributions.

It has been stated on many occasions by the Farmers' Union and others that the Victorian Government gave concessions to primary producers when it introduced its legislation. These concessions apply to vehicles carrying over a four-ton pay load. I have looked up the Act, and the only concessions given are in respect of fruit, dairy produce, and stock going to or returning from market; but as all trucks over four tons pay one-third of a penny per ton mile, they are probably in a position to do this. Also, they do not give the concession of 50 per cent. to those trucks that pay the one-third of a penny per ton mile.

In South Australia a concession is also given in regard to fruit, dairy produce, and stock going to agricultural shows. But there again a rebate of 50 per cent. of the licenses on the trucks that pay one-third of a penny per ton mile is not given.

I would say that the Western Australian Government has had a good look at this matter from every angle, and it has had the benefit of the experience of the Acts that have been in operation in the other

States for many years. If we weigh the whole lot up, we will find the Bill before us is a long way better than the others from every point of view. Everybody will pay a fair share towards the upkeep of the roads, and everybody will be more or less on the same footing.

I feel that the primary producer, by being allowed to carry eight tons, will not be as hard hit as many people think. Those who want to carry more than that will have to pay the one-third of a penny per ton mile; but if people want to do certain things they must be prepared to pay for them.

Taking it all in all, I think the Minister has brought down a reasonable Bill. No-one likes paying more taxes, but if the money is required for the matching money, we cannot throw the matching money down the drain by not bringing down the same Act or providing for the same sort of toll for road maintenance as applies in the other States. Therefore I support the Bill.

THE HON. C. R. ABBEY (West) [8.23 p.m.]: I support the Bill although, perhaps, as a country member, somewhat reluctantly. The situation as I see it is that Western Australia has no alternative but to participate in this taxing measure. If we are going to take advantage of the present system of matching money, then we have to find a means of raising our required contribution.

I am not particularly happy with the matching-money principle, but it is one that we, as a State, have to accept; and we do accept it because we are treated very well in the distribution of petrol tax under the Federal Aid Roads Agreement. But it does seem to me that it forces us into the position where, in order to obtain this pound for pound matching money, we have to levy taxes that would not be necessary if a straightout grant were made; and I feel that should be the true position. The Commonwealth could, and should, make a straightout grant rather than require a matching-money contribution.

I certainly support Mr. Heltman in his contention that it would be well if, instead of the Main Roads Department retaining 5s. in the pound of the matching money, it returned at least 18s.; and I suggest considerably more could be returned to the shires. Not very large administrative expenses have to be met by the Main Roads Department, and I think it would be reasonable if the Government, on this occasion, accepted the responsibility of administration and returned the whole of the pound. I am sure it would be much better accepted in the country areas if that were the case.

I have had drawn to my attention by people who are particularly interested in the situation as it affects the large farm trucks, that a new Bedford truck of seven-ton capacity—the largest table-top truck usually used by primary producers—could, with 12-ply tyres, which are standard

equipment, and with an average tare weight of four tons, and with the 10 per cent. tolerance that is now allowed, reach the stage where it might be considered to be over eight tons.

I am certain the Government does not intend that this should be the case, and I particularly ask the Minister to examine the situation and give the House an assurance on this point. It would be ironical, if through some small tolerance of measurement we had a situation where a nominal 7-ton truck was classed as an 8-ton vehicle and came within the intention of the Government in this regard. I support the measure.

THE HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [8.28 p.m.]: When the legislation was first mooted I had a few doubts as to what the result would be in relation to the people that we represent in the country. After getting further information on the legislation and studying it, and studying certain other information, I am not unhappy about the measure as it affects, particularly, primary producers. For years we have had big interstate hauliers coming into Western Australia with heavy loads and making a big impact on some of our highways, particularly during the wet winters we have had in the past few years. Probably most members have travelled over these highways that the interstate freighters use and have seen the damage they do during the winter months.

In the past three years we have had heavy winter rains, and many members must have noticed the damage that has been done to the Great Eastern Highway as a result of the heavy haulage. There will be, I assume, a small increase in the costs of a limited number of primary producers in the southern part of the State. I am basing that assumption on the fact that not a large number of farmers in the State crop, for instance, 2,000 acres or more each year.

The extra cost that will be entailed by this legislation will not be so very great in the ultimate when the half license fee concession is made to those primary producers who cart wheat and super.

It would, because of the provisions of the Commonwealth Constitution and the decisions made in Victoria in 1955 as a result of the challenges to that legislation, be extremely risky to attempt to exempt primary producers within this State who operate vehicles over eight tons. I do not think we can afford to have any challenge made through the courts in this State because of not complying with the rules that have to be followed more or less on the direction of the High Court when it gave its ruling in Victoria to ensure that this type of legislation would not be *ultra vires* the Commonwealth Constitution.

After all is said and done, I suppose a little extra in tax imposed on the larger primary producer—especially the producer

of wheat—will be more than compensated in the future by the amount of money he will save on the maintenance of his vehicles because of better roads. I do not suppose this effect will be felt in the immediate future, but ultimately it will help to reduce maintenance and running costs of vehicles.

Mr. Strickland quoted from a letter he had received from the Farmers' Union. The Farmers' Union, in asking members to have primary producers exempted under this legislation, did not submit any case in support of its arguments. This evening all members received a circular pamphlet from the Farmers' Union which set out the facts in relation to this legislation as it saw the legislation.

If my memory serves me correctly, Mr. Strickland quoted from this circular; and I repeat that the case submitted by the Farmers' Union on this Bill is extremely weak. The union has given members no information that could be considered relevant to this legislation and has not presented any case in support of the request that exemptions should be granted to primary producers. I say this, because the second paragraph of the circular reads as follows:—

Recent rises in fuel tax, freight, motor vehicle insurance, traffic licences, drivers' licences and the limiting of concession licences under the Traffic Act are now being added to by the proposed road tax which is at present before Parliament. These rises apply only to primary producers' transport costs.

It is a very poor statement when the union says that the major items mentioned, such as fuel tax, freight, motor vehicle insurance, traffic licences, and drivers' licences are paid by only the primary producer. Every person owning a vehicle has to pay fuel tax and other taxes associated with the running of that vehicle. Admittedly, freight is paid by people living in country areas, but motor vehicle insurance has to be paid by every vehicle owner, together with registration fees and drivers' licences, and even an increase in road tax. The number of concessional licenses which, in the past, have been granted to primary producers are to be limited under another measure, and this is a reasonable provision. It is a fact that some shire councils allow concessions on three or more license fees, whereas another shire council allows a concession on only one license.

I believe that if an organisation such as the Farmers' Union is desirous that primary producers shall be exempt from the provisions of this Bill it should submit a more substantial case than that set out in the present circular. It has not stated what effect this increase in tax will have on any one section of the primary producers. Apparently it does not have any data as to who will be affected, because it

is only those primary producers or truck hauliers who have a vehicle with a load-carrying capacity in excess of eight tons who will pay this tax.

As I said previously, the people in the farming community who will be affected by this tax are principally the larger wheat farmers such as those in the northern part of the Central Province who seed from 2,000 to 3,000 acres per annum, who operate large self-propelled headers, and who use big trucks to transport their wheat to the wheat bins and their super from the railway siding. They will be the ones who will be affected by this legislation.

