

as it likes for housing is specious. It is one of the big weaknesses of Commonwealth-State finance in Australia that any State faced with the extraordinary demands of sudden development is automatically put in the position of robbing Peter to pay Paul.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Have you had a look for yourself at the comparable construction tables over the last 10 years?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: The construction tables are not very impressive if compared with the growth of population. These tables can be misleading, in my opinion, when considering the statistical growth of house building and the greater amounts of money that can be spent on this work.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That means you have had a look at them.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: The difficulty in this issue is that we tend too much towards the statistical rather than the factual side. If it is true that more and more applications are building up with the State Housing Commission—and this is quite true; it is not denied—and if it be true that the waiting time for people to get houses is becoming greater, and that the cost of land is continuing to rise, as it is, then we have a problem which is common and which must be faced.

I was very disappointed to find that in the Speech delivered last Thursday there was only the most meagre statement made on the question of land, under the heading of "Development." It was said—

The keen demand for Crown land has continued during the past year, when more than 4,000 applications were received for more than 1,000,000 acres released for selection.

This did not deal with the problem I have been talking about this afternoon, which relates to housing needs in the metropolitan area; housing needs for individuals throughout the State. The same thing was said with regard to Government action in connection with homes. We were given the building figure of the State Housing Commission, but beyond that very little information was supplied.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You will no doubt tell us the remedy before you sit down.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: Keeping to the subject matter before us, and the points I have mentioned—

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Do not tell me my interjection is not on the subject matter.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: The problems of the availability of land at a reasonable price and home purchase are closely related. It appears to me that in the Governor's Speech the Government has not indicated any positive action with reference to these problems.

Amendment to Motion

Whilst I support, in principle, the motion moved by Mr. Willmott, I feel an addendum to the motion has become necessary; and I therefore move—

That the following paragraph be added to the motion:—

However, it is our duty to inform Your Excellency that we, the members of the Legislative Council, are very much concerned that the Government has allowed a crisis in housing to develop and has made no serious endeavours to prevent the price of land from continuing to rise, with the result that many families both indigenous and migrant are obliged to pay extortionate rents and suffer much hardship and prospective home-builders are being frustrated.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. A. F. Griffith (Minister for Mines).

House adjourned at 5.43 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, the 1st August, 1967

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

CONDOLENCE

The Late Mr. G. M. Cornell, M.L.A.: Motion

MR. BRAND (Greenough—Premier) [4.32 p.m.]: I move—

That this House desires to place on its records its profound sense of the loss sustained in the passing of the late Mr. George Meredith Cornell, a member of this House, and that an expression of the sincere sympathy of members be conveyed to his widow and family by Mr. Speaker.

It is unnecessary for me to say that we were all very shocked at the untimely death of the late member for Mt. Marshall, Mr. George Cornell. Mr. Cornell had represented the electorate of Mt. Marshall for some 19 years in which time he established himself so firmly that, so far as I am aware, he was never opposed. Anyone who travelled through that electorate would quickly appreciate the fact that George Cornell was a highly respected and well-supported member of the Legislative Assembly. We know he attended to the duties of his electorate in a conscientious manner and was ever-ready to assist and give advice whenever it was requested.

The late honourable member was a Minister of the Crown for a relatively short time but during that period he proved to be an efficient Minister and applied himself to that heavy responsibility. He had a ready turn of wit and, indeed, when he so desired, and applied himself to the task, could make quite telling speeches. Therefore I am sure I express the feeling of everyone in this Chamber, and indeed of all Western Australians, when I say it was with the deepest regret that we learned of the accident which took him away so suddenly.

However, whatever impact his death might have had on the members of this House, the greatest loss has been sustained by his widow and family. I know we all feel very deeply for them because George took a close interest in his family affairs and it was with great pride that he referred to the achievements of his children. While in this regard he was no different from anyone else, I am sure we all feel deeply for both Mrs. Cornell and the boys in this sudden and irreparable loss.

MR. TONKIN (Melville—Leader of the Opposition) [4.35 p.m.]: It is a solemn privilege which I very much appreciate to be able to support the motion which the Premier has moved in connection with the death of the late lamented member for Mt. Marshall, Mr. George Cornell. I can agree with everything the Premier has said about the late Mr. Cornell for whom I had a great liking.

The Premier has referred to what was one of his outstanding traits—his scintillating wit—and I think it was Pope who said in his essay on criticism—

True wit is nature to advantage dress'd,

What oft was thought, but ne'er so well express'd.

I believe those words appropriately describe the late Mr. Cornell in his use of witticisms from time to time to emphasise the clear thoughts he had about matters which exercised his mind.

We would regard him as a most sincere member of Parliament who gave close attention to the requirements of his constituents and to his duty in the House. With his wife and family we mourn his loss and we on this side very greatly regret his death. He will leave a void in the House which will not be completely filled by any new member, because he had some characteristics which were unique and which we do not find generally in the average man. As time goes on the wheels will keep turning, of course, but it is inevitable that from time to time we will be reminded of the honourable member, who made so many contributions to the work of this Chamber and who, above all, was conscientious in what he did. I support the motion moved by the Premier.

MR. NALDER (Katanning—Minister for Agriculture) [4.38 p.m.]: I wish briefly to support the motion that has been moved by the Premier, and to express our deepest regret at the passing of the member for Mt. Marshall, Mr. George Cornell. Without a doubt he filled his position as the member for Mt. Marshall with a great deal of distinction. The late honourable member was elected to Parliament in 1947 and was returned unopposed in six elections. I think that in itself is a record which probably has not been equalled, and has certainly not been bettered, by any other member.

He was a very jovial person, and I—no doubt like other members—can recall many occasions when he changed the whole atmosphere of a situation by the remarks he made. The late honourable member was also an excellent secretary. He held the position of Secretary of the Parliamentary Country Party for a number of years. There was never an occasion on which he was unable to remember or recall necessary events, or when he was unable to deal with situations relating to correspondence without a great deal of ability. Some members will also recall that George Cornell was a member of the Parliamentary Sports Club, and I quite vividly remember a number of occasions when he filled the role of a medium-paced bowler in the cricket team. Quite a deal of amusement and enjoyment was always engendered in the game when George Cornell was a member of the team.

I would extend very sincerely our sympathy to Mrs. Cornell and to the boys, and we trust that this sympathy will help to heal the scars caused by his tragic and untimely death.

Question passed, members standing.

QUESTIONS (26): ON NOTICE

GOVERNMENT PRINTING

Value of Government and Private Work

1. **Mr. TONKIN** asked the Premier:

- (1) Of the total value of the work done by the Government Printing Works during the financial year 1966-67 what amount was done for—
 - (a) the Commonwealth Government;
 - (b) the W.A. Government;
 - (c) private customers?
- (2) What was the total cost of printing done for the Government by private firms?

Mr. BRAND replied:

- (1) (a) \$418,767.
- (b) \$1,648,178.
- (c) \$77,025.
- (2) Approximately \$198,000.

MEAT**Unlicensed Works: Supplies and Inspection**

2. Mr. TONKIN asked the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What is the estimated quantity of meat supplied, on the average, each week to the metropolitan area from unlicensed works and farm sources?
- (2) Is such meat killed with little or no supervision?
- (3) Is it subject to inspection by qualified inspectors at any point before sale to the public?

Mr. NALDER replied:

- (1) Veal—100 carcasses.
Beef—20 carcasses.
Mutton—20 carcasses.
Pork—10 carcasses.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Yes. By local authority inspectors at metropolitan markets before sale.

KING BAY PORT**Control by Hamersley Iron Pty. Ltd.**

3. Mr. TONKIN asked the Minister for Works:

- (1) Is it intended that the port of King Bay will continue indefinitely under the control of Hamersley Iron Pty. Ltd. as a private port?
- (2) If "No," when is it expected that the port will be placed under the jurisdiction of the Harbour and Light Department?
- (3) If "Yes," is such a policy a departure from what the Government originally intended?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) to (3) In accepting the detailed proposals submitted by Hamersley Iron Pty. Ltd., the State has reserved the right, subject to the provisions of the agreement, to make any proclamations under the Ports and Harbours Act, 1917. These include the right at any time to proclaim Dampier as a port under the Act. Because the State has reserved the right referred to, the time when the port may be proclaimed a port under the Ports and Harbours Act, 1917, will be dependent on the operations of the company and general development by others requiring major usage of the port.

CRAYFISHING**New Licenses**

4. Mr. TONKIN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Fisheries and Fauna:

- (1) How many crayfishing licenses other than replacement licences

have been issued additional to the number of licenses which were current at the 30th June, 1965?

(2) To whom have such licenses been issued?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) Two.
- (2) (a) One granted to E. B. Kelly, of Cottesloe, in September, 1966; pursuant to a promise made in April, 1963. At that time he surrendered his license on the understanding that it would be restored when his financial position improved.
- (b) One granted in October, 1966, to Henry Wellington, of Port Denison, an old fisherman in indifferent health who was given authority to use an 18-foot boat with only 30 craypots (24 less than would normally be permitted).

BUILDING BLOCKS**Rising Cost: Remedial Measures**

5. Mr. TONKIN asked the Premier:

- (1) Following the Government's examination in March, 1965, of the question of rising residential land prices "to get a clearer picture of the problem," what remedial measures appeared to him to be practicable?
- (2) Which of these were not included in the suggestions put forward by the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority in April, 1967?
- (3) What action does the Government propose to take to curb rising land prices?

Mr. BRAND replied:

- (1) The practicability of any necessary remedial measures will be considered when a report is received from the committee of officials that was appointed to investigate and make recommendations on the price of residential land.
- (2) and (3) Answered by (1).

RAILWAYS: CENTRAL CITY AREA**Tenders for Lowering**

6. Mr. TONKIN asked the Premier:

- (1) What was the cost to the State of the feasibility study and report by the De Leuw, Cather & Company for his inter-departmental committee on the proposed lowering of the railway, central city area?
- (2) If it had been decided to proceed with the proposal, what area of land would have become available for re-development?

- (3) Did he accept De Leuw, Cather & Company's opinion that "There is ample economic justification for the capital outlay involved"?
- (4) Upon what basis were proposals to undertake the work invited from interested firms?
- (5) Of the 11 firms selected to submit tenders, how many have withdrawn from competition?
- (6) What reasons were given in explanation in each case?
- (7) To what causes does the Government itself ascribe the withdrawals?
- (8) Has the Government in mind the granting of special privileges to outside capital as an added inducement to undertake the work?
- (9) If "Yes," is due consideration being given to local commercial interests to safeguard them against what would virtually be subsidised competition?

Mr. BRAND replied:

- (1) \$45,480.29.
- (2) Materially that which is now available to the developers currently tendering.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) The widest possible basis in order to allow complete flexibility in approach and formulation of proposals.
- (5) Two—
 - (a) Morrison Knudsen International Inc. (6th April, 1967);
 - (b) Lend Lease Developments Pty. Ltd. (5th July, 1967).
- (6) In the case of Morrison Knudsen International Inc. withdrawal was due to the heavy work schedule occurring in their engineering department within the next few months.

In the case of Lend Lease Developments Pty. Ltd. withdrawal was due to the belief that it was premature to submit any scheme along the lines set down in the accreditation letter of the 9th February to the company, because of the lack of firm detail surrounding the project.

- (7) Policy decisions in the accredited companies referred to.
- (8) As yet no policy has been decided upon.
- (9) Answered by (8).

RING ROAD SYSTEM: SOUTHERN LEG *Engagement of De Leuw Cather & Co.*

7. Mr. TONKIN asked the Minister for Works:

- (1) Over what length of time have traffic consultants De Leuw Cather & Company been engaged

in connection with the planning of the southern leg of the proposed ring road system?

- (2) What has been the cost to the State in fees to De Leuw Cather & Company for work performed in connection with the southern leg of the proposed system?
- (3) Why were the consultants not commissioned at the commencement of their consultations on the southern leg of the ring road system to endeavour to find an alternative to river reclamation?

River Reclamation

- (4) If construction of the Narrows interchange is continued in accordance with existing plans, will not construction of the southern leg of the proposed ring road system be inevitable with consequent reclamation of the river or considerable encroachment on Langley Park or the strip of park between the road and the river?
- (5) Will he cause construction to cease on that portion of the Narrows interchange which is intended to connect with the proposed southern leg of the ring road system, until De Leuw Cather & Company have completed their assignment of endeavouring to find an alternative to river reclamation?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) The international firm of highway consultants, De Leuw Cather & Company, were authorised in September, 1965, to carry out "Planning investigations covering development of the inner ring freeway and approaches within three miles of the inner ring freeway itself." This planning study is proceeding.
- (2) Little detailed work has been carried out to date on the southern leg as most effort has been directed to determining plans for the north-west segment and the radial freeway extending towards Scarborough. Fees for work on the several sections have not been separately costed.
- (3) The consultants' brief was that the "highway system outlined in the Metropolitan Region Scheme of 1963 was to form the basis for the study." This was the plan approved by Parliament in 1963 and from which major departures can only be made with the approval of Parliament. Suggestions for modification of the region scheme may emerge as a result of traffic assessments being made by the Main Roads Department and

its consultants. Should such changed proposals emerge they will have to be defined and submitted for parliamentary approval, if they constitute major departures.