The majority of farmers who own trucks with a carrying capacity of less than eight tons will not be affected by this tax and so it will not increase their costs of super carting or wheat carting. The concessional license will help considerably to reduce the amount of tax the large haulage contractors who carry super and wheat will have to pay under this Bill. The increase in their costs will naturally be passed on to a certain section of the farming community, but I do not think it will be a huge impost. As Mr. Heitman said, it is most important that the funds be raised under this Bill so that the maximum matching money can be obtained from the Commonwealth. In the long run we will find that many benefits will be gained from this legislation, because better roads will mean that vehicles will be kept in better condition and the maintenance costs and running costs will be lessened.

I think this is amply illustrated by the fact that over the years in areas where roads have been in a bad condition, complaints have been received from people who used those roads that their vehicles are falling to pieces as a result of travelling over them. They have pleaded with members of Parliament to endeavour to have the roads sealed, which would lead to a reduction in the maintenance costs of their vehicles. In fact, such complaints still come from the northern section of the Central Province, and the sooner more money is available to seal roads in that area the sooner will the cost of maintenance and repairs on large vehicles be reduced. This will mean a greater return to the owner of any vehicle—by having fewer repairs done to his truck—than if he were not paying this tax.

The State is entitled to receive some compensation from interstate hauliers who have used our roads for many years and who have paid nothing towards their maintenance. They will continue to use our roads in the future. Dozens of operators of heavy haulage trucks are seen every day using the Great Eastern Highway; and, furthermore, they travel at great speed over the roads. Therefore they should contribute something towards road maintenance.

I support the Bill with confidence, because I consider that any publicity given to this measure throughout country areas has been without any real foundation and has not told the true story of what is in the Bill. After reading the article issued by the Farmers' Union I am of the opinion that whoever wrote it never studied the Bill properly. Before people make such statements I would advise them to have a good look at the Bill and take into consideration what it seeks to do. If they did this they would have a better understanding of its provisions. I support the measure.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs.

BILLS (2): ASSEMBLY'S MESSAGES

Messages from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendments made by the Council to the following Bills:—

1. Education Act Amendment Bill (No. 2).
2. Workers' Compensation Act Amendment Bill.

FIREWORKS: SALE AND USE

Legislation to Control: Motion—Defeated

Debate resumed, from the 28th October, on the following motion by The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs:—

That as there is conclusive and ample evidence to prove that the unrestricted use of fireworks has caused serious damage to the eyes of children, and has been the cause of serious burnings to the body, and in addition has at times contributed a threat to property and crops, in the opinion of this House legislation should be introduced to control the sale and restrict the use of fireworks in Western Australia.

THE HON. C. E. GRIFFITHS (South-East Metropolitan) [8.43 p.m.]: When moving this motion, Mr. Stubbs suggested that he had submitted a case on the three following points:—

1. The sale of fireworks on Guy Fawkes day only.
2. The sale of fireworks on that day to adults only.
3. The sale of fireworks at any time to an organisation that controlled them—an organisation with adults in charge; and that there shall also be insurance cover, etc.

I repeat that Mr. Stubbs said he had put forward a case in support of those three recommendations. I believe, because of the many reasons put forward by the Minister in his speech on the motion that these suggestions would be definitely impracticable and could not be put into effect.

I wish to make it clear that I intend to support the Minister in his decision to oppose this motion. Nevertheless, something should certainly be done about the sale and use of fireworks generally. I have had some eight to 10 years' personal experience in the stocking and selling of fireworks; in fact, I still own a store in which, among other things, fireworks are sold. Therefore I think that my experience should at least serve to enlighten members on a few points relating to this subject.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: You might not be permitted to vote on this motion.

The Hon. C. E. GRIFFITHS: I only own the store. I do not own the goods. As was mentioned in this debate, fireworks are ordered by the reseller in January of the year in which they are to be used, and the stocks are delivered to him in September, some three months prior to Guy Fawkes Day. As soon as they are taken into stock the reseller does his best to dispose of them. He does that for many reasons, not the least of which is his desire to obtain a return of the capital invested in the purchase.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: What is the margin on fireworks?

The Hon. C. E. GRIFFITHS: Not very high. He also does that to meet competition. If his competitors were able to sell their stocks before he sold his, he would have no opportunity to sell them. Immediately a storekeeper receives his stock of fireworks he tries to sell them. I do not believe that the purchasers of fireworks in September have any intention of keeping the fireworks until the 5th November before letting them off. Everyone knows that is not the case.

Mr. Stubbs put forward some very good and practical reasons why restrictions should be placed on the sale of fireworks. One was that larrikins purchased fireworks for no other purpose than to cause a nuisance to others, by lighting them and throwing them at other people or out of their cars. If the sale of fireworks was restricted in some way then the general public would be protected from these nuisances.

Regarding the sale of fireworks, generally speaking the storekeepers would be overwhelmed with joy if we decided to ban fireworks. I can give good reasons for saying that. One of the most important reasons is that very stringent regulations govern the storing and the stocking of fireworks. Fireworks cannot merely be purchased and placed on the shelves; they must be stored in completely enclosed cases. These regulations prove to be a nuisance to the storekeeper, and he would be very pleased if he did not have to go to all that trouble.

Another reason is that the turnover of the store during the period when fireworks are sold is not increased, because the

stores which sell fireworks also carry numerous other goods. In my case the other goods were newspapers, comics, books, etc. Immediately the storekeeper receives his stock of fireworks he tries to sell them, but his weekly turnover remains exactly as it was, and instead of the comics being sold the fireworks are sold. The same amount of money is spent during these weeks.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Are the fireworks sold at a lower profit margin?

The Hon. C. E. GRIFFITHS: I would not say that. There is no comparison between the convenience and the ease of handling the other classes of goods, as compared with fireworks. The large stores which directly import fireworks would possibly be very aggrieved if sales of fireworks were banned, because they make a much larger profit and their business is increased greatly by these sales.

I am applying my remarks to the small suburban storekeeper who sells fireworks as well as other classes of goods. It is in these stores where the nuisance becomes evident, and where early purchases of fireworks are made. The most peculiar feature of the sale of fireworks is this: Although the storekeeper receives his stocks in September, and he can sell them as fast as they come in, on the 6th November the fireworks cannot be given away.

I have been in such a position. I have tried to get rid of the stocks after Guy Fawkes Day, and I found that when the 6th November arrived sales were not possible. This is brought about by the fancy of the children. On one day the children might all be playing with skipping ropes, but on the next day their interest is diverted to some other pastime. One boy might decide to bring along a top, and it takes on. Nobody knows why this occurs. The same applies to fireworks.

Mr. Stubbs has suggested that the sale of fireworks be restricted to one day. Perhaps there is some merit in restricting sales to one week or to a fortnight.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Perhaps Guy Fawkes Day could be a movable day, like the Queen's birthday.

The Hon. C. E. GRIFFITHS: We should bear in mind that the storekeeper orders his stock in January, and the fireworks are supplied in big cases, each containing a variety of fireworks. He takes whatever is in the box. By the time the legitimate purchaser decides to obtain fireworks to be let off by his children on the 5th November there is no selection left, and the storekeeper cannot replace his stock. The rowdy element, which purchases fireworks and which lets them off indiscriminately in the weeks preceding Guy Fawkes Day, has obtained the types which the children ordinarily purchase. By that

time the children are left with what remains. There is some merit in restricting the period in which fireworks may be sold, but I do not agree to a period of only one day.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Move an amendment for sales to be restricted to one week.

The Hon. C. E. GRIFFITHS: I shall not do that at this stage. I am supporting the remarks of the Minister, because the suggestions which have been put forward by Mr. Stubbs are impracticable. The Minister said the only practical way to achieve what is desired by Mr. Stubbs is to ban their sale completely. I could give serious consideration to supporting some move along those lines.

The Hon. J. J. Garrigan: When?

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You tell him to make his own speech.

The Hon. C. E. GRIFFITHS: I am not worried about the honourable member at all. When the Minister suggested that the only way was to ban the sale of fireworks completely, I might have misunderstood his remarks. He said it would be too late during this session of Parliament to introduce legislation to alter the existing practice. I cannot understand his remarks for this reason: If legislation is introduced next session it will still be too late, bearing in mind that the reseller places his order in January. Irrespective of whichever session the legislation was introduced it would have to be applied 12 months later. Although the reseller places his order in January, the wholesaler must put in his order sometime before that.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: You are talking at cross purposes. The Minister was talking about the legislative programme.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I was talking about the legislative programme in respect of Guy Fawkes Day which will fall on the day after tomorrow.

The Hon. C. E. GRIFFITHS: Quite obviously that would be too late. I must have misinterpreted what the Minister was putting forward. The other point put forward by Mr. Stubbs was that fireworks displays could be organised by clubs.

The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs: Such as the Apex Club.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Or the Lions Club.

The Hon. C. E. GRIFFITHS: Mr. Stubbs did not refer to the Lions Club. I am a member of Lions International, which last year conducted a fireworks display on Guy Fawkes Day with the sole idea of preventing the type of accident referred to by Mr. Stubbs. We had a most successful result.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: You experienced many traffic jams.

The Hon. C. E. GRIFFITHS: We did, but we did not see too many children burnt with crackers. On that occasion 35,000 people turned up at the Showgrounds.

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver): Order! Will the honourable member please address his remarks to the Chair?

The Hon. C. E. GRIFFITHS: There was an attendance of 35,000 people, and many hundreds of others had to be turned away. This gives a very clear indication that the public supports such fireworks displays, and in fact welcomes future displays. Lions International is keen to put on a similar display this year at Lathlain Park. Once again I shall be there helping the club.

Whether or not legislation is introduced to restrict the sale of fireworks, I feel sure that through the work of Lions International and similar organisations the sale of fireworks will eventually disappear from the stores, and we will achieve the result desired by Mr. Stubbs.

I believe sincerely that this type of public display is the answer to the problem raised by Mr. Stubbs when he moved the motion. On those grounds I oppose the motion, and hope that in future the accidents which are caused through the use of fireworks will diminish rapidly.

THE HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [9 p.m.]: I am somewhat in sympathy with Mr. Stubbs because, after all is said and done, the motion states that—

In the opinion of this House, legislation should be introduced to control the sale and restrict the use of fireworks in Western Australia.

If we look back to the origin of the use of fireworks in Australia—not taking into consideration other nations of the world which use them for different purposes, including celebrations—we know that it started with Guy Fawkes, a person who at the instigation of others, I believe, attempted to blow up Parliament House in London.

When I was a young chap I saw him depicted as a tall, sinister gentleman, with a long beard, quite wide whiskers, and a tall top, 10 gallon type of hat. If I remember correctly, he had a big firebrand in his hand ready to set alight the fuse to the gunpowder. To use fireworks to celebrate that gentleman is rather farcical, especially when we remember he suffered a rather horrible death for his attempts to use the oversized firecrackers. I believe he was hung, drawn, and quartered, which was the custom in England in those days for some offences.

In this modern day children do not get hung, drawn, and quartered for using firecrackers, but some of them do suffer very bad burns and, as Mr. Stubbs and Mr. Dolan illustrated, some lose their eyes.

One young chap this year was badly cut on the leg; and even adults have received quite severe, painful, and lasting burns from firecrackers.

I believe we can go a little further than does the Explosives and Dangerous Goods Act, because although the Minister did say it contains enough provisions to deal with fireworks, actually to a large degree that Act excludes fireworks as such except for one schedule which states what fireworks shall contain.

May be some regulations do provide a safeguard, but in my opinion not enough to restrict the use of fireworks. If there were something worth while these days in the celebration of Guy Fawkes Day I would not be speaking as I am now, but I do not think the injuries, pain, and suffering which some people incur in this way justify the continued use of fireworks by children.

I laud organisations like the Lions Club and others which put on fireworks displays under proper control. In this way there is no danger to anyone. I believe there is nothing wrong with the Government giving consideration to this type of control so that fireworks will be sold to recognised and approved organisations to conduct gala nights of fireworks.

Mr. Griffith told us that 35,000 people turned up at the fireworks display at Claremont, and I understand from people who attended that function with their children, they enjoyed it a lot more than they enjoyed the fireworks they bought for their children. At such celebrations at home there is usually a bonfire and it is a worry to the parents most of the time. It is much better for the parents to take their children along to a properly conducted and organised display where they can gain far more enjoyment. In most cases parents are only able to purchase the fireworks for themselves in small quantities. I believe that the properly conducted and organised display is the only sensible way.

I do not think there is anything wrong with this motion, and I do not think there is anything wrong with the Government having a look to see what can be done in this matter. Many pleas have been made by people in all walks of life in regard to the use of fireworks. A large section of the community believes some restriction should be placed on their use. Naturally if there is a restriction, there must be some control of their sale; and that is all the motion requests.

I do not think we should entirely ban the use of fireworks, because organisations can use them on certain occasions to create quite interesting and enjoyable displays which, if conducted in a proper manner with the necessary safety precautions taken, can be quite an event. This is the practice in other countries. I think I am correct in saying that

America celebrates the 4th July with quite a big fireworks display, mostly under proper supervision and control.

I do not believe we should continue this celebration, particularly as it was started as a celebration of Guy Fawkes Day or night, whatever it may be. In the days when it was started, there was very little in the way of amenities for enjoyment such as we have today, and have had for many years. There were no picture shows; and, of course, England does not have the beaches or many of the other amenities from which we in Australia obtain enjoyment.

The 5th November really means nothing to Australian people; and, therefore, for all these reasons I must support the motion, because I feel the approach of Mr. Stubbs is a genuine one and should receive the approbation of all those in Western Australia and, indeed, in Australia.

THE HON. J. M. THOMSON (South) [9.8 p.m.]: I will confine my brief remarks to the portion of the motion which reads—

In the opinion of this House, legislation should be introduced to control the sale and restrict the use of fireworks in Western Australia.

I personally see much merit in that proposal. We have heard suggestions from various speakers as to provisions that could be embodied in legislation when it is submitted at some future date—not this session, of course. I do not think that the restriction on the sale of fireworks should be confined to any particular day.

The speeches made both for and against this motion have been very interesting and informative, but it is high time that legislation was introduced to control, and restrict to a certain extent, the use of fireworks in Western Australia. Therefore I can go along with this motion. Members of this House will have ample opportunity to study any legislation that is submitted to make sure that it embodies what is required and desirable. Therefore, with those few remarks, I support the motion.

THE HON. E. C. HOUSE (South) [9.10 p.m.]: I would like to compliment Mr. Stubbs for introducing this motion. I will not be a squib and say too much about it.

I think the Minister stated that sufficient provision already exists to adequately control fireworks. I am afraid I have to disagree with him on that point. It is like everything else; it is all right for these laws to be passed and for the provisions to exist for control, but it is very difficult to police them.

We know the difficulties with which we are confronted in respect of even more serious matters than fireworks when we try to control them. Even when we have organised fireworks displays which are supervised and reasonably well controlled, accidents still occur, mainly, I think, because the displays have to be held at night.