- (4) No. The Government has decided that there should be no reclamation of the river eastward from the Narrows interchange as envisaged by the Leader of the Opposition when he was Minister for Works.

Construction of the Narrows interchange in accordance with existing plans can be considered independently of final plans for the southern leg.

If, however, Parliament were to agree to a change in the region scheme the southern leg of the proposed ring road system could be downgraded below freeway standard without reclamation of the river or serious encroachment on Langley Park. If such a solution were adopted there would be spare capacity in parts of the Narrows interchange.

- (5) No.

Tangent to Foreshore Road

8. Mr. TONKIN asked the Premier:

- (1) Upon what criteria did he form his opinion that it would probably be six months before firm plans for the next stage of the city foreshore road system would be ready?
- (2) How long would it take to have full consideration given by the Government to the proposal by a group of architects for a freeway tangent to the north of the city?
- (3) Will he have full consideration given to the proposal and make public details of the appraisal?
- (4) As he has indicated that the southern leg of the ring road system is necessary, will he give fully detailed reasons to support this contention?

Mr. BRAND replied:

- (1) It is expected that the consultants to the Main Roads Department will be submitting a planning report in the next few months on the ring road system and radial approach roads, after which it will be possible to develop plans for the next stage improvement of the foreshore road system.
- (2) Full consideration of the proposals demands a reappraisal of the central city and region plan proposals embodied in the Metropolitan Region Scheme. This overall planning reappraisal is the first step to any consideration of a

highway proposal which is only one facet of the plan. The Metropolitan Region Planning Authority has now initiated a reappraisal of the region scheme but this is not expected to be completed for about 18 months.

- (3) Yes.

- (4) This proposal is contained in the statutory plan of the Metropolitan Region Scheme which received the approval of Parliament in 1963.

IRON ORE

Deepdale Deposits: Timetable for Development

9. Mr. TONKIN asked the Minister for the North-West:

- (1) What are the details of the amended timetable to which B.H.P. is obligated to conform in substitution for the requirements implicit in the 1964 agreement and which the Government, taking power under clause 31, substantially varied?
- (2) As the company in its letter of the 5th January, 1966, acknowledged the feasibility of the Deepdale development, has the Government made a decision as to the limit of time the company is to be permitted to retain the leases to the exclusion of others who may be prepared to proceed with the establishment of a pelletising plant at Deepdale?
- (3) If "Yes", what is the date of the limit?
- (4) Has the company indicated any date when it would be prepared to proceed?
- (5) If "Yes", what is the date?

Mr. COURT replied:

- (1) Under the amended timetable for the B.H.P. Deepdale commitments to give effect to the changes announced on the 10th April, 1967, following B.H.P.'s agreement to join with and assist the Mount Newman project, the main operative dates are as follows:—

Submission of proposal for location of port, sites for and general design of wharf, railway terminal, etc.—31st December, 1978.

Commence construction of facilities required for the Deepdale project—31st December, 1981.
Complete construction of facilities required for the Deepdale project—31st December, 1986.

(There are some other changes in dates but these are consequential on the above.)

- (2) The company has no leases at Deepdale, but it may at the present time retain its temporary reserves under the terms of the agreement subject to conforming to the revised timetable. In due course a lease for the smaller area finally determined under the conditions of the agreement will issue to replace the temporary reserves.

(3) to (5) answered by (1).

RING ROAD SYSTEM

Recommendation for Reconsideration

10. Mr. TONKIN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Town Planning:

- (1) Did the Central Area Committee of the M.R.P.A. have before it in July a recommendation from the Town Planning Department that there should be a reconsideration of the inner ring road system?
- (2) If "Yes", will he state if any supporting reasons were given and what they were?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) A reappraisal of the inner ring road system was considered to be a necessary part of the current general review of the Metropolitan Region Scheme.

HOUSING

Teachers at Collie: Location

11. Mr. MAY asked the Premier:

Referring to my question, the 4th August, 1966, 'Building of Houses for School Teachers under the Government Employees' Housing Authority at Collie', has this authority built the three houses indicated in the reply; if so, can he advise me of their location?

Mr. BRAND replied:

No.

The Government Employees' Housing Authority was requested by the Education Department to build three houses at Collie in the 1966-67 programme. Having regard to the situation at Collie, where there were vacant houses, it was determined not to build, but where possible, to purchase from the State Housing Commission's existing stock in this town. The authority has subsequently purchased one house from the State Housing Commission and action has been taken to upgrade this house currently occupied by the Deputy Principal, Collie High School.

TOOTH DECAY

Use of Fluoride Paint for Prevention

12. Mr. TONKIN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is he aware that the U.S. Public Health Service announced on the 10th August, 1964, that it intended to conduct an experimental programme to determine if painting the teeth with fluoride will improve the cavity-preventing rate?
- (2) Is he aware that the U.S. Public Health Service provided the finance for the four year programme for the town of Jackson?
- (3) What is the view of the Health Education Council of W.A. on the efficacy of fluoride when painted on teeth?
- (4) Will he comment on the following news item from *Cultural News from Germany*, September, 1966, a semi-official monthly journal designed to inform the layman overseas of the latest developments in German art and science:

"Recent research at the Institute of Dental Medicine of Marburg University has shown that it is not necessary, in order to protect teeth against caries, to supply the whole body with fluoride as, in fact, fluoride works directly on the enamel of teeth."

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) and (2) No; but I am aware that the effects of tropical fluoride applications have been studied in the United States.
- (3) Answered by question No. 14 (3) and (4).
- (4) As explained on page 1696 of *Hansard*, No. 13, 1966, alternative methods of supplying supplementary fluoride are beneficial, "but there is no method, other than its ingestion through water supplies, which ensure that all children will receive this benefit irrespective of whether their individual parents are forgetful, neglectful, unaware of its advantage to health, or unable to meet the costs involved".

SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE

Safeguard before Subdivision of Land

13. Mr. TONKIN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Town Planning:

- (1) What were the recommendations of the special conference held under instructions from Cabinet

to discuss sewerage and drainage problems at Lynwood?

- (2) Which of the recommendations is it intended will be implemented?
- (3) Is it correct, as reported in *The West Australian*, the 27th April last, that the Town Planning Department had approved subdivision for another 74 homes in the area but the Canning Shire Council had told its health inspectors to see if septic tanks will function?
- (4) Whose responsibility is it and what action is taken to ensure that before approval is given for the subdivision of land for homes it will not be subject to serious flooding such as has been experienced in Lynwood and Attadale this year where conditions have been most deplorable?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

- (1) (a) All developers should be responsible for the provision of sewer reticulation within their own respective areas.
- (b) The initial developers within the area should be responsible for the acquisition of the 25 acres required for the treatment works to serve the whole of the reticulation area of which the initial developer's land forms part.
- (c) The initial developers should be responsible for the cost of construction of the treatment works adequate for the purpose of their own development, and the cost of any additional construction work required to enable other development to be served should be met by the other developers concerned.
- (d) As the initial developers would provide land for the treatment plant and would also have to carry out studies in respect of the whole reticulation area, they should be recouped proportionately and progressively from other developers who are able to take advantage of the facilities provided as a result of the initial developers outlay. The machinery for such recoupment, which it may be possible to arrange through conditions of subdivision imposed by the Town Planning Board on the advice of the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Board, should be examined by a committee set up for this purpose.
- (e) After the establishment of the sewerage system and its transfer to the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Board, operation and maintenance costs of such system should be the responsibility of that board.
- (f) The cost of disposal of effluent from the treatment plant, including the cost by purchase or lease of the disposal site should be borne by the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Board.
- (g) Pending the establishment of a reticulated sewerage system which should be established as soon as possible, the developers should confer with the Public Health Department, and the local authority in order to find ways of maintaining building operations without adversely affecting public health.

In making these recommendations, the committee was conscious that the Town Planning Board requirements with regard to lot size in the Canning Vale area have been relaxed and that the profitability of development in the area has, therefore, been increased. Nevertheless the committee suggests that in principle, it might be appropriate for the State to recoup developers for the capital costs of sewerage treatment works and their sites (excluding of course the sewerage reticulation system) and if this principle is accepted, the committee recommends that the proposition be referred for detailed examination to a special panel which should include appropriate representatives from the Treasury and the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Board.

- (2) All of them.
- (3) On the 9th March, 1967, the Town Planning Board, on the basis of the then known information, advised that, subject to conditions, it would be prepared to approve 99 lots at Lynwood. Subsequently, and in the light of later experience in the area, the Canning Shire Council considered some 74 of the proposed lots to be suspect for septic tank functioning and these were the subject of negotiations between the council and the developers.
- (4) It is the responsibility of the Town Planning Board, or the Minister for Town Planning on appeal, to determine applications for sub-

division of land. Before determining such applications the board consults and is advised by all relevant authorities and departments.

FLUORIDE TABLETS

Expectant Mothers: Efficacy

14. Mr. TONKIN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) What inquiries have been made by the Health Education Council of Western Australia into the reasons for the following announcement by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health, Education and Welfare—

The Food and Drug Administration finds that there is neither substantial evidence of effectiveness nor a general recognition by qualified experts that prenatal drug preparations containing fluorides are beneficial to tooth development in the foetus or in the prevention of dental caries in the offspring?

- (2) What explanation has been received from the United States?
- (3) Does the Health Education Council of W.A. agree with the opinion of the Food and Drug Administration which was published in the *Federal Register* October 20th, 1966, and is as stated above?
- (4) If "No", will he state the opinion of the Health Education Council in a form which will assist in having the question clarified by reference to the United States?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) and (2) The explanation sought is provided in another section of the document from which the Leader of the Opposition has quoted.
- (3) and (4) It is not a function of the Health Education Council (consisting as it does mainly of laymen and laywomen) to express an opinion on a professional question of this nature.

RENTAL HOMES

Carnarvon: Completions

15. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Housing:

How many State rental homes were built in Carnarvon during 1965 and 1966 respectively?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

1964-65—9.
1965-66—15.

Carnarvon: Outstanding Applications

16. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Housing:

What is the total number of applications held by the State Housing Commission for State rental homes at Carnarvon?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

Ninety-two.

HOUSING

Rent Rebates: Procedure for Determination

17. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Having regard to the implementation of the legislation introduced by the Government last session in respect of restrictions on the movement of the basic wage and the subsequent decision to make adjustments to wage levels, but not under the heading of basic wage, what procedure is now adopted in the formula for the calculations to determine rental rebates?
- (2) Is the present procedure to the detriment of affected persons?
- (3) If so, what steps are to be taken to rectify the position?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

- (1) As from the 1st July, 1967, the table used for the determination of rental rebates includes the special loading of 60c per week granted on the 29th June, 1967, as though it were a part of the basic wage.
- (2) No.
- (3) Answered by (2).

RENTAL AND PURCHASE HOMES

Waiting Period

18. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Housing:

Will he advise the waiting period between the date of lodging an application and the allocation of accommodation in the Perth metropolitan area as at the 1st August, 1965, the 1st August, 1966 and the 1st August, 1967 respectively for—

- (a) purchase houses;
- (b) 3 sleeping unit rental houses;
- (c) 2 sleeping unit rental houses?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

As at the 1st August, in each year, the periods between application and allocation were as follows:—

- (a) 1965—14 months.
- 1966—23 months.
- 1967—31 months.

- (b) 1965—20 months.
1966—24 months.
1967—33 months.
- (c) 1965—20 months.
1966—31 months.
1967—42 months.

HOUSING

Applications Outstanding

19. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Housing:

- (1) How many applications for housing are currently outstanding?
(2) Of these, what is the number in respect of single unit applicants?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

- (1) At the 30th June, 1967—

Purchase	....	....	5,750
Rental	....	....	7,505
Single Unit—			
Aged Women—1209;			
Working Women—			
82	....	....	1,291
Total	....	....	14,546

- (2) See answer to (1).

Note: 1,777 applications have been duplicated between rental and purchase by applicants lodging dual applications.

Emergent Accommodation: Waiting Period

20. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Housing:

- (1) How many applicants, approved for housing on grounds of emergency, are at present awaiting allocation of accommodation?
(2) What is the longest waiting period of any such applicants since approved as emergent cases?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Perth area—36.
Fremantle area—15.
Midland area—1.