While young children of any age group are able to buy crackers, they will continue to obtain great delight in throwing them where they will terrify some other child or cause some disturbance. They are thrown from cars and into groups of children.

These fireworks are a danger not only to human beings, but also to property, especially on the 5th November, when, right throughout the State, a fairly high fire danger exists. I think in both weekend papers last week warnings were issued on the use of fireworks and instructions were given on the treatment of burns. Also suggestions were given as to precautionary measures to be taken with regard to fire, and so on. The paper suggested that these fireworks were extremely dangerous.

I do not think the total ban of fireworks would be the answer entirely, because there is always someone who will keep the practice alive and will get hold of some from somewhere. An organised display was held at the Royal Show at an approximate cost of £300. However horses were terrified and injured, and this caused a great deal of concern to the owners, who had spent months preparing the horses. Nevertheless the show was allowed to continue for a short period to entertain the public.

Another article appeared in the Press on Monday warning of the terrors fireworks create to pets. By permitting the sale of fireworks we are allowing these animals to be terrified by people who are not old enough to understand what they are doing. It is not always only those who are not old enough to know what they are doing who cause personal injury. I myself have slight damage to an eye caused by a cracker which was thrown into a crowded room. It was thrown not by a small child, but by a person who ought to have known better. It exploded right on my eye. I would be quite pleased if fireworks were banned.

We tried organised displays locally, but they did not work. So we asked the storekeepers not to stock fireworks. They have not stocked them, and today the children do not worry about them. The fireworks are not in the shops, and there has been no trouble since.

I am not going to support this motion, for the simple reason that complete banning is not the answer. An Act of Parliament would probably not achieve very much; and I cannot see any point in restricting the sale of fireworks to one day.

THE HON. V. J. FERRY (South-West) [9.16 p.m.]: I cannot support the motion in this form at all. I want to express my opinion that the total banning of fireworks is not the answer to this problem. I understand that in a number of the States of the United States of America one cannot legally buy fireworks. That is the position in 27 of the States. However,

illegally, one can buy fireworks. That is the danger of banning all fireworks: it drives the selling of them under cover.

I believe that the situation in those States where fireworks are banned is that vans pull up alongside schools, or operators sell fireworks from cars at the kerbside. They sell fireworks of excessive power under the lap to children and then start up the motor and drive away and disappear. I feel that this is the situation which will develop through the total ban on fireworks, and I think it is most undesirable. I would prefer to have them in the open, under some form of control at least. The control could be voluntary by the storekeepers, or there could be some other method. It does appear that the banning of this type of article is not in the best interests of the public or the children of the community.

In some States of the United States of America, I believe that fireworks of a non-explosive type can be sold. They are more of a spectacle. Here again it is not the complete answer, because the situation is that the shopkeepers display the comparatively harmless types of fireworks, but under the counter they have the more powerful types. That again is an example of where banning is not the complete answer.

I do come down on the side of suggesting that there could be some voluntary policing of the distribution. I believe this trend is creeping into the trade, particularly in Western Australia. I have not studied the situation in the Eastern States in recent years, but I do feel there is public feeling towards some restriction of this type of pleasure, if I might term it that way. That is all I have to say and I cannot support the motion before the House.

THE HON. R. H. C. STUBBS (South-East) [9.19 p.m.]: I wish firstly to thank all the speakers on this motion. It certainly has engendered a lot of interest and a lot of worth-while debate. The Minister explained to me the delay and the reason for not hurrying the motion along and said nothing could be achieved because the purchases had been ordered from the manufacturers 12 months in advance. I agree that that is a fact.

The motion has now been on the notice paper since the 17th August, and I thank the Minister for being in a position to carry on with it tonight. I am as pleased as he is to get it off the notice paper. In his speech the Minister said—

I would remind the House that, not so long ago, I, as Minister for Mines, presented to this House a Bill for the revision of the Explosives and Dangerous Goods Act.

Further on he stated—

Therefore, it is only recently that the legislation was extensively overhauled. What more can be done to amend that Act, I do not know . . .

In my opening remarks I said that I was aware of the Explosives and Dangerous Goods Act. It was passed in 1961; and I also said that I had read the debates which took place on that Bill, which is now the Act. I could not find where fireworks were mentioned at all, so I do not think very serious consideration was given to the subject. Members must have been completely satisfied, because nothing was said on the matter.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Did you have a look at the regulations made under the Explosives and Dangerous Goods Act?

The Hon. R. H. C. STUBBS: Yes, I have them here. Further on the Minister said—

If fireworks are to be permitted to be sold it will not be practicable for retailers to handle them in the way proposed. Were this to be attempted it would assuredly create trouble, confusion, and overcrowding.

That is my idea. The idea is to make it difficult for people to obtain fireworks. By making it difficult we are naturally controlling and restricting the sale and use of them. The word "control" means restriction. My idea is to make it terribly difficult for people to obtain them so that they will not be interested.

In today's paper there is a letter from R. G. Linten, executive director, Australian Foundation for the Prevention of Blindness. I presume that is Doctor Linton. I have been in communication with him, and he also wants to see fireworks controlled. He is of the opinion that if controls were such that it was difficult for people to get fireworks there would not be so many accidents.

People can go to the Lions Club function and witness a fireworks display; and their attendance would be a means of channeling interest into that type of display. The Minister also suggested that there would be a problem when the 5th November fell on a Sunday. I do not think that is any argument. After all, those circumstances are not insurmountable. I think the Interpretation Act deals with such an occasion and, as far as I can gather, section 27 on page 210 deals with Sundays. It is to the effect that the following Monday can be taken into account. The point is that the problem could be easily overcome.

The Minister also interpreted my remarks as if the shop assistants would have to distinguish between irresponsible adults and vandals. Perhaps with your permission, Mr. President, I can quote what I said. It appears on page 313 of *Hansard* and is as follows:—

Of course I am not saying that everyone who uses firecrackers is irresponsible, but I am saying that a lot of irresponsible people do get hold of them and use them before bonfire night.

I want to correct that; responsible people should supervise their children when celebrating Guy Fawkes night.

When the Minister was replying he said, "I presume this refers to responsible people." I will again quote from page 313, as follows:—

... and that all exhibitions be given by responsible people. The Act does provide for the last-mentioned condition now, but I suggest that responsible people ...

Then I mentioned various organisations. They are the ones I meant as responsible people. We have an example of responsible people in the Lions International Club. I must apologise to Mr. Clive Griffiths for not mentioning it before, but I certainly made a note here. The Lions Club is conducting a fireworks display at Lathlain Park on Friday evening next. This community service club is an important association. Last year it raised money through its fireworks display and has purchased 100,000 booklets for distribution to every school child in Western Australia. The book gives details of various factors, and what to do when lost, etc. It also tells how to handle fireworks. It is a very good book and it deserves every commendation.

I want to say how I admire the action of the progressive football club which, with the concurrence of the Perth City Council, has loaned its ground for the occasion at Lathlain Park. I am sure that everyone who is fortunate enough to be a member of that club will be very proud of the co-operation shown by the Perth Football Club.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: You are talking about the President's club.

The Hon. R. H. C. STUBBS: He will be all the more pleased. The Minister referred to the difficulty of purchasing fireworks retail. I looked through my speech and I could not see where I mentioned the word "retail." After all the Lions Club is using 2½ tons of fireworks, and it would not be reasonable to expect it to purchase its requirements retail.

Last week there was a display of fireworks at Kalgoorlie and it was advertised that fireworks to the value of £3,000 would be used. I do not think those responsible would buy that amount of fireworks retail.

The Minister told us of the tightening of regulations under the Explosives and Dangerous Goods Act and instanced that the amount of damage has been reduced and there has been less injury to children. Since I moved this motion I have received a lot of correspondence on the matter. I would like to read one of the letters, which is dated the 6th September, from the

Women's Service Guild of Western Australia, Inc. It is signed by the State President, D. Squires, and reads as follows:—

At our last Executive Meeting much appreciation was expressed of your statement in the House concerning the urgent need for restricted sale of fireworks.

This organisation has for several years been urging control along the following lines—preferably that the practice be discontinued altogether; otherwise that sale of fireworks be restricted to authorised organisations for public display (such as Lions International successful effort last year)—or at least that the general sale be restricted to November 5th. We do hope that you will find support in the House for your move.

This letter, dated the 12th October, is from the W.A. Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations and it reads as follows:—

At our last meeting this Federation's Committee of Management gave consideration to correspondence received from the Belmay Primary School Parents and Citizens' Association, who ask that we take steps to seek legislation to prohibit the sale of fireworks, particularly to youths and children.

In support of their plea for this action to be taken the Belmay Association gave the following as their main reasons:—

1. Danger. (Even when no deliberate intent to harm is involved, there is often mishap.)
2. Damage. (Again, even when not deliberate, ignorance of consequences often occurs. Films, especially T.V., depict sabotage and warfare, which children in games imitate so often.)
3. Nuisance. (For a long period prior to, and for some time after, 5th November, considerable nuisance to the community is caused.)
4. Economic Waste. (Often children spend every possible penny on fireworks for a long period.)

In my reply to the Belmay Association I outlined the Bill regarding firework sales recently introduced by yourself.

They must have got mixed up with the motion I moved. The letter continues—

At the same time we felt during our Committee discussions that you would be interested to learn that Federation Office has received a number of demands for restrictive action

on the sale of fireworks and that this matter has also been received by an annual conference of the Federation.

The following is a relevant resolution of our 1963 Conference:—

"That Conference seek a complete ban on the retail sale of fireworks."

This particular resolution was initiated by the Rockingham Parents & Citizens' Association whose President, at the time, Mr. N. J. Snow, had managed to influence Rockingham retailers not to stock fireworks.

Mr. Snow is the proprietor of businesses in the Rockingham district and his campaign of those days to eliminate the retail sale of fireworks attracted attention as far afield as Sydney.

Since 1963 our Committee has carried out independent enquiries into developments in the retail sale of fireworks, mainly in the metropolitan area. Also, as the 5th November approaches we have given prominence in our journal, "The W.A. Parent and Citizen," to dangers that go with handling fireworks in the usual domestic circumstances.

I expect you will have seen the feature in our October (1965) issue under the title—"Guy Fawkes Would Laugh."

Last year's October feature concerning the danger in fireworks was entitled—"November 5—How Safe Can it Be?"

My Committee has asked me to acquaint you with the particulars mentioned above in the hope that you may find them helpful in support of the steps you are taking at present to have the retail sale of fireworks subject to legislative control.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: The emphasis there is on retail trading.

The Hon. R. H. C. STUBBS: Yes, controlling the retail trade.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: Yes.

The Hon. R. H. C. STUBBS: I shall not read the articles which appeared in the journals of the parents and citizens' associations for October this year and last year, but there is a good deal of interesting material in those articles. However, a good deal has been said about the subject and I cannot see any point in reiterating it.

As has been said, the Rockingham traders have set an example that could be followed by other towns. I was glad to note that Mr. House said that a town in his district had stopped the sale of fireworks. That brings it into line with Rockingham and Merredin. Some of the shopkeepers

at Merredin refuse to handle fireworks and, to the best of my knowledge, only the chain stores sell them; and decisions in that regard are not made at Merredin. Anyone who wants the sale of fireworks controlled is in good company, because the Merredin branch of the Farmers' Union has intimated that it wants restrictions placed on their sale, as do the Country Women's Association, the Fire Brigade Board, members of the staff of the Princess Margaret Hospital, the St. John Ambulance Association, and the Society for the Prevention of Blindness.

In addition, leading eye specialists throughout Australia, the Women's Service Guild of Western Australia, and the W.A. Housewives' Association as well as the Parents and Citizens' Association of the Belmay Primary School and, indeed, all parents and citizens' associations, want the sale of fireworks banned. The eye specialists at the Princess Margaret Hospital dread firecrackers and believe they are a great risk to children and are a major cause of eye accidents. Eye specialists and members of the Australian Foundation for the Prevention of Blindness also want control over the sale of fireworks.

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver): Order! Will members please be silent while Mr. Stubbs is speaking, because it is very hard to hear him.

The Hon. R. H. C. STUBBS: Professor Ida Mann, an eminent eye specialist, and Dr. Graham Raad, another well-known eye specialist in Perth, have both given me permission to use their names and to mention that they are against the use of fireworks and the fact that fireworks can be purchased at present at any time and anywhere. Professor Ida Mann said that every eye injury was unnecessary and she sent me a little note which reads, "Good luck and best wishes to your effort." When Dr. Raad discussed the matter with me he said he could not agree more with what I said when moving the motion.

It is significant that a *Daily News* reporter recently mentioned the fact that in the pink pages in the telephone book, on page 83, there is an advertisement of a wholesale manufacturer of fireworks and immediately underneath it is a listing of first-aid supplies and the telephone number for the health services.

The Minister said that injuries have been fewer in number since the Explosives and Dangerous Goods Act came into force in 1961. In that year there were three eye injuries and one severe burning of the face, and one child died due to severe burns. Those figures relate only to the Princess Margaret Hospital and do not take into account cases at country hospitals or other metropolitan hospitals. In 1962, three children suffered burns of the body, and in 1963 there were five cases of burns of the face. In 1964 there were four eye injuries.

In addition there were injuries to adults and other children who were treated in country and other suburban hospitals.

Not long ago I got a telephone message from Dr. Linton's secretary to the effect that as a matter of interest in Victoria in 1964, between the 11th October and the 12th November, there were 17 eye injuries due to crackers—those cases were treated at the eye and ear hospital—while three cases were treated privately, making a total of 20. That indicates that even when people purchase fireworks before the 5th November accidents happen.

I should now like to read an extract from *The Evening Star* of Friday, the 25th June, 1965, under the dateline of Washington D.C. It is a very interesting article and I intend to read it to the House because although they do not celebrate Guy Fawkes Day in America they do celebrate Independence Day, and they light a lot of crackers. It is headed "Bangs are Definitely Out: Legal Fireworks go 'Fizzle'" by Staff Writer, Walter Gould, and reads as follows:—

If your fireworks go "fizzle" or "Woosh" your July 4th celebration will be legal, but if they go "bang" or throw sparks over 12 feet, you are breaking the law in Washington.

And don't even set off a sparkler in Montgomery and Prince George counties, where all types of fireworks are banned, as they are throughout the State of Maryland and in the city of Alexandria.

Arlington and Fairfax counties and the District itself are the only jurisdictions in the metropolitan area where the public is permitted to use fireworks, but only the non-explosive types. Since most people don't know which types of fireworks are legal in these jurisdictions, two Washington fire officials last night gave a briefing.

"Bangs" are Out.

"The best rule of thumb is to remember that anything that goes 'bang' or propels itself is illegal" said Battalion Fire Chief, Warren C. Kelly of the Fire Prevention Division.