- (2) In Perth there are two paraplegic applicants, one of whom has been waiting five months and the other two months for special type homes. The longest waiting period for the remainder is six weeks.

In Fremantle there is one case of eight months' standing. Although an offer has been made, this applicant is awaiting a suitably located home. The longest waiting period for the remainder is 13 weeks.

The Midland case has been waiting ten weeks.

Completions in 1966-67

21. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Housing:

- (1) What is the number of housing units completed by the State Housing Commission during the year ended the 30th June, 1967, under the headings:
- (a) War service homes;
 - (b) State Housing Act;
 - (c) Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement;
 - (d) McNess homes;
 - (e) Government Employees' Housing Act;
 - (f) special Acts or agreements for industrial concerns;
 - (g) other schemes?

Arrangement for Building by Charitable Organisations

- (2) What is the financial basis, ownership and other arrangement, of housing units built for charitable organisations as listed in the return submitted in answer to Parliamentary questions on the 9th August, 1966?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

- (1) (a) Supervised or inspected by State Housing Commission
- | | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| ..... | 143 |
| Other new homes financed | 159 |
| Total new homes | 302 |

In addition, financial assistance was given for the acquisition of 434 other homes.

- (b) State Housing Act 560
(c) Commonwealth - State Housing Agreement 698
(d) McNess Nil
(e) Government Employees' Housing Act 49
(f) Special Acts or agreements for industrial concerns 111
(g) Other schemes (including other Government departments) 215

- (2) The units are owned by various charitable organisations and are financed under the Commonwealth Aged Persons Homes Act, whereby the Commonwealth contributes \$2 for every \$1 raised by the organisation concerned. The State Housing Commission provides free architectural, contract, and supervision services. Progress payments are made direct to the contractor by the particular charitable organisation on authority of the State Housing Commission's architect.

Loan Funds: Availability and Expenditure

22. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Housing:

- (1) What amount of loan funds was made available for the year ended the 30th June, 1967, under the headings:
 - (a) War service homes;
 - (b) State Housing Act;
 - (c) Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement;
 - (d) McNess homes;
 - (e) other schemes?
- (2) What sum was actually expended that year under those headings?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

	\$
(1) (a) War service homes	4,500,057
(b) State Housing Act	4,200,000
(c) Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement	9,477,778
(d) McNess homes	Nil
(e) Other	4,078,026
Total	\$22,255,861

	\$
(2) (a) War service homes	4,500,057
(b) State Housing Act	4,853,568
(c) Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement	8,949,069
(d) McNess homes	Nil
(e) Other	4,523,511
Total	\$22,826,205

The sums shown under the heading of actual expenditure are subject to final accounting adjustments.

Southern Cross, Merredin, and Bruce Rock: Completions and Waiting Period

23. Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Housing:

- (1) What number of State Housing Commission homes have been completed and occupied in the years 1964, 1965, 1966 and to date in 1967 in the centres of—
 - (a) Southern Cross;
 - (b) Merredin;
 - (c) Bruce Rock?
- (2) What number allocated remain uncompleted in the above towns?
- (3) What allocations have been made for completion in 1968?
- (4) What is the estimated housing lag in each town at the present time?
- (5) Does this figure cover only applications already lodged with the State Housing Commission?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

- (1) State Housing Commission Homes and units completed and occupied.

Town	1963-64	1964-65	1965-66	1966-67
(a) Southern Cross	Nil	Nil	Nil	5
(b) Merredin	6	7	10	14
(c) Bruce Rock	Nil	1	Nil	1

- (2) Homes and units under construction, 30th June, 1967—

(a) Southern Cross	2	.....	.....
(b) Merredin	12	.....	.....
(c) Bruce Rock	14	.....	.....

In addition the following tenders had closed but contracts were not signed.

Merredin—10
Southern Cross—3

- (3) The tentative programme for 1967-68 is—
 - (a) Southern Cross—2
 - (b) Merredin—20
 - (c) Bruce Rock—2
- (4) Currently, the commission is dealing with applications lodged as follows:—
 - (a) Southern Cross—January, 1967
 - (b) Merredin—May, 1966
 - (c) Bruce Rock—April, 1967
- (5) Yes.

LAND

Wyndham: Granting of Title Deeds

24. Mr. RHATIGAN asked the Minister for Lands:

When will the title deeds be granted to all those living in "the Gully", Wyndham?

Mr. BOVELL replied:

Of the 20 lots provided in the "One Mile Gully" subdivision at Wyndham, one Crown grant has issued; 13 Crown grants have been drawn and will issue shortly; and there are six lots on which the full purchase money has not yet been paid by the applicants.

HOSPITALS

Wyndham: Tenders for Construction

25. Mr. RHATIGAN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

Have tenders been called for the new hospital at Wyndham; if "No," when will they be called?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

It is expected that certain pre-fabricated items in connection with this project will be the subject of tendering in November, 1967, and that the main part of the project will be advertised in January, 1968.

NATIVES

Kimberleys: Granting of Liquor Rights

26. Mr. RHATIGAN asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

When will the right to drink alcoholic liquor be granted to the natives in the Kimberleys?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

No consideration has yet been given to the further extension of drinking rights.

QUESTIONS (3): WITHOUT NOTICE

GOVERNMENT FUNDS

Treasury Cash Resources

1. Mr. TONKIN asked the Treasurer:

What was the total of cash resources at the Treasury, including short-term investments, at the 30th June, 1967?

Mr. BRAND replied:

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for notice of this question, the answer to which is \$30,725,567.

STATE'S PUBLIC DEBT

Increase, and Amount of New Loans

2. Mr. TONKIN asked the Treasurer:

- (1) What was the increase during the financial year ending the 30th June, 1967, in the State's public debt—
 - (a) Australian debt;
 - (b) Overseas debt?
- (2) What was the total amount of new loans raised during the last financial year?

Mr. BRAND replied:

- (1) \$43,086,936, being an increase in Australian debt of \$45,013,052, less a reduction in overseas debt of \$1,926,116.
- (2) \$51,730,820.

TIMBER

Royalty Payments

3. Mr. MITCHELL asked the Minister for Forests:

Would he give consideration to making the royalty payments to private landholders 40 per cent. of the amount received instead of the present 40 per cent. or 80 cents per load, whichever is the lesser?

Mr. BOVELL replied:

It is not proposed to amend existing royalty payments at present. However, when a review is being made the honourable member's request will be given consideration.

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE

Days and Hours

MR. BRAND (Greenough—Premier) [5.21 p.m.]: I move—

That the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 4.30 p.m., and on Thursdays at 2.15 p.m., and shall sit until 8.15 p.m. if necessary, and, if requisite, from 7.30 p.m. onwards.

Question put and passed.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Precedence on Tuesdays and Thursdays

MR. BRAND (Greenough—Premier) [5.22 p.m.]: I move—

That on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Government business shall take precedence of all motions and Orders of the Day.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION

Appointment

MR. BRAND (Greenough—Premier) [5.23 p.m.]: I move—

That for the present session—

- (1) The Library Committee shall consist of Mr. Speaker, Mr. Crommelin, and Mr. Norton.
- (2) The Standing Orders Committee shall consist of Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Guthrie, Mr. Bickerton, and Mr. Gayfer.
- (3) The House Committee shall consist of Mr. Speaker, Mr. May, Mr. Jamieson, Mr. Dunn, and Mr. Mitchell.
- (4) The Printing Committee shall consist of Mr. Speaker, Mr. I. W. Manning, and Mr. Fletcher.

Question put and passed.

DEPUTY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

Appointment

THE SPEAKER: I wish to announce that I have appointed the member for Claremont (Mr. Crommelin), the member for Victoria Park (Mr. Davies), and the member for Stirling (Mr. Mitchell) to be Deputy Chairmen of Committees during the present session.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

Meetings

THE SPEAKER: I would like to inform members of the House that the Standing Orders Committee has, since the House rose, met on 19 occasions, has sat for approximately 90 hours, and has almost finished the job it set out to do.

SUPPLY BILL

Standing Orders Suspension

MR. BRAND (Greenough—Premier)
[5.24 p.m.]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable resolutions from the Committees of Supply and of Ways and Means to be reported and adopted on the same day on which they shall have passed those Committees, and also the passing of a Supply Bill through all its stages in one day, and to enable the business aforesaid to be entered upon and dealt with before the Address-in-Reply is adopted.

Question put and passed.

Message: Appropriations

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriations for the purposes of the Bill.

In Committee of Supply

The House resolved itself into a Committee of Supply, the Chairman of Committees (Mr. W. A. Manning) in the Chair.

MR. BRAND (Greenough—Premier)
[5.25 p.m.]: I move—

That there be granted Her Majesty on account of the services of the year ending the 30th June, 1968, a sum not exceeding \$68,000,000.

In moving this motion that a sum not exceeding \$68,000,000 be granted to Her Majesty, I am following a precedent of many many years' standing as a result of which the Government of the day has sought Supply at this time of the year to carry it forward for at least some three months. Action is now proceeding to prepare the Revenue Budget and the Loan Estimates for the current year. These will be presented in due course and, as is usual, will be followed by an Appropriation Bill.

In the meantime, it is necessary to provide these funds to allow the Government to carry on. The amount of supply being sought at this stage is the estimated requirements for the first three months of this financial year, and this of course also follows the pattern which has been developed over the years.

An issue of \$48,000,000 is sought from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and \$15,000,000 from moneys to the credit of the General Loan Fund. These amounts exceed the provisions in last year's first Supply Bill by \$6,000,000 and \$1,000,000 respectively, and are needed to meet the current higher cost of Government services and a general expansion of the services operating at this time.

Provision is also made in the Bill for an issue of \$5,000,000 from the Public Account to enable the Treasurer to make such temporary advances as may be necessary to carry on the services of the State. This is the same provision as was

made last year. Full details of proposed transactions of both the Consolidated Revenue Fund and the General Loan Fund will be presented through the medium of the Estimates.

Last year finished on a good note, as we came within \$27,000 of a balanced Budget, and the indications are that we should be able to budget for a deficit of manageable proportions in this current year without recourse to significant increases in taxation and other charges.

Although recently there have been several changes in the formula governing the disbursement of financial assistance grants to the States which have lifted these payments by the Commonwealth, rising costs, particularly as the result of substantial increases in salary and wage rates, continue to pose major financial problems to the States. There is also great pressure on State Budgets which has been steadily building up as the standard of living rises and the wealth of the nation increases.

Increased prosperity brings in its train a demand for expanded and improved services, which is growing at a much faster rate than the revenues of the States. It seems clear, therefore, that the States in general will have to take steps to enlarge their resources; but in our case we will have the benefit of a full year's return from measures taken last year, and I do not contemplate that any marked degree of additional revenue-raising effort will be required in this State during 1967-68. I remind members that other States have already indicated that they will have to take action with respect to raising greater revenue through charges and taxation.

MR. TONKIN (Melville—Leader of the Opposition) [5.29 p.m.]: I agree that this is quite normal procedure. As the Premier has not asked for any extraordinarily large amount, or for any greater period than the normal period, we have no objection to the Supply being granted.

It is very necessary that the services of the State should be fully maintained and that the salaries that have to be paid be paid on the due date, and the Government requires funds for those purposes. So this is all I wish to say at this stage. Later on, during the discussion on the Bill, I shall have some remarks to make in regard to what the Premier has already said.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

In Committee of Ways and Means

The House resolved itself into a Committee of Ways and Means, the Chairman of Committees (Mr. W. A. Manning) in the Chair.

MR. BRAND (Greenough—Premier) [5.30 p.m.]: I move—

That towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty for the services of the year ending the 30th June, 1968, a sum not exceeding \$48,000,000 be granted from the Consolidated Revenue Fund; \$15,000,000 from the General Loan Fund; and \$5,000,000 from the Public Account.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

Introduction and First Reading

In accordance with the foregoing resolutions, Bill introduced, on motion by Mr. Brand (Premier), and read a first time.

Second Reading

MR. BRAND (Greenough—Premier) [5.34 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. TONKIN (Melville—Leader of the Opposition) [5.35 p.m.]: Last year the Premier budgeted for a deficit of almost \$600,000, and finished up with a deficit of only \$27,000, which on the face of it looked an excellent achievement. In making a public statement in connection with this, the Premier attributed the near balance of his Budget to the general buoyancy in the State's economy. The Premier was aware of the fact that this buoyancy existed when he made his forecast last session. There has not been a speeding up in the buoyancy; it was there; and it was there the previous year. So one would have expected a more accurate forecast than was actually given.

I ascribe an entirely different reason to the results. When the legislation was introduced to increase the stamp duties and the receipt duties we, on this side of the House, expressed the opinion that much more revenue would be received than was anticipated by the Premier. We were firmly of that opinion, and we did not have available to us the information which was available to the Treasury.