Kelly's co-worker, Fire Inspector John P. Brahler, said that in general, only sparklers and fountain-type fireworks are legal for public use in Washington, Arlington and Fairfax.

"Usually, any fireworks that you buy at a reputable store or at special fireworks stands are legal" Kelly added.

Legal Requirements.

Licenses to sell fireworks already have been issued to more than 400 individual retail sale locations in Washington, the firemen said, with about 100 additional permits expected to be issued by July 4th. Each type of fireworks sold here has been carefully tested and approved by his division, Kelly said.

Some of the qualifications fireworks here must meet are:

All must be clearly labelled with instructions for use and the manufacturer's name.

They must stand on their own bases or have handles.

They must have fuses that can be lighted only at the top of the display.

It's against the law to use or sell any fireworks that explode, move, fall, go up or throw sparks over 12 feet after being lighted, officials said. This law applies to Arlington and Fairfax as well as to Washington.

So far this year, Kelly and his staff have tested about 350 different types of fireworks, approving all but seven items. Most of the fireworks are manufactured in nearby states, but for the first time, fireworks made in Hong Kong and other Far East cities are turning up for sale here.

As for the safest way to use approved fireworks, the fire department suggests that "common sense" be used by "responsible adults" who should follow simple directions printed on fireworks. Adults should not let their children set off any type of fireworks unsupervised, officials cautioned.

Kelly suggested that those who want to celebrate the 189th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence attend the city's annual fireworks display beginning at 9.15 a.m. on the Washington Monument grounds.

We could give similar advice and suggest that people attend the Lions Club display at Lathlain Park. All this information has arrived since I moved my motion on the 17th August but it is very interesting. I should now like to quote a cutting from the newspaper dated the 11th September, 1965, and it reads as follows:—

A 12-year-old schoolboy had an artery in his right leg severed yesterday when an exploding fire cracker sent a shower of flying glass into the air.

Robert Dalby, of Planet-st., Carlisle, was taken to a doctor's surgery, where he had three stitches put in his leg.

His father, Mr. Mervyn Dalby, said Robert had been playing with a group of boys.

One of them, an older boy, had put a penny bomb on the ground and covered it with broken glass. He told the others to run, but Robert was hit by the flying glass in the back of the leg.

That injury was caused by a penny bomb and in order to see what they were like I went down to a store and bought one. They are about two inches long, with an

outside diameter of half an inch, but they can project glass at such a speed that it will cut a boy's leg.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Where can you get them for a penny these days?

The Hon. J. Dolan: Penny bombs have always cost a penny.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You are behind the times; they are threepence now.

The Hon. R. H. C. STUBBS: On the 18th August there was an article in *The West Australian* saying that the Midland Town Council had agreed to ban the sale of fireworks. So it would appear that there are some sensible people in that area.

In the *Daily News* of the 25th August there is a heading "Early 'Guy Fawkes Night' Casualty". The boy concerned was lying in St. John of God Hospital, Subiaco, his eyes swathed in bandages because of crackers. The article goes on to say that the boy had been given one shilling pocket money, and instead of spending it on things on which he should have spent it he bought fireworks.

In *The West Australian* of the 14th September, 1965, under the heading "Danger in Play", we find that a gun taken from a 15-year-old boy at Rivervale could fire a ballbearing through a 44-gallon drum. It was operated by lighting a firecracker inserted in the barrel. When the firecracker exploded it projected a ballbearing from the steel barrel. That goes to show that even though a firecracker has not a great deal of diameter it generates tremendous power. There is a letter to *The West Australian* dated the 15th September, 1965, in which the writer says he heartily endorses complaints about nerve-racking crackers. He suggests that the parents of the larrikins who explode them or the shops that sell them should be prosecuted.

Another letter is written under the heading "Anger at Fire Crackers". The mother concerned is complaining about shops selling fireworks before the necessary time to six and seven-year old boys. There is another suggestion that there should be a limit on the sale of fireworks. A further letter states that birds are frightened by fireworks. People who have birds in their backyards find them distressed as a result of the sound made by firecrackers.

I would like to quote an article that appeared in *The Northern Times* of the 28th October, 1965. It reads—

The Carnarvon fire brigade was called out to Jackson's Cafe. The fire was caused by fire-crackers thrown in rubbish near the wash-house. The back of the building was burnt out before the fire was controlled, causing about £60-worth of damage.

Before I conclude I want to reiterate that since 1961—the Explosive and Dangerous Goods Act came into force in 1962; and this applies to the metropolitan

area—there have been 50 rubbish and grass fires, one property fire and one property fire in a severe form. In 1963 there were 25 rubbish and grass fires, two properties damaged by fire, and one property severely damaged by fire. In 1964 there were 22 rubbish and grass fires, two properties damaged by fire, one property severely damaged by fire, and one property totally destroyed by fire.

I will end my speech by again quoting my concluding remarks when introducing the motion. I said if an eye or a life is saved, or if this helps to prevent property from burning, we will have achieved something worth while. I hope the House will agree to the motion.

Question put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes—10	
Hon. N. B. Baxter	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. J. J. Garrigan	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. W. F. Willesee
Hon. H. C. Strickland	Hon. F. J. S. Wise
Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs	Hon. J. Dolan

(Teller)

Noes—15	
Hon. C. R. Abbey	Hon. L. A. Logan
Hon. G. E. D. Brand	Hon. G. C. MacKinnon
Hon. V. J. Ferry	Hon. N. McNeill
Hon. A. F. Griffith	Hon. S. T. J. Thompson
Hon. C. E. Griffiths	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. J. Heitman	Hon. F. D. Willmott
Hon. J. G. Hilslop	Hon. H. R. Robinson
Hon. E. C. House	

(Teller)

Ayes	Noes
Hon. F. R. H. Lavery	Hon. A. R. Jones
Hon. R. F. Hutchison	Hon. T. O. Perry

Majority against—5.

Question thus negatived.

Motion defeated.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Assembly's Message

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it continued to insist on its amendments to which the Council had disagreed.

Council's Request for Conference

THE HON. L. A. LOGAN (Upper West—Minister for Local Government) [9.55 p.m.]: I move—

That the Assembly be requested to grant a conference on the amendments insisted on by the Assembly, and that the managers for the Council be The Hon. F. J. S. Wise, The Hon. J. Heitman, and the mover.

Question put and passed and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

FISHERIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Second Reading

Debate resumed, from the 28th October, on the following motion by The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (Minister for Fisheries and Fauna):—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

THE HON. R. THOMPSON (South Metropolitan) [9.57 p.m.]: This will possibly be my shortest speech on fisheries legislation for some years, because I intend to support the Bill. I see no reason why I should make a lengthy speech when I propose to support the measure.

In the main the Bill deals with something on which I and other members of this chamber have held a firm view for a considerable time. I refer to the licensing of all processors. This, however, has also been requested by the Rock Lobster-Crayfish Association when it advised the department on the 14th August, 1963, that it also desired such legislation, but possibly on a more restrictive basis than is contained in the Bill, because the resolution contained in the letter to the Minister dated the 13th August, 1963, reads—

That in the opinion of this association the unrestricted establishment of processing plants results in over-capitalisation of this section of the industry without in any way contributing to the increase in the quantity of crayfish for export.

So it can be seen that the processors of crayfish also had this in mind, and although this was rejected by the previous Minister, and by the Fisheries Department for some time, we now have part of that resolution before us.