It seems to me that the Premier quite deliberately tried to cover the actual situation which existed at that time, inasmuch as he knew full well that the amount which he would receive from the tax he was imposing would be considerably in advance of the actual amount estimated: because I do not believe the Treasury officials are that bad at forecasting.

Let us look at what transpired. The actual receipt of stamp duty exceeded the estimate by \$1,529,000, and the increase or excess in the new receipt duty was \$330,000 above the estimate. The current rate at which this stamp duty is being received is running at \$1,250,000 a month. That is the current rate of receipts to the Treasury from this special tax.

The Government obtained in five months—because the tax did not come into operation until February—approximately the amount estimated for a full year. That suggests either great laxity in the Treasury and lack of efficiency in forecasting taxation, or else, as I have already said, a deliberate attempt to cover up what was actually occurring.

I say here with no apology to anyone that it is not only bad financing but bad economics for the State to impose a level of taxation on the people which will enable it to receive in five months the amount of money it anticipates receiving in 12 months. On the face of it, that looks like an imposition of taxation of double the amount that is required to be imposed.

It is fortuitous for the Treasurer that he has available to him this extra amount of money to make up for the expenditure in other directions, and so enable him to finish up with this small deficit of \$27,000 instead of \$600,000 for which he had budgeted. But that does not say much for the accuracy or the efficiency with which the estimates were made.

In June, 1966, the total tax from this source—that is, from stamp duty—was \$9,687,559, and the amount from this source in 1967 was increased by \$3,316,761, with this increased tax operating for only five months. We should not lose sight of the fact that this same stamp tax was increased in 1964-65, and it went up by \$1,908,000 from that increase. The taxation in this State from stamp duty has gone from 42 per cent. of the total taxation to 47 per cent. of the total taxation, which suggests to me a greatly disproportionate amount of the revenue required is being taken from this particular source.

The fundamental principle in taxation is that as far as possible it should be levied equitably over the whole community, and that no particular section should be singled out to carry the burden. If one reflects for a moment on that shift of percentage one will see what a heavy part of the burden is transferred to those who pay the stamp duty—from 42 per cent. of the total taxation in the previous year to, in the last financial year, almost half the total taxation received, or up to 47 per cent. of it.

I agree with what was said by the members of the Chamber of Commerce who went to see the Premier: that this taxation is inequitable and discriminatory; and the figures prove that. The figures show that the businessmen who went to see the Premier on this matter had just cause for their complaint.

What we have to keep in mind is that in a number of these cases—one which comes readily to my mind is in connection with the oil companies—this duty is immediately passed on to the members of the community.

Mr. Brand: Do you know of any tax of this kind that is not passed on?

Mr. TONKIN: I know of some taxes which are not passed on.

Mr. Brand: What are they?

Mr. TONKIN: There are several. Land tax is one.

Mr. Brand: I said a tax of this type. I did not say land tax.

Mr. TONKIN: What is meant by this type of tax?

Mr. Brand: Receipt duty and stamp tax.

Mr. TONKIN: Receipt duty is a similar tax, and of course it is passed on.

Mr. Brand: I am asking whether you know of any tax of this type which is not passed on.

Mr. TONKIN: What difference does that make to my argument?

Mr. Brand: You made the statement.

Mr. TONKIN: It only emphasises the point I am making that finally this discriminatory tax, which is levied on a section of the community, will in a number of cases be passed on to other individuals who are already paying some of this tax.

One decided weakness in this tax—and it is a bad one—is that the worker who works for the State and receives his wages from the State pays this tax; but a worker employed by the Commonwealth does not pay it, because the State cannot collect it. So, to the extent that this tax is increased, the anomaly is increased, and that makes it more discriminatory. We should keep that fact in mind when we are considering the effect of the taxation we are levying.

The Premier gave an undertaking—not that I have much faith in undertakings which have been given—

Mr. Brand: You have not altered since you became Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. TONKIN: A little later on I will be in a position to point out a few of these instances, when, in due course, a certain report is issued.

Mr. Brand: Don't tell me you are talking about the T.A.B.?

Mr. TONKIN: No, about assurances: answers given in this House and letters written by the Premier stating things which are not facts at all. But more of that anon.

Mr. Brand: You must have got good advice.

Mr. TONKIN: I will come back to these assurances. The Premier gave an assurance to the Chamber of Commerce that he would have a review made of this taxation. However, he gave no indication, when he spoke earlier this evening, of any review. As a matter of fact, I think there was a suggestion that in some instances he would have to obtain a little more tax. So, if he has to obtain a little more tax in order to keep his deficit within manageable proportions, there does not appear to

be much likelihood of any substantial review downwards. There could be a review upwards.

Mr. Brand: I just said "review."

Mr. TONKIN: Yes, I know. Well if the Premier thinks the Chamber of Commerce will interpret his assurance of a review as being satisfactory if he reviews it upwards, he is a better man than I am, Gunga Din.

Mr. Brand: All I promised was a review.

Mr. TONKIN: It will be well remembered by those who follow the Premier's movements, and read his utterances from time to time—as I do—that when he attended the Premiers' Conference, in April, 1965, he told the Premiers quite solemnly and determinedly that Western Australia had reached the limit—the State tax limit.

Mr. Brand: What did you want me to tell them: that we had plenty of taxing margin?

Mr. TONKIN: After stating that, he came back here last session and imposed a rate of tax which enabled him to get in five months the amount he estimated he would get in 12 months. That was from a State which had already reached the State tax limit. Either the Premier did not know what he was talking about or he misled those at the conference.

Mr. Brand: My word! If I was able to do that I am coming on.

Mr. TONKIN: Well, if you did not mislead them, they did not believe what you said.

Mr. Brand: They were all saying the same thing, you know.

Mr. TONKIN: We cannot mislead a man who treats what we say as so much boloney. We only mislead the man who accepts what we are saying as being what we think and what we know. Of course, if a Premier goes to a Premiers' Conference and says things which do not mean anything and which do not indicate the true position, then he cannot blame anybody if he becomes discredited.

The Premier cannot deny that in April, 1965, he told the Premiers that W.A. had reached a State tax limit. Well, I agree. We were pretty close to the limit of the taxation which we could reasonably impose upon the people. But on top of that situation we have imposed in this State an increase in stamp duty which has enabled the Treasurer to obtain in five months what he expected to obtain in 12 months. If that is not savage taxation, Mr. Speaker, I will ask you to give it a name. It seems to me not unlike reckless and thoughtless finance without any consideration for what the result might be. The only concern was to get as much money as possible into the Treasury in order that the anticipated deficit would not result; and the people were not to be told what was happening in the meantime.

Surely, if a tax returns in five months as much as was anticipated in 12 months, and when it was imposed an assurance was given that it would be reviewed, then the Government has a weak case if it does not review it downwards. The men who went to see the Premier—and I know he received complaints from all round the suburbs about it—quite rightly emphasised that the tax was inequitable and discriminatory. They did not know then, although I imagine they suspected it, that this tax was bringing in such a great excess over and above the amount estimated.

I said quite clearly, when I was speaking on this tax in the House, a lot more money would be received from it than was being budgeted for. I think that was perfectly obvious, taking all the circumstances into consideration. I do not know what the Government proposes to do about it, because it endeavours to enshroud in secrecy all of its administration, as far as it is able to do so.

I would say there is a very strong moral obligation at least upon the Government to review this tax, and to review it downwards, in view of the fact that it has returned such an excessive amount of money in such a short time. It should be perfectly obvious to anyone who examines this situation—and it should be obvious to the Minister for the North-West, who is an accountant—that if this tax is currently bringing in \$1,250,000 a month, the level will increase because it has reached this \$1,250,000 a month from something under \$1,000,000 a month. It is continually on the rise.

It is pretty obvious to me—and I have not the data available to me for calculation which the Premier has—that in the next five months substantially more tax will be received from this source than was received in the preceding five months. That will further widen the gap between the estimate and the actual amount received and will be further justification for a review of the tax.

When we come to add this to the taxation being received in connection with road maintenance, we can appreciate the very heavy amount of taxation which has been imposed on the people in Western Australia; and I repeat what I have said so often before: This Government has imposed upon the people of Western Australia the highest level of taxation that has ever been imposed in its history. Whilst it is levying these heavy imposts upon the people, it squanders money in other directions.

Take the proposition referred to in this morning's Press, to spend \$35,000 on some sort of a structure in King's Park for the purpose of enabling people to view a model of the Freeway! I can think of a number of jobs which would have a much higher priority than that if I had the money to spend.

Mr. Graham: You can see the mess from Parliament House.

Mr. Brand: All in good time.

Mr. TONKIN: It is proposed to spend \$35,000 to enable some people to view the model of the Freeway—a model which may not represent what is actually going to be done, because we are told there is going to be a reappraisal and reconsideration of the ring road and the Freeway.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: What plan?

Mr. TONKIN: If there is to be a reappraisal and reconsideration, might not the plans be altered? So what is the sense in letting people view the existing plans and spending \$35,000 to let them see them?

Mr. May: Got to get rid of the money somehow.

Mr. TONKIN: It just amazes me. Down at Merredin the people are putting on a show—and rightly so, too—because they cannot have proper septic tank installations at the school, they had to put the pressure on, and get considerable publicity, before they could get things to move.

Mr. Bovell: Your geography is a bit astray.

Mr. TONKIN: I am sorry, I meant to say Wickiepin. This \$35,000 would have gone a long way.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: It is from the Main Roads funds.

Mr. TONKIN: Yes, I know; but surely the Government could do what it did with the Lotteries Commission—

Mr. May: Why bring that up?

Mr. TONKIN: —and take it out of one pocket and put it in another.

Mr. Brand: You are wrong there.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You are joking.

Mr. TONKIN: No, I am not; and whilst I am on that question, I would like to ask the Premier if he would tell me, when he is replying, whether it is a fact that before the Lotteries Commission can make distribution to any organisation, it has to be approved by the Minister. That is what I would like to know, because if that is so—and I believe it is—then it represents a very big departure from the practice which has been carried on in this State for many years, and it suggests the Government does not want a Lotteries Commission at all; it only wants somebody to run the sweeps, because this is tantamount to the Government determining where these gifts will be made. I would like some information on that question so we shall know precisely what is happening.

The Government can come in and help itself to a lot of the money available to the commission, and the Minister for Police assured us it would not make any difference to the amount that was being

given to the various charitable organisations. Of course they know quite differently, because the money is not there.

Mr. Bickerton: You might have to give a bit to the Festival of Perth, yet.

Mr. TONKIN: I would finish on this point: that the Government on one hand is financing recklessly by imposing a level of taxation that it is not justified in imposing; and, on the other hand, it is wasting money.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: It is not waste at all.

Mr. TONKIN: Yes, wasting it.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Rubbish!

Mr. TONKIN: It is so easy to exclaim "Rubbish." I could get children in the kindergarten to say that! This is where the Minister shines; he either says "Rubbish," or evades the question and does not give an answer, as he did this afternoon. Instead of coming forward honestly and giving an answer to a question, he would not face up to it because it would be damaging to his own attitude. So what did he do? He completely evaded the question.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You read the question and the answer again.

Mr. TONKIN: I read the question and listened to the answer; and it was a question which should have been answered and could have been answered by anybody who had sufficient confidence in his case to know that he was right.

Mr. Brand: Was this a question on fluoride?

Mr. TONKIN: Yes, that was the question. The question referred to the announcement made in the United States in connection with action taken there to ban certain prenatal drugs. I asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health whether he would give an answer to enable this answer to be referred to the United States in order that the true position could be ascertained. Of course, he would not do that; that would enable the truth to be found out. So he used a lot of words and evaded the question, and did not supply the answer. That is all right as a political manoeuvre; it would not be the first or last time that will be done, but it does not strengthen the Minister's case.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You were far better at evading questions than any Minister I have known.

The SPEAKER: Order! I think the honourable member should get back to the Bill.

Mr. TONKIN: I think, Sir, you will appreciate that on this Bill I can deal with any subject.

The SPEAKER: You are getting close to impugning people's honesty.

Mr. TONKIN: I beg your pardon?

The SPEAKER: You heard me!

Mr. TONKIN: I do not know, Sir, how you made that interpretation. I would straightaway disclaim it. I am not impugning the honesty of the Minister; I am simply saying that because his case was so weak, he evaded the question; and he did it deliberately because his case was weak. If he wants to do that as a political manoeuvre, he is quite entitled to do so, but it does not strengthen his case or engender any confidence in his attitude. Very often one gets more advantage from what is not said than from what is said. So it is not one-way traffic. I think in this particular case it would have served the Minister better if he had straightforwardly answered the question, but I knew he would be in difficulty if he did; and he knows this, too.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I think you are being unfair to me.