I sincerely trust that, in the interests of the industry generally, the Minister will deem it necessary next year, or the year after, to impose restrictions on licenses in certain areas. It would be grossly unfair if a person establishes himself in an area, builds up a business, and is then sniped at by big companies which try to capitalise on the work and money he has expended on proving grounds. Such a person is entitled to some form of protection. The license fees, which are to be paid to the Treasury in the first few years, will be used for the purposes of an aquarium, which should benefit the industry generally.

Another portion of the measure provides that the Minister for Fisheries and Fauna shall become a body corporate with perpetual succession. I do not think anyone could disagree with that, as it is long overdue. Provision is made whereby the Minister for Fisheries and Fauna will be able to order and pay in the name of the department for such necessary equipment as boats, and so on.

One of the few things on which I would like the Minister to give me an answer is in respect of the legislation whereby he will be able to ban the use of nylon or kurilon nets or nets of synthetic fibres. I think it would be unfair to put a blanket ban on such nets.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It is only to ban a net with hangings on it.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I am coming to that. I realise that a nylon net or a kurilon net with some sort of synthetic fibre on the lead line and cork line with seasonal use can last up to 20 years if it is looked after carefully, and I would suggest to the Minister that natural fibres—hemp and sisal—should be used after a period of 12 months or 18 months. The Minister could give a warning that any nets being rehung or replaced would have to have natural fibres on both the lead line and the cork line when being used for set net fishing, such as estuary fishing or even in the Swan River where such nets could be carried away by tides, and even be towed away by boats.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: And sharks.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Yes. I think it is a most necessary provision. However, I would disagree that it applies to deep-sea fishing, as we could have an industry here in the near future, particularly in regard to sardines, if some enterprising person likes to open the business. We know there are countless thousands of tons of sardines just outside Fremantle; and if these nets were all synthetic they would not catch or destroy many fish and it would be hardly likely that one of these nets would ever be lost.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: The main worry has been in the fairly intensified tuna areas. This has been a main international worry.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I am speaking of sardines; and even a fish of 1 in., 1½ ins., or 2 ins., could not mesh in it and could not cause any destruction. It is a provision that will not be accepted readily by fishermen, because nets cost many thousands of pounds to prepare. Although it will not be accepted readily, sufficient time should be given to the fishermen and they should be told that in regard to replacements, or nets due for major reconstruction, natural fibres should be replaced on the lead and cork line, except in regard to the other type of net I have mentioned.

In principle, I support the licensing of processors. I think we have reached a starting point. I would not say the Bill contains every provision needed to make it a watertight measure, but I do not intend to be critical of it, other than ask the Minister if he would give me an explanation of certain clauses in order to save debate in Committee. I refer to new section 35E (3). I hope this provision will not have applied to it answers such as I received to a question where processors would not make available to the department or the Minister the names of the persons or their agents and the premises they conduct. That is something about which the department should have knowledge at all times. I hope and trust the clause will cover that.

New section 35F reads—

Where the Director is satisfied that any breach of the conditions or restrictions to which a processor's license was granted or renewed . . .

I would like to know exactly what conditions or restrictions could be applied. I take it these conditions and restrictions will be provided for by regulation; or is it something in the Bill?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: By regulation, remembering this covers all fishing. It might be herring in the round.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I realise that. My last query concerns new section 35J. Reading paragraphs (a) and (b) I consider this clause could be ambiguous. I cannot read complete commonsense into it, but this may be due to my lack of understanding. I do not think the final two words of paragraph (b) should be included. Portion of paragraph (b) reads as follows:—

... the Minister shall fix the amount of any such fee as he thinks reasonable and the amount so fixed shall be final and conclusive.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: The amount so fixed shall be final.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Yes. That does not seem to make sense to me.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: There is no appeal. Remember, we put in an appeal to the court, but on this there will not be.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The only other query is in regard to new section 35O, which is at the end of the Bill, and in which there is a right to waive payments.

Apart from these queries, I support the Bill in principle and think it is a starting point; and it is probably a finishing point so far as fishing is concerned for this year. I think the department is now armed with workable legislation; and it will be up to the department now to prove it can adequately police and stop the rackets that have been rife over the years. With extra inspectors and extra legislation with steeply increased penalties, there should be sufficient deterrent; but I realise some departmental officers working on the isolated parts of our coast have a hard job to do. However, I will be looking forward to seeing a change for the better in the administration of this vital industry by the department. With those remarks, I support the Bill.

THE HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [10.10 p.m.]: In speaking to this measure I would first like to say that I give this Bill my full support. The story contained in the legislation introduced during this session looks as though it will eventually place the fishing industry of Western Australia on a sound basis.

This Bill mainly deals with the licensing of processors—that is, land based processing factories and freezer boats—and, in addition, it contains a few other amending clauses. I think this is one of the major amendments that has been incorporated in the Fisheries Act for some years, because it is a case of where there is no buyer there can be no seller. Because there has been a means for those who have caught undersized crayfish finding some place to dispose of them, this industry has reached the stage that has been evident over the past year or so.

I believe that in the future the industry will be more easily controlled on account of the legislation that has been introduced this year; and I believe this will go a long way towards stopping some of the practices such as have been mentioned in the newspapers recently concerning the sale of undersized crayfish overseas which could be, and certainly would be, to the detriment of our market, particularly in America and perhaps in other parts of the world.

As we move along to the next few years we may find it necessary to go further than these amendments propose, to put this industry on a sound footing. In spite of what has been said in the past I think that eventually there will have to be an authority set up in Western Australia to handle the marketing side of the industry. I do not wish to deprecate the department in any way, although in our report we did suggest that the control of fisheries be taken out of the hands of the department. However, I think an authority for controlled marketing is a must in the future as an authority could keep its finger on the pulse, not only of marketing crayfish overseas and within the State, but also in regard to the marketing of scale fish.

I am still of the opinion that our marketing arrangements in Western Australia are not as they should be and that there is big room for improvement to see that the consumers obtain good quality fish at reasonable prices which are payable prices to the fishermen.

I do not want to speak long on this Bill, but I would like to compliment the Minister on the job he did as soon as he took over control of this department, although he told us a lot of the foundation was laid before he took over.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: That is the truth.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I think it has been a case of a new broom sweeping clean. In this case the Minister has, for all purposes, become the new broom and he has certainly started to sweep pretty well. If he can sweep the dregs out of the crayfishing industry and clean it up he will have proved what a new broom can do. I support the measure.

THE HON. S. T. J. THOMPSON (Lower Central) [10.15 p.m.]: I feel I should take this opportunity to say a few words on the presentation of this Bill to the House. I particularly wish to speak to the portion regarding the licensing of processors. I was an inexperienced amateur in this game when I was on the Royal Commission which inquired into the crayfishing industry. It did appear to me that the industry was in danger of being overcapitalised by the processing works and by the licensing of those works. I feel that the Minister has taken a step which is going to greatly assist the control of the industry in the future.

I would add that approximately 12 months ago, when reading the remarks of the previous Minister regarding our report, I was rather perturbed to think we had wasted such a lot of effort in preparing the report. However, just 12 months hence, after a study of our report—although I was one of the members who voted against the Royal Commission—I would say that perhaps never was a Royal Commission more justified than that which inquired into the crayfishing industry. If it had anything to do with the Bill we have before us this year, it was well worth while.

I commend the Minister for the action he has taken in a genuine endeavour to clear up the trafficking which we are constantly hearing about. Even during the last week we had a report of undersized crayfish getting as far afield as America. I think that every action the Minister can take to justify the clearing up of the industry will be greatly appreciated by the genuine fishermen in the years to come.