Mr. TONKIN: No. That is one thing the Minister cannot say about me. The Government has a lot of explaining to do in connection with this taxation; and it will have a lot more as the session progresses and as these returns come in. As the Premier knows, a monthly return is issued from the Treasury, and the information is available for anybody who takes the trouble to look in order to see what these taxes are bringing in.

Mr. Brand: That is right.

Mr. TONKIN: I make the forecast that it will not be long before this taxation, which is currently bringing in \$1,250,000 a month, will be bringing in \$1,500,000 a month. Therefore, we will be receiving in approximately three months the amount budgeted to be received in 12 months. If that is not reckless finance, what is it? I suggest that perhaps the Premier had his tongue in his cheek.

Mr. Brand: No he didn't.

Mr. TONKIN: I will accept that statement.

Mr. Brand: I was quite frank about it.

Mr. TONKIN: I accept that when the Premier told the Chamber of Commerce he would have a review in 12 months' time, he was being quite frank and he will, in fact, have the review. I shall confidently look forward to a downward review of this tax.

MR. DAVIES (Victoria Park) [6.7 p.m.]: I think this is an appropriate time to bring to the notice of Parliament what I consider is discrimination against one section of Government employees. I refer to the Railway Officers' Union. The complaint I have received is in relation to the recent one dollar basic wage increase which was awarded by the Federal court. I am sure that before the session is over, we will hear something more about the one dollar basic wage increase and the flutter it caused in the dovescotes, and the rethinking which the Government will have to do on the question of wages

as a whole. I am quite certain that the Government was aware when it amended the arbitration Bill last session, that it was quite likely that a total wage would be brought down in the Federal court. There had already been four applications, and all the experts at that time said that a total wage would more than likely emerge at this hearing. However, it is not in regard to the general question of the one dollar increase that I wish to make a complaint.

My complaint is concerned with the manner in which the Railways Department handled the application which was put to it for the dollar increase to be applied to all railway officers. For a very long time the wage margins that apply to railway officers, that is, the clerks, stationmasters and white collar workers who are generally outside of the professional staff, have been related directly and continuously to the wages which apply to the Civil Service Association. I am sure this is known to most of the members of the Government.

Some months ago, the Railway Officers' Union accepted the new scale of wages which had been applied to the Civil Service Association. This meant that it also accepted the lower Federal basic wage. Of course, the total wage was to the benefit of the people concerned. I will not go into the reasons why the Federal wage applied at that time, or why it was accepted. The fact remains, however, that the Civil Service Association and the railway officers have been on the Federal basic wage for some considerable time.

When a general increase of one dollar was awarded in the Federal court, it was expected that this would apply automatically to those workers in this State who were on Federal awards. I will not go into the details of the judgment given by the State Industrial Commission, which in my opinion was quite a sound and reasonable judgment. However, I think we must have a look at the moves which were then made by the Civil Service Association and by the Railway Officers' Union.

The Federal court brought its decision down on the 5th June, 1967, and said that the dollar increase would apply from the first pay period in July. The Civil Service Association made a request to the Public Service Commissioner. Letters passed between the two bodies and, by agreement, the commissioner decided he would grant this one dollar increase to all civil servants in this State and that the application of the increase would apply from the 8th July, 1967.

As I said before, the Railway Officers' Union has been long related to the Civil Service with regard to margins and, accordingly, it approached the Commissioner of Railways on the 16th June, 1967, and asked that the one dollar increase should apply to all railway officers who

were working under the awards which had been issued by the Railways Classification Board. Eleven days had elapsed between the time of the Federal decision and the time of the application to the commissioner, and I am sure that both the union and the commissioner knew at that time just what was meant by the Federal court's decision. A reply was received from the Commissioner of Railways on the 26th June, 1967—10 days later—advising that the commission could not grant the increase, and that it was a matter for the Railways Classification Board. What was not mentioned at that stage was that it was less than six months since the railway officers had received a rise and consequently they were precluded from going to the Railways Classification Board in order to have their case heard.

The Secretary of the Railway Officers' Union wrote back to the commission on the 4th July, 1967, and set out, in a long and detailed letter, some cogent reasons as to why the commission could reasonably grant the one dollar increase to all railway officers. The next contact with the commission was a fortnight later when the Industrial and Staff Section rang the Railway Officers' Union and said that the commission still insisted the matter should go to court, but it was prepared to waive any objections to a case going to the Railways Classification Board within the six-monthly period. If the union wished, it could take its case immediately to the Railways Classification Board. This advice was on the 18th July, 1967. The union lodged its claim on the 19th July, 1967, and the case was heard on the 21st July, 1967.

The chairman of the board, Mr Wallwork, and the department did everything possible to expedite the hearing, and the judgment of the board was that the one dollar increase should apply to all officers under the Railways Classification Board's award. However, because of the terms of the Railways Classification Board Act, it had to apply from the end of the next pay period, which meant it would apply to railway officers on the 22nd July, 1967. This was at least a fortnight later than the date it applied to civil servants.

I believe the Government is being increasingly harsh in its attitude to general increases of this nature. Certainly it is saving a few dollars, but it is certainly not enjoying the goodwill of railway officers. On many occasions over the years approaches have been made to the Government for retrospective payment of award increases. Indeed, there have been deputations to the Ministers concerned. I, myself, lead a deputation on one occasion to the previous Minister for Railways, who was at that time, and still is, the Minister for Industrial Development. On that occasion he said that railway officers were not Government employees but were

transport employees. I do not know how he drew the subtle difference, because, as I understand the position, they are all paid by the Government. The fact that they come under the Railways Classification Board instead of the Public Service Commissioner does not make them any the less Government employees.

This has long been a bone of contention with the railway officers, and I believe they have been tolerant for a very long time. A more reasonable attitude should be adopted to approaches in connection with industrial matters of this nature. There was no trouble at all in arranging the one dollar increase between the Civil Service Association and the Public Service Commissioner. All of the arrangements were concluded by the 30th June and, as I understand the position, the one dollar increase was to apply from the first pay period in July, which is the same date that the Federal Court made the application.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. DAVIES: My complaint arose from the fact that the Government, during the last session of Parliament, made great play about the need to standardise wages; that is, to bring the State wage into line with the Federal wage. Here was an opportunity for the Government to prove how genuine it was, but at least a month was wasted before anything was done in this particular case.

In the meantime, the Civil Service Association, in the spirit of complete conciliation, had been able to work out that the rise would apply from the first pay period in July, which was exactly the same period that had been stipulated by the Federal court. As I said before, no complaint can be made about the Railway Officers' Union submitting its case to the Government as soon as the implication of the decision by the Federal court became clear. However, it took 10 days for a reply to be forwarded.

About a week later the union wrote again and another fortnight elapsed before it received a reply to that letter. As a consequence of all this delay, the railway officers lost at least a fortnight's increase in pay, which increase was subsequently granted to them. During this time the Government had approached the State Industrial Commission, and because of its announced policy last year it offered the male workers of the State an increase of 30c, and female workers an increase of 47c. This was some proof of the Government's intention to standardise wages, but when it came to considering the railway officers' case an entirely different standard was applied.

As I said before the rates of pay of the railway officers and members of the Civil Service Association have been accepted as a basis for balancing one against the other and for achieving some kind of uniformity in the State Civil Service. The rates

which are applicable to members of the Civil Service Association also apply to many other officers employed by Government and semigovernment instrumentalities.

I understand that these rates apply to hospital employees, to officers of the Metropolitan (Perth) Passenger Transport Trust, to Robb Jetty employees, to officers employed by the State Shipping Service, and to other employees of government and semigovernment instrumentalities. Those employees are paid the same wages as are paid to civil servants, and because of the arrangement entered into between the Civil Service Association and the Public Service Commissioner, they would all be enjoying the benefit of the \$1 increase.

Great play has been made by the Government on the achievements of the Railways Department; and, indeed, when such statements are made it is generally acknowledged that the officers of that department have done a great deal towards making these achievements possible. However, to use a colloquial term, those officers are getting a little browned off with the treatment they have received.

In the annual report of the Railways Department for 1966, the Deputy Commissioner writes—

Although the continued improvements in operating equipment and track have contributed to the Department's increasing operating efficiency, results such as those achieved this year would not have been possible without the solid support of all members of the staff.

Then again, in a more recent publication entitled *Railway Achievement in Western Australia*, the following appears in an article headed "Efficient Freight Transport":—

These achievements would not have been possible without the loyalty, co-operation and teamwork of every member of the Railway.

It is pretty common knowledge that the staff position in the Railways Department at the present time is very acute. Drastic changes have been made, particularly in regard to the employment of females. Whilst in many instances this policy has worked out quite successfully, in many others it leaves a lot to be desired. This is a time when the department is facing serious staff problems, and yet it quibbles over a \$1 rise to its employees.

After all that has been said about the State's standards when amending the Arbitration Act and in the recent basic wage case, it is now evident that there is a hollow ring about all those claims, because when the acid test was put on the Government it did not stand up to it.

In view of what transpired with the Civil Service Association, I want to say that there should have been no delay by

the Railways Commissioner in replying to the claim of the officers, and when the matter came to the notice of the Government—as I am sure it did—the Government should not have discriminated, but should have granted the \$1 increase on the same basis as that applying to the members of the State Civil Service.

If the union decides to take further action to impress on the Government the need for some equality I would be 100 per cent. behind it.

MR. GRAHAM (Balcatta-Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [7.37 p.m.]: The reason for my rising this evening is to take advantage of the first opportunity to emphasise to the Government—and I trust the public—some shabby treatment which the public has received at the hands of this Government.

I am heartened to speak because perhaps members will recall that in the dying hours of the last session I took advantage of the opportunity to speak of the grave injustices that had been done to many people in several parts of the metropolitan area—in my electorate in particular—in the matter of town planning and the right to subdivide.

Members may recall that I instanced a number of cases and inadvertently used the name of one of the persons detrimentally affected, when perhaps I would have been better advised not to have used his name because, in the course of my remarks, I mentioned some personal and private circumstance. However, I related the matter to that person subsequently and no harm was done.

My point in recalling this instance was that, first of all, I had these people approach the Town Planning Department and then, by way of appeal, approach the Minister for Town Planning, who confirmed the rejection of the application. Because I felt the matter was one of such transcending importance I wrote in detail to the Premier, as head of the Government, but he stood firmly behind his Minister as his answer was in the negative.

Therefore it was somewhat of a surprise—but a refreshing one—when I received a letter from the Minister for Town Planning dated the 23rd May last with an attached copy of a letter he had sent to the affected person, in which copy of the letter appeared the following words:—

Since you made unsuccessful representations to me through Mr. Graham, to allow the subdivision of your land at Osborne Park as applied for on the 7th February, 1966, the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority has adopted a more liberal attitude towards the development of urban deferred land.

In the light of this new policy, a subdivision of your land to show two house blocks fronting Hertha Road, and the balance area as one large

lot in accordance with the enclosed sketch, would be favourably considered by the Town Planning Board.

I repeat, I am thankful to the Minister for a change of heart. But I am saying to the Government now that because of its attitude, as expressed to the department—through the Minister by way of appeal—and subsequently my own approaches in a mood of desperation to the Premier, where in each case the reply was the same, this matter finally reached the point it did. I do not know whether it was on account of my having spoken in Parliament about it, but the fact remains that this letter came to hand.

Whereas this person wanted to subdivide one small block out of his area, we find now that the Minister has acceded to his request and has suggested that if he makes application favourable consideration will be given to permit him to have two house blocks for his needs. This person was an ex-serviceman, but I need not go into that detail. That is one of the reasons for my addressing the House this evening.

A matter to which I desire to make direct reference is in relation to the activities of the Bush Fires Board. I am aware that this question received considerable ventilation in the Press, and in other means of public communication, but certain cases were brought to my attention, which I investigated. I went through the whole gamut of appeals to the authority concerned, an appeal to the Minister for Lands, and finally an appeal to the Premier. In each case there was a complete denial of elementary justice.

I regret that after so many months it is necessary to resurrect this question now; but surely this indicates the necessity for what is usually referred to as two sessions of Parliament. These were events that occurred in the December-March period, and yet it is only now possible for members of Parliament to give any attention whatsoever to this question. In my case it is done by taking advantage of a Bill dealing with financial arrangements, but which provides considerable scope. Because of that I am compelled to use this device to illustrate the inhumanity of the Bush Fires Board, and the lack of sympathy and understanding on the part of the Government.

This only bears out what I have said on so many occasions, that the present Government is completely removed from the people. It has lost touch with the ordinary citizens of the State.

Mr. Rushon: That is not quite true.

Mr. GRAHAM: This Government is far more concerned with dining and banqueting with Japanese millionaires. It pays no attention whatever to the ordinary, everyday citizen. That is why the housing situation has reached the deplorable condition it is in at the moment; that is

why the wage level is pegged, notwithstanding the continual rise in prices; that is why land prices have gone sky high; and that is why rents are at extortionate levels. While all this is happening the Government sits idly by dealing with millionaires, investors, speculators, and so on. It has no consideration whatever for the ordinary people in the community.

Fortunately these ordinary people have the right to vote in this country, and it will be possible for them to exercise that right in the course of the next few months.

There were certain cases brought to the notice of the public per medium of the Press in the month of March this year. We find somebody by the name of Wedgwood who was charged \$24 by the Bush Fires Board for clearing his property in Rossmoyne. We also find there was a lady who was charged \$45 because of the activities of the Bush Fires Board in clearing her land in East Cannington. We read in the Press of the 30th March of this year the following:—

The Gosnells Shire Council will ask the board how it arrived at the cost of \$45 for clearing a quarter-acre block of land in East Cannington, when it would have cost the Council \$6. At a Council meeting last night the council foreman reported that the work would have taken him only two hours with a rotary hoe.

I repeat, the charge was \$45. This will pale into insignificance when compared with the case I propose to enumerate presently. I read in the newspaper of the 31st March this year, and I quote—

The Wanneroo Shire Council has dissociated itself from action taken by the Bush Fires Board in clearing blocks in the Sorrento area.

Members are aware of the fact that those who were owners of property were not given any warning or notice whatsoever of the intention to take direct action. Therefore I was more than amazed to read the statement from the Chairman of the Bush Fires Board (Mr. Gibson) which appeared in *The Sunday Times* of the 2nd April last. First of all he refers to Mr. Lithgo, who has been associated with local authorities, with bush fires, and fire prevention work. He then says—

We told Mr. Lithgo we would do, in fact, what we have always done—make considerable efforts to trace the owner so that he can arrange clearance himself.

If this proves an awkward or lengthy process we must be able to act on our own initiative.

I make the charge that no attempt whatever was made by this board to locate the owners of the properties concerned. It would be true that in all cases where residences were involved inspectors called at

the houses if it was felt that there was something wrong with the bush and the grass surrounding the houses.

But where there were vacant blocks of land, no action was taken to find the owners until after the work was done. Then inquiries were made for the purpose of serving a bill for the amount on these people. I object strongly to these methods. I object strongly to any public authority adopting an attitude of complete and utter irresponsibility, and so doing because somebody else will meet the cost.

If I, as a person, were such an authority, and there was something which had to be done on your property, Mr. Speaker, I could care not a straw nor a fig for what the amount of the charge would be, because you would be paying for it, and you would be unaware that the work was being undertaken. We have the statement of a local authority where a woman was charged \$45: the appropriate officer of the local authority said that the cost for the work, if the council had done it, would have been \$6.

I am afraid the contractors get to learn of this irresponsibility, and because of it they put in any figures at all. They drag tremendous figures out of the air and submit them. The Bush Fires Board then accepts what was, in fact, the lowest quote received; but this was a picnic conducted by the Bush Fires Board at the expense of decent citizens who had done, or who were anxious to do the right and proper thing by the constituted authority.

I was born and reared on a farm, and I have seen and taken part in the fighting of bushfires, and serious ones at that, which consumed crops, haystacks, and buildings; devastated the countryside; killed stock, and the rest. Naturally enough, because of those experiences, if for want of no other, I would not be advocating the cause of people if I felt they were in a direct way and in a dire manner creating risks and hazards in the community.

Surely it is not necessary to go in with a bulldozer, in every sense of the word, if somebody has not conformed exactly with the requirements of a certain regulation! I was amazed to read on page 13 of the *W.A. Firefighter* of June, 1967, published by the Bush Fires Board in Perth—incidentally the price is 1s., and it is time that was attended to—the following dealing with the metropolitan fire prevention scheme:—

At a recent meeting at Moora the Minister for Local Government, the Honourable Mr. Logan stated that the Government was fully behind the Bush Fires Board in the work which had been done in fire prevention in the Metropolitan Fire District.

There we have it from the Minister for Local Government that what has transpired has the blessing of this Government.

I will produce evidence in a moment to show that not only the Minister in another place, but also a Minister here and, indeed, the Premier himself endorsed the action against, and the completely unfair and overburdening liability placed on certain people. I have not heard of a case like the one I am about to outline.

A person approached me earlier this year. He had received a note from the Bush Fires Board, on the 20th December, 1966. This person and his wife are both age pensioners, and they own a property on Lot 55 Wilberforce Street, North Beach. It is immediately opposite a convent school, and just one block from the corner. I inspected this block myself. It is a flat block, and has no stony outcrops as in the case of the block of Miss Landquist and the blocks surrounding it. This block has a gentle gradual slope. At the front there is a little bank which has been created by the local authority in the construction of the road, but there is almost level access from the side street.

This block of land owned by a couple of age pensioners did not have any trees upon it. It had some bushes which the owner told me were about 3 feet high. There was a difference of opinion between the Minister and myself in connection with this point, because the Minister admitted there was nothing on the block taller than 7 feet. There were bushes 7 feet or 6 feet high. This block was one-third of an acre with no rough terrain, no granite or limestone outcrop, or anything of that nature; yet the Bush Fires Board, for the work done in removing the scrub, asked for \$140. This figure is fantastic; it is unbelievable.

Unfortunately the Minister and the Premier have accepted the word of the Bush Fires Board that there were all sorts of difficulties, and that tremendously powerful machinery had to be used, and all the rest. That is a figment of the imagination. The Premier, following the complaints and an unfavourable political climate, having regard to the fact an election would be held in 12 months, announced in *The West Australian* of the 30th March in reference to the clearing of metropolitan properties on the ground of so-called fire hazards—

Premier Brand said complaints about the methods used were being investigated and action was being taken to redress any wrongs.

I do not care who the person is; under no circumstances could he justify a figure of \$140 for removing scrub, none of it more than 7 feet high, from one-third of an acre. That is over \$420 an acre. I notice some members of the Country Party are laughing in disbelief, but what I am saying is perfectly true. I repeat that this is a pensioner couple. All the particulars have been submitted to the Government but no sympathy whatsoever has been shown.

This person went along to the Bush Fires Board and pointed out the impossibility of paying such a large amount. He happened to observe that under those circumstances it looked as if he had no alternative but to sell the block. This was good enough for the Bush Fires Board. It then created the situation that this person intended to sell the block. Immediately the board grabbed hold of that, as did the Minister, and said that that person need not pay the account now, but when he disposed of the block then from the proceeds he could pay the \$140. The Bush Fires Board, to be generous in the matter, declared it would not charge interest on the outstanding amount!

It is painfully obvious to all of us, even if this person had intended to sell the block, that a pensioner couple would have been called upon by this Government to pay the full amount of \$140 for clearing a bit of scrub from one-third of an acre in the metropolitan area. It is not as though it was a matter of someone having to be sent many miles into the country to reach the block on which the work had to be done.

I emphasise that this couple had no intention of selling, but a remark was made in passing and this was cottoned onto by the Bush Fires Board. I had better read the letter from the board addressed to this luckless couple on the 12th January of this year. It states—

It is noted that you are not in a financial position to make immediate payment of the total amount of \$140. This sum which was arrived at after the receipt of three separate tenders of which \$140 was the lowest received represents only part of the cost incurred by this board as a result of your failure to comply with the notice issued. However, the Board does not endeavour to recover its inspection and administrative costs and only passes on the actual cost of the work done by the contractor.

In these circumstances, it is necessary to recover the amounts expended as early as possible.

In accepting your offer of repayment by the amount of \$2 per fortnight, I must request that you endeavour to make greater payments than the \$2 referred to when this is possible in an endeavour to discharge the outstanding balance without delay.

No interest is charged on the balance owing but it is required that you make regular fortnightly payments of the \$2 referred to without reminder from this Office. Failure to meet these regular payments will result in consideration being given to legal action for the recovery of the outstanding balance without further notice.

Mr. Lewis: What was done with that scrub? Was it just bulldozed, heaped up, and burned?

Mr. GRAHAM: That is a good question and I will come to it presently. I was told by either the Minister or the Premier—I have forgotten which one—that in addition to pushing over the scrub, it was removed. That is, the scrub or bushes were removed; and this involved certain expense. So I quote again from remarks made by Mr. Gibson, who was chairman of the Bush Fires Board, and published in *The Sunday Times* of the 2nd April, 1967, as follows:—

Mr. Gibson also denies that clearance charges are high.

"We always accept the lowest tender, and do not add a penny to the contractor's price," he said.

"In addition, we keep costs down by specifying that vegetation shall not be carted away but should be piled on the block clear of outbuildings and fences."

That is the statement of the Chairman of the Bush Fires Board made after there had been a hue and cry in connection with this particular matter.

Mr. Bickerton: It should be called the Bushrangers' Board.

Mr. GRAHAM: That may be a more appropriate appellation. I find in this letter of the 12th January, from which I quoted earlier, the following words:—

The inspection carried out by our Warden on the 5th December, 1966,—

Here let me interpolate that the date in the letter to the Minister was the 5th November, 1966. I think perhaps the typist had a sense of the fitness of things by making this apply to Guy Fawkes day. However, it was the 5th December, 1966. Continuing—

—disclosed that this lot was covered with dense bushes up to seven feet high and the ground beneath these bushes was covered with dry wild oats and dry couch grass.

That was the letter, and that was the subject of the complaint. So, on the 31st March, after these people had approached me, I made representations to the Minister for Lands, and I quote, in part—

This block, I am told, measures 94 ft. x 142 ft., and on it was green bush, no more than 6 ft. high, no trees whatsoever, and an inspection made by Mr. S satisfied him there was no fire risk. However, without any notification whatsoever, on the 5th November last the entire area was bulldozed, and Mr. S presented with an account for \$140.

In my view, the figure is completely without reason, and when it is pointed

out that Mr. S is an Age Pensioner you will, I am certain, gauge this whole sorry affair in its proper perspective.

It would be appreciated if you would investigate the ridiculous extent of the account submitted, and use your good offices in order to ensure that this luckless pensioner is not compelled to meet the amount demanded.

I await your reply at your earliest convenience, as I think there is some need for urgent decision.

Mr. Runciman: Did they give a breakdown of costs?

Mr. GRAHAM: There was an attempt made a little later that might satisfy the honourable member who has just interjected. The information was supplied to me by the Minister for Lands in a communication dated the 12th April, 1967. It reads as follows:—

I have had an investigation made of the points in your letter and find that the hazard on this particular lot was reported to the Bush Fires Board Office at the beginning of November, and subsequently referred to by the Fire Brigade Board.

Might I interpolate here and state that it will be seen the inspection was made early in November and the work was carried out on the 5th December. A month was allowed to lapse. It should have been a simple procedure for the Bush Fires Board to ascertain the fire hazard and all that went with it and notify the owner, who lived only at Yokine, in my electorate. For the purpose of sending an account for \$140 to remove what was considered a fire hazard, but apparently it was beyond the ken of the Bush Fires Board to find out the name and address of this owner in order to request him to do something, or notify him that within seven, or whatever it might be, days, certain action would be taken at his expense.

Mr. Bovell: They were notified of this obligation months before.

Mr. GRAHAM: The owners received the circular thing with the rate notice that was posted to them.

Mr. Bovell: It is in red and is quite conspicuous.

Mr. GRAHAM: Yes, that is so. This person went to the block to inspect it and decided there was no particular fire hazard. He was quite satisfied with things. It may be a matter of opinion between you, Mr. Speaker, and myself. Here and now let me say that I shudder to think what would occur if one of these wardens visited my premises where I live and decided to take the bull by the tail and get on with the job without notifying me of his intention, because my place, from the point of view of the theoretician, would be 100 times more a fire hazard

than the particular lot of which I am speaking. I continue to quote—

The Senior Warden of the Bush Fires Board inspected the block on the 5th December, and reported dense growth which required clearing away. The report shows that this block was one of the worst hazards dealt with during the recent summer period.

Mr. Bovell: And reported on by the W.A. Fire Brigades Board.

Mr. GRAHAM: I am reasonably familiar with this locality and say without any hesitation whatsoever that is a gross exaggeration and it is a belated attempt to justify the unreasonable and inhuman action taken in this and very many more cases. As a matter of fact, I was amazed as this was following the experience of Miss Landquist. I had been in the general locality of Marmion and North Beach—

Mr. Bovell: Did you hear what her neighbours thought of the position?

Mr. GRAHAM: Of course I did not.

Mr. Bovell: Did you ascertain the danger they thought was so high?

Mr. GRAHAM: The Minister is a little bit touchy on this, but I happened to inspect adjoining blocks, which everybody admitted were far greater fire hazards because there were no grass lawns, and the rest of it. However, these had been by-passed by the contractors of the Bush-Fires Board because they were too difficult. They were rocky outcrops. So the contractors drove their machinery through a beautiful garden. It was a natural bush garden.