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (Lower West—Minister for Fisheries and Fauna) [10.17 p.m.]: I thank honourable members for their acceptance of this measure. Perhaps I could make a few comments with regard to some of the queries raised and, as Mr. Ron Thompson suggested, save some discussion during Committee. Mr. Ron Thompson mentioned the Rock Lobster-Crayfishing Association, an estimable body which has done quite a good deal of work. He also mentioned a letter from that association in which it stated that the establishment of processing plants does not necessarily increase production.

Of course, this is so in fully-developed areas. One of the difficulties—that associated with licenses—is one of the reasons why I welcome this measure and the controls it gives over licensing; and it is one of the few aspects which might entail some additional legislation later on.

There are circumstances where a processing plant is an absolute essential for increased production. For instance, if one gets into a northern area where there is no settlement and which is rich in natural sea life, whatever the fish may be, then the establishment of a processing plant

with the necessary cool rooms and so forth at that locality would be a pivotal point for the development of that area.

A lot of areas are being examined, and there is much we hope to examine because of the acceptance of this measure. The £45,000 which we hope to get will, of course, be spent on research development, economic services, exploitation services, general extension services, and all that sort of things. It could well be, of course, that under these circumstances the establishment of a processing plant becomes the pivotal point for the development of an area.

In this connection, there might even be a necessity to develop some form of protection for a particular plant or location during a developmental period. This is a procedure which has come to be accepted. Over recent years this House has passed a number of agreements which have incorporated this sort of principle whereby a firm prepared to spend considerable sums of money has got the advantage of knowing that it will have sufficient time to make a return on its capital.

Mr. Ron Thompson mentioned the synthetic nets. This is a safeguarding section. We would naturally have our scientific officers examine this in consultation with the fishermen themselves and work out what is a reasonable proposition. It might be that under many circumstances it would only be advisable to, say, tie the leads with a natural fibre, so that the net would float to the surface. It could even be that the nets will be hung with natural fibre. Some of the nets are very expensive; a seine net can run up to £5,000. That is a lot of money, and these nets are very valuable.

Members were particularly kind to me and I am very grateful for this. But I sincerely hope that what I have done up to date is not in the capacity of a new broom, because new brooms tend to wear down a little too quickly. I reiterate what I have said before, that I happen to be the fortunate one of a very long line of Ministers for Fisheries. I am very determined that I am not going to be the last of the long line. In other words, I hope, with the co-operation of everybody concerned, that the fishing industry will last a long time. It is a very good fishing industry. It is not an industry which can become a good industry. Any industry which earns £6,000,000 a year is a darned good industry. It has a few foolish people in it who interfere with the smooth running, but everyone else plays his part.

The Honorary Royal Commission, if it did nothing else, at least focussed attention on the very real problems which were in existence, and I am grateful to the members of that commission. I think that members here must be aware that legislation alone cannot make an industry

good. An industry like the fishing industry—the crayfishing industry in particular, which extends over about 400 miles of coastline, and the general fishing industry, which I hope will extend over the whole 4,000 miles of our coastline—must always depend to a large extent on the common-sense of those engaged in it.

As I said this morning in an interview, when one of the fishermen said he thought 85 per cent. of the fellows were good chaps, and I now repeat, I think he underestimated the percentage, because the percentage of fools in this industry is not that high. As a matter of fact, I think it is no higher than in any other group.

I can remember that when I was in the army our colonel told us that we must expect some trouble because in any group there is always 10 per cent. of goats. This applies to any group except Parliament.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Do you think Parliament is 20 per cent.?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: No, it is not. I sincerely hope that members are wrong in one aspect when they say that we might need some amending legislation. I sincerely hope that with the penalties imposed by this Bill and with the goodwill which has been expressed by responsible people in this industry, we can proceed without the necessity for further legislation. I think it is obvious that we have a reasonable indication of co-operation even as far afield as Los Angeles; and at least this gives us the knowledge that we can check on people engaged in this industry. They cannot feel safe when that box of undersized tails is on the water and on its way, because it is still possible to find out where it came from.

One other matter I would like to mention is that Mr. Baxter referred to plate fish: fish for human consumption. He hoped that this industry would prosper and people could get fish at reasonable prices. I do not know whether I mentioned it the other night, but my hope at the present is that in one big leap, one of these days, we can go beyond this and get into the fishmeal industry. This industry has taken a non-fishing nation like Peru to the largest fish producing earner in the world in 10 years. So good is the processing in oil and fish meal, that plate fish are now caught as a luxury item only. There are large quantities of fish such as anchovies and sardines to work on. They can be processed into meal for stock food. If this process could be developed in Western Australia and was successful for fish flour, this would not only supply protein for the world's underprivileged people, but it would earn an enormous amount of money for this State.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: What about a method of processing blowfish?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I think just about anything can be processed. It all goes into meal. With your indulgence,

Sir, I will explain a few of the clauses in the Bill. Clause 3 (b) merely allows the department to prescribe certain forms and to make regulations requiring the production of books and papers by fish processors. This will enable statements of catches, purchases, etc., to be checked, and ensure that these are available on demand so that the necessary returns and assessments can be checked.

New section 35F was the one referred to by a member when he mentioned conditions or restrictions under which the processor's license was granted or renewed. This empowers the Minister, in certain circumstances, to suspend or cancel the license. That is the idea of the clause. To a certain extent, it is naturally desirable that one should have this power to cancel or suspend a license.

New section 35J deals with a person who could start in the industry half-way through a season. He might have a fire and his records could be damaged, or for various reasons he might not be able to supply records of a full year's work. This clause allows the Minister to make an assessment of the fee which the fisherman ought to pay.

It will be remembered by members who have been here for years, and who have had something to do with legislation like the Milk Act, that there are difficulties with regard to this type of license for some food lines. It is necessary to work out a basis on which one can make an estimate of what the current license should be. That is the starting point in order to work this out. Members will be aware that in legislation of this nature one endeavours to cover every loophole, and yet, at the same time, leave one or two deliberate loopholes in the event of a contingency or hardship arising. Proposed new section 35O comes within this category, because it provides that the Minister may waive payment in certain circumstances.

It could well be that, because of a particular local demand, a processor finds that whereas his article was being exported to the Eastern States or overseas, a change in price or public taste means that the article could be sold on the local market, and in order to compete with a local product it might be in the interests of the State to say to that processor, "You are no longer subject to the fee." This would be done; because it would be ludicrous for the processor to prepare a packet of some form of fillets, for example, which were already being marketed locally, only to find, because of the license fee imposed, he could not produce that article at a price which could compete with imported fillets and thereby be put out of business.

The Hon. R. Thompson: That is hardly likely.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I agree; but we are just making allowance for such an eventuality. Further, there is always a possibility of a processor suffering genuine hardship whereby it may be considered wise to do something for him.

I reiterate my thanks to members for their acceptance of the measure and for the good wishes they have expressed to me in carrying out the duties of this portfolio. I repeat, as my predecessor said when I succeeded him, no man could start in a complete vacuum to carry out a job such as this. One carries on along the lines that have already been developed.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (Minister for Fisheries and Fauna), and transmitted to the Assembly.

House adjourned at 10.35 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 3rd November, 1965

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

QUESTIONS (13): ON NOTICE

ROYAL PERTH HOSPITAL: BED RATE ASSESSMENT

Procedure

1. Mr. EVANS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health:
 - (1) Upon admission of a patient to Royal Perth Hospital, who is responsible for making a financial assessment of his case for the purpose of determining the bed rate for the particular patient?