I have a similar area at my place and I am exceedingly proud of it. Whatever sort of a gardener I might be, and I have not yet received commendation at the hands of visitors, but I must say that, without exception, they have made exclamations of surprise and praise about the natural area where there are jarrah, tuart, banksia, blackboys—

Mr. Norton: Red gum?

Mr. GRAHAM: No; there are also shrubs and flowers of a native variety. I do not know what my neighbours think about it, but several of them have an area somewhat akin. It has all sorts of natural conditions which I do not intend to go into.

Mr. Brand: How big is the area?

Mr. GRAHAM: My area?

Mr. Brand: Yes.

Mr. GRAHAM: About one-third of an acre, or perhaps a little larger.

Mr. Runciman: Do you clean around the fence line?

Mr. GRAHAM: I do not think we need make a personal issue of this. To continue quoting—

Owners of land in the metropolitan region are given until the 30th November to clear fire hazards, by printed

notice accompanying the rate notice. As a result of the assessment made that the land constituted a fire hazard, quotes were called from contractors to remove all inflammable materials from the land. Light machinery could not be used, and consequently it was necessary for the contractor to use a bulldozer, particularly as the block fell away very steeply from Wilberforce Street.

Here and now I want to say that is complete and utter poppycock. Light machinery could not be used. It would be possible for anybody to ride a push bike over the whole lot of it, and even more feasible to drive light plant such as can be used for clearing bushes, the highest of which were only 7 feet. However, it was necessary for the contractor to use a bulldozer. The contractor knew his business. There is so much work to be done so that the Bush Fires Board can justify itself that the contractors do not care whether they put in a price of \$100, \$200, or \$500. There are not many operators in the business and it does not matter if they do not get the contract because there is plenty of other work to be had. So, of the two or three who put in quotes the lowest was \$140 for one-third of an acre.

Mr. Lewis: Were many other blocks cleared at the same time?

Mr. GRAHAM: I do not know.

Mr. Lewis: Then they went out specially to do it.

Mr. GRAHAM: I agree with the Minister for Education and I am certain that if it were his money which was being spent he would have some regard for when the contractor was likely to be in the area.

Mr. Lewis: I could not afford it; I would clear it myself.

Mr. GRAHAM: The Minister cannot afford \$140 for one-third of an acre, but somebody else can. Even if the contractor is at Kwinana he is called in, because somebody will pay. The Minister and the Premier are not prepared to waive, or make a simple adjustment for these people who have been treated in a rotten manner and who have been most heavily overcharged.

If the Bush Fires Board is responsible for a rotten arrangement surely the pensioners are not expected to pay 100 cents in the dollar, or 20 shillings in the pound as we used to say. This applies more particularly after the Premier has said, and I quote in part—

Complaints about the methods used were being investigated and action was being taken to redress any wrongs.

If any wrong requires redress, it is the case of these people. To continue the letter from the Minister—

Three quotes were called; one for \$140 another for \$150 and the third was not prepared to do the work.

No doubt the third contractor was getting his quota in other localities and charging unreasonable amounts such as this for work, as I instanced earlier, which the local authority would have done for \$6. In that case the ratepayer was being robbed by a charge of \$45.

Three quotes were called for. The contractors were having a party and when a job had to be done it was at somebody else's expense, and the Bush Fires Board—and apparently the Government—could not care less. Even when its attention is called to the matter, it still could not care less. To continue the letter—

When Mr. S called at the Bush Fires Board Office to discuss his position he advised that the block was owned by his wife who is a pensioner and he offered to pay \$1 a week for the cost of removing the fire hazard from his land. At the same time Mr. S mentioned it was their intention to sell the land.

Here again I point out that it never was their intention to sell the land.

Mr. Bovell: That was the information given to me.

Mr. GRAHAM: I am not blaming the Minister. This person mentioned he did not have \$140 and if it were demanded he would have no option but to sell the land. To continue the letter—

If this should eventuate, then I think some consideration could be given to Mr. S by deferring payments until such time as the land was in fact sold, when the full balance would be paid at that time.

Mr. Bovell: Of course, he has not paid anything yet.

Mr. GRAHAM: The Minister is talking without his book; the man is paying.

Mr. Bovell: Well he does not have to.

Mr. GRAHAM: We will come to that in a moment. The letter from the Minister continues—

I would advise you also that rules for burning established for the Metropolitan Fire Scheme during 1966-67 summer period provide for total clearance of hazard from blocks of less than half an acre. For areas larger than half an acre, fire breaks were acceptable.

I have concluded that the correct action was taken in respect of this particular block which was regarded as a serious fire hazard because of the nature of the growth on it and you will no doubt agree, that it is essential to protect life and property from any serious outbreak of fire.

With these thoughts I do agree. To continue—

Should you feel that Mr. S's case can be assisted, then I would be prepared to advise the Bush Fires Board to defer arrangements to pay

the amount until such time as a decision is made on the sale of the land.

So the position is that whether he pays a lump sum—if he has it—or whether he pays his dollar a week, or whether the payment of \$140 is made when the land is sold—whenever that might be—the fact remains that the Minister has insisted that this pensioner should pay every cent of the \$140. I was so shocked at this I wrote to the Premier on the 24th April.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member has another five minutes.

Mr. GRAHAM: I hope I can encompass this letter in that time. It reads as follows:—

Several weeks ago you announced that the complaints about the methods used by the Bush Fires Board would be investigated, and action was being taken to redress any wrongs. For this reason, I am addressing this letter to you, also because an earlier approach to the Minister for Lands brought no satisfactory response.

It is unfortunately necessary to set this case out in some detail so that you might be informed of the facts and appreciate how decent citizens have been heavily penalised by a public authority using its extreme powers.

I refer to the case of the owners of Lot 55 Wilberforce Street, North Beach, which is an undeveloped block of about $\frac{1}{4}$ of an acre.

Following receipt of a notice from the Shire of Perth and relating to the obligations of land owners, Mr. S inspected the property and considered it did not constitute a fire hazard, there being green growth of bushes, no trees whatsoever, no litter, and grass only on the road verge side of the block. Of the green bushes he claims none was more than 6 ft. high, which is virtually confirmed by the Minister who refers to growth up to 7 ft. high.

You may well imagine the consternation of Mr. and Mrs. S when they received a letter from the Bush Fires Board, dated 20th December last, informing them that, on account of the fire hazard, work had been done on the block (bulldozing) and that the cost to be met was \$140.

I emphasise there was no notification, request or warning given the owners by the Bush Fires Board, there were no trees, nothing taller than 6 or 7 ft. to be cleared from a $\frac{1}{4}$ rd acre block, yet \$140 is demanded from the owners, who are pensioners.

I have inspected the block which has no rock outcrops or other such difficulties; it has a gradual slope, with the exception that the road level has been raised by the local authority, which gives a steep bank at the boundary only, and could not in any way

affect operations, even entry and exit, as the block can be approached, without any difficulty, from North Beach Road.

I mention these factors since the Minister, obviously, has not been properly informed, as reference to his letter to me of the 12th inst. will indicate.

Upon receipt of the Bill for \$140, Mr. S took, by hand, a letter to the Board pointing out that his inspection of the block had not revealed evidence of untoward inflammable matter, and asking for a review, and reduction of the amount charged. The officer interviewed informed him that the contractor had already been paid, and no reduction was possible.

Mr. S said he could not afford the amount and if it were insisted upon, there was probably no other course he could follow than to sell the block. The officer went on to say that, in all probability, the Board would place a caveat on the block it was intended to sell, and this would involve solicitors' fees, etc. He suggested an offer be made to pay the amount in instalments, if unable to pay the lump sum. He also advised Mr. S to take the letter away and rewrite it. This he did, and wrote on the 6th January asking permission to pay at the rate of \$2 a fortnight, an offer which, in a letter dated the 12th January was accepted by the Board but with certain strictures.

In regard to the sale of the land, as mentioned by the Minister in his letter to me, I would point out that Mr. and Mrs. S have not offered the block, advertised it for sale, or placed it in the hands of agents to dispose of. It was only the action of the Bush-fires Board in carrying out operations without any notice and submitting an account for \$140 that prompted Mr. S to observe that he might be forced to dispose of the land.

I am asking you to acknowledge the sum asked for clearing a mere 1/3rd of an acre, containing only bushes, is absolutely absurd, and it is unthinkable that this should be sought from anyone, much less a pensioner, and this without any notice whatsoever. Surely no person would enter into a ridiculously high contract such as this if his own money were involved.

The suggestion that payments might be deferred until the sale of the land begs the question of the magnitude of the charge, and of course it still leaves the pensioner liable to meet the full extent of the bill.

I trust you will agree with me that this case is one of such an extreme nature that it warrants your attention as head of the Government.

Trusting I shall receive a favourable reply in due course—

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) H. E. Graham, M.L.A.

I should like to read the short reply I received from the Premier before I resume my seat. The reply is dated the 23rd May, 1967. It reads, in part—

I have had the benefit of discussions with the Minister for Lands (The Hon. W. S. Bovell, M.L.A.) and have considered the report submitted covering this operation. The advice given to you previously by the Hon. Mr. Bovell and the offer to defer payment of the cost pending on a decision on the sale of the land were, I feel, reasonable in the circumstances.

In reporting on this case, contractors usually employed by the Board advised wheel tractors could not be used because of the nature of the land. Consequently it was necessary to employ a contractor who had the right type of machines. This involved the use of a low loader, a front end loader, and 7-ton tip truck and two men to clear the land and cart the debris away. It was necessary to make several trips to cart the debris some distance away and the use of such machinery undoubtedly increased the cost of clearing this hazard beyond the normal.

I am quite sure you will agree with me there is a necessity to protect life and property from the danger of fire and when complaints are made by neighbours about the condition of such land, then most certainly action is required to remove the threat to adjoining property.

I am thoroughly disgusted with the Premier and his Ministers for allowing a case like this to proceed and for refraining from intervening when it is brought before their notice. I think it is a disgrace to them, but is typical, I am afraid, of so many unpublished actions on their part. I hope and trust that the public will take advantage of the opportunity to be presented to them in February or March of next year.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse—Minister for Lands) (8.23 p.m.): I would like to comment on the remarks made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, in connection with the decision made by the Bush Fires Board to take action principally to protect life and property. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has read the letters and I think these convey the information that the whole case was thoroughly investigated.

The reason I have risen is that, in his usual way, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has maligned responsible citizens of this State, that is, the members of the Bush Fires Board, who give their ser-

vices free and perform a public duty which is not an enviable one. Furthermore, he has maligned the W.A. Fire Brigades Board, because it is on the recommendation of this body that the Bush Fires Board takes action to protect life and property.

This year, Hobart was an example of some neglect on the part of the responsible authorities who were involved. Not only was there a loss of property and a loss of stock, but there was a loss of many lives: I believe 80 lives were lost. This was because precautions had not been taken to protect the people.

This case is one which has been fully investigated. The Government has given very generous consideration to allowing any payments whatsoever to be deferred—whether these payments are by pensioners or not. These people are still able to own some property on which they do not reside.

Mr. Graham: Will you comment on the charge of \$140?

Mr. BOVELL: This charge was read out by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and it has been investigated. It is no good mentioning these things and then arguing about a charge when it is considered there is a fire hazard which should be attended to. There is no excuse; every ratepayer receives with his rates a notice printed in red to tell him of his obligations. If he does not carry them out, he must accept the consequences.

I do object to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, or any other member, maligning honest citizens who are trying to do a job in this community and who are doing it without any payment or remuneration whatsoever.

Mr. Graham: They were not maligned; their action was criticised.

Mr. BOVELL: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition maligned the individual members of the Bush Fires Board, half of whom are representing local authorities in this State. The reason why the Bush Fires Board took over the responsibility of protecting the metropolitan area against fire hazard was because the Bush Fires Act is the only Act which enables such precaution to be taken.

In regard to the country areas, the local authorities are responsible for this work, but in the metropolitan area the local authorities did not accept this responsibility and consequently the Bush Fires Board itself had to accept the responsibility of protecting the community against fire hazard and against threats which may, as I have said, result in the destruction of life and property.

Mr. Graham: If the Government is so keen about the Bush Fires Board, why is it taking this authority away from it now?

Mr. BOVELL: With reference to the Premier's announcement and the cases which are to be investigated, I cannot quote exactly how many are involved, but the number which was conveyed to me

some weeks afterwards was that there were only 20, approximately. This was the final figure which was conveyed to me. What occurred afterwards I cannot say, but the last advice given to me was that approximately 20 people had asked to have their cases investigated. When one considers the whole of the metropolitan area, this is a very small response to the Premier's public statement to the effect that any people who felt they were aggrieved should submit their cases and have them examined by the Minister or by the Bush Fires Board.

Mr. Graham: It is obvious they would be wasting their time.

Mr. BOVELL: As far as I am concerned I could count on one hand the number of appeals which have been made to me, one of which the Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred to this evening. Accordingly, there were not many people who felt they were aggrieved. I believe that most people accept their responsibility and are anxious to see that their own property is protected, and that their neighbours' properties are similarly protected.

In most cases, the action which the Bush Fires Board took was taken on the advice of the W.A. Fire Brigades Board or as a result of protests from neighbours. I am not going to say that every system is perfect, but we have protected the community in this State against any loss of human life whatsoever over many years.

In the country areas this work has been commendable and I would like to take the opportunity of paying tribute to the honorary work of the bush fire brigades throughout the country districts in preserving the property and the life in the communities in which they live.

If the people in the metropolitan area, having in mind the tragedy that happened in Hobart this year, can appreciate the need for careful fire hazards, they will realise that the Government has a responsibility, first of all, to ensure that the property and the lives of people are fully protected. Where would the criticism have come from if the Bush Fires Board had neglected its responsibility and a tragedy similar to that which occurred in Hobart had happened in Perth? Further, at whom would the criticism have been levelled? It would have been levelled at the Government of the day, and rightly so. However, because one or two people felt aggrieved, the Bush Fires Board has been subjected to this criticism; but it should be borne in mind that it is only natural there will be some anomalies in an exercise of this magnitude.

The case which has been instanced has been carefully considered. I have not inspected the area personally, because time and opportunity do not always allow this.

Mr. Graham: Would you come with me to inspect it?

Mr. BOVELL: The reply—

Mr. Graham: Would you come with me to inspect it?

Mr. BOVELL: The reply—

Mr. Graham: Would you come with me?

Mr. BOVELL: I will have a few words with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition later. I will not commit myself at this time. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has never before extended to me an invitation to come with him anywhere that I can recall—not even outside to settle a difference—but I will give his request some consideration.

What I want to emphasise is that the Government has a responsibility in this matter. The Bush Fires Board comprises responsible citizens doing a job of work in an honorary capacity. They are carrying out this particular function to protect the people against any intrusion of neglect which may cause a fire and result in tragedy. So I ask the House to take into consideration the responsibility of the Bush Fires Board to provide this protection; and every country member will join with me in acknowledging that, despite any small differences that may occur between the local communities in the country and the Bush Fires Board, there is the general acknowledgment that the board is performing sterling service and that its operations, overall, have been in the best interests of the community.

Further, it must be kept in mind that the board, in an honorary capacity, has been responsible for co-ordinating the activities connected with this organisation throughout the length and breadth of the State, and this has resulted in very few major or serious fires. We certainly had the tragedy of bush fires at Dwellingup and Karridale in 1960 and 1961.

Mr. Graham: But why have you sacked them in the metropolitan area if they have performed this terrific job?

Mr. BOVELL: We have not sacked them.

Mr. Graham: Oh, yes! You passed it over to the local authorities.

Mr. BOVELL: We were hoping that the local authorities in the metropolitan area would take over the responsibility that the local authorities in the country have assumed; that is all.

Mr. Tonkin: Very nicely put!

Mr. BOVELL: The Bush Fires Board carried out this onerous duty because there was not time to bring the metropolitan local authorities into the position of accepting their responsibilities in the same way as the local authorities in the country have done. The Bush Fires Board is essentially a country organisation, and at the outset of my speech I said that the reason it accepted this responsibility—as far as the Government and I are aware—is that the Bush Fires Act is the only one under which this function could be carried out.

Therefore let us acknowledge the work of the Bush Fires Board. The individual matter referred to by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has been fully examined, and we must recognise the principle that on account of the failure of landholders to carry out their obligations, somebody has to take action, and in this instance the Bush Fires Board took action in the best interests of the community.

Mr. Graham: If an individual landholder inspects his block and comes to the conclusion that either it requires no attention or that it is necessary for him to carry out certain activities, which he does to satisfy the requirements, is he to be penalised because somebody else arrives at the decision that he has not satisfied those requirements?

Mr. BOVELL: But this man did not carry out his obligations. As far as I am aware the owner of this land did nothing whatsoever.

Mr. Graham: Because he considered it was not necessary.

Mr. BOVELL: In that event his responsibility was to go to the Bush Fires Board after receiving the notice and say, "My property does not need any attention, because it is not a fire hazard", and thus he would have enabled the Bush Fires Board to make a decision in his particular case. However, he just ignored the notice.

Mr. Graham: No, he did not. He inspected the block.

Mr. BOVELL: But, as I understand the position, the Bush Fires Board took action in this case because the W.A. Fire Brigades Board reported that it was a fire hazard.

MR. O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Railways) [8.37 p.m.]: Earlier this evening the member for Victoria Park made certain statements on the treatment meted out by the Railways Department to members of the Railway Officers' Union. Although I have not had the opportunity to check the details outlined by the honourable member, I thought it advisable at this stage to make some comments in reply to the statements made, with the knowledge that I have at the moment concerning this problem.

Firstly, the members of the Railway Officers' Union have an award which, I believe, was the subject of negotiation between the union and the Railways Department. This award gives the officers some distinct advantages which employees of other unions do not enjoy. Naturally, it has some disadvantages in other ways, but it is not easy for a union or an individual to enjoy the best of two worlds.

Mr. Davies: What are the advantages?

Mr. O'CONNOR: One that I know of is in connection with classifications, but I believe there are a number of others. As I have pointed out, at this stage I have not had the opportunity to check with the Railways Department the details sur-

rounding this case, but when I do I shall pass them on to the member for Victoria Park.

The disadvantages that arise from this award are, firstly, that members of the Railway Officers' Union have no right to a classification from the board, except at certain set periods. In this particular instance I believe they would not have any claim for an increase in their wages, or to the additional amount of 60c granted by the Industrial Commission, until the end of November this year.

This fact was brought to my notice on the 18th July last by the department. At that stage the commissioner indicated that he felt that the officers—the members of this union—although they were not entitled to be classified until November, should be given the opportunity to put their case before the Chairman of the Railways Classification Board (Mr. Wallwork).

In the memo forwarded to me, the commissioner requested that this approval be given immediately and that the union be allowed to take its case to the court. He also requested that the department should endeavour to arrange for this to be done as soon as possible. As I have said, I think it was on the 18th July that the department negotiated with Mr. Wallwork, and the union was granted the additional money on the 21st July, which was two or three days after I received the memo from the Railways Department.

The department itself considers that there is justification for some alteration to be made to the award, but this cannot be done in one or two days. At this stage the department is investigating the details of the award, and I believe it will have some discussions with the union over amendments to it. I understand the alterations in this case would need to be agreed to by the department and the union, and there might be some negotiation necessary in this regard.

While there may have been some little delay by the department, as I pointed out the award applied generally as from the first pay period in July. The department did not waste a lot of time in connection with this—the increased amount awarded applied as from the 21st July.

The member for Victoria Park also made some comment in connection with the morale of the staff of the department. Here I agree that the morale of the staff is extremely high.

Mr. Davies: I said low.

Mr. O'CONNOR: I say it is extremely high, and I say so because the department is moving more freight per head than ever before. Naturally it is not easy to obtain the number of employees required by the department at this stage, but this is understandable in a State where there has been an explosion of activity in the last eight

or nine years, and where there is much more work available than there was when the honourable member's party was in power.

It is probably a little more difficult to obtain the number of employees required because of the opportunities that do exist here, not only in the metropolitan area but in other parts of the State as well. That is why I think there is some little difficulty in obtaining the labour force required. In connection with the award mentioned by the honourable member, I would point out that the department at this stage is investigating the matter, and will, in due course, endeavour to negotiate with the union concerned.

MR. BRAND (Greenough—Premier) [8.42 p.m.]: I do not propose to delay the House unduly, but there are one or two points made by the Leader of the Opposition which I feel should be answered. On this first opportunity I would like to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition on his election to his high post. He becomes the alternative Premier in this State, and I can only assure him that whenever that happens he will find it is a fairly heavy sort of job.

Nevertheless, I am sure everybody joins with me in wishing him all the very best of pleasure and satisfaction in his present job, and in any other job which might ultimately come his way.

In spite of the speech he has just made, I also extend the same good wishes and congratulations to the member for Ballcatta—the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. If he gets no more vocal than he has this evening, this session will be quite reasonable.

The Leader of the Opposition raised a number of points. He said that the assessment and the estimates of the Treasury, and indeed of myself as Treasurer, were a long way out; they were very rough estimates. He said we had budgeted for a deficit of \$600,000 and we finished up with a deficit of \$27,000. He then went on to say that the reason for this was not the buoyancy of the State's economy, but the fact that the Stamp Act Amendment Act had brought about a greater income than that for which we had provided, or which we had anticipated. He said we had not been quite direct with the public when we brought down an estimated deficit of \$600,000.

I simply want to say that the stamp tax—and he obtained the figures from a monthly document which goes out to the Leader of the Opposition, and to a great number of other people—not only includes the receipt duty, which was in fact amended by the amendment which we made last year to the Stamp Act, but it also includes all other revenue under the heading of stamp tax.

I might point out—as I am advised by the Treasury—that a very sharp increase was derived through the sale of land because of the high values of that land—about which we will hear a great deal more I am sure—and as a result there came to the Treasury, per medium of the taxes which applied to those sales, a much greater amount than we estimated. The Leader of the Opposition also said that the tax was not equitable.

As members know, this is not a new tax. As long as I can remember, and I am sure as long as most people in this House can remember, there has been an ordinary receipt duty which should have been paid on all receipts. But over the years there has been a tendency to forget about that, and the principle of this new amendment was to call upon everyone to pay receipt duty per medium of this tax. They might elect to do so monthly, six monthly, or yearly, while all the chain stores have to pay receipt duty on their total receipts rather than on receipts of amounts which cost more than £5, as it was then.

Might I say that because there was no basis on which to assess the estimate of income, it was really a very rough guess that the Treasury made concerning the assessment of income from the new stamp tax, or new stamp receipt duty. There was no other way.

I can assure the House that the Treasury officers examined every possible means and avenue before arriving at a figure. However, I think the Leader of the Opposition has overlooked the fact that even though we finished up with a \$27,000 deficit after having estimated a \$600,000 deficit, it was not income from the receipt duty or stamp tax that caused this. It was due to the fact that when we were called to a special Premiers' Conference in February all the Premiers, like myself, complained that we could not tax our States any more; that we had to have more help, and the Commonwealth decided to make a straight-out grant of \$5,000,000, our share being \$1,300,000 of that amount, which went into our revenue.

We had no idea the Commonwealth would make such a grant. We had proposed to make some appeal for help, and I can assure the House that so far as our Treasury, or for that matter any Premier, was concerned, we did not anticipate this sort of help. Accordingly, we found ourselves with \$1,300,000 over and above the estimated income from the Commonwealth, and the grants which come to us year by year. Therefore I point to the fact that in spite of that windfall, if I might call it that, we finished up with a deficit of \$27,000.

As the Leader of the Opposition knows, as the member for Northam knows, in fact as we all know, over the last 12 months there have been very real increases in the costs of running the country. The staggering cost of operating the hospitals

has caused great alarm; alarm to the extent where I feel we must put some limit on the amount of money demanded by hospitals as the cost of running them. Unless something is done to cut down some of the service given we must raise more money from the Commonwealth or through our own avenues.

I appreciate the Leader of the Opposition would take a line such as he has. It is the normal line. We have already heard evidence that the new tax—the receipt duty under the stamp tax—is bringing in much more money than we had anticipated. I believe, as he does, that the receipts will grow. Of course they will grow. For a start, there will be more people paying the tax every year. He said this Government is taxing the people at a higher rate than ever before. If by any chance through a stroke of bad luck, there is a change of Government, then next year I am sure that the taxation will be higher. That goes without saying. If the Leader of the Opposition becomes the Treasurer of this State and reduces taxation next year or the year after, he will become the miracle man of all time!

Mr. Craig: He will bankrupt the State.

Mr. BRAND: Every year brings rising costs, rising wages, and rising incomes. Without any doubt the Government, as an employer, does not escape all this by any means. Every Labor, Liberal, and Country Party conference has motion after motion calling for more and more services to be provided. They ask to be given this and that, and they usually finish up with a motion that taxation must be reduced. It is a hard cold fact of life that taxes do rise, and I do not care to which party we belong, taxes will continue to increase.

The receipt duty tax is a very good one. It is equitable, because it is being spread right throughout the countryside; and the bigger the revenue or the bigger the turnover, the greater the amount that is paid.

I did say in a public statement that we must be realistic. These taxes are passed on; they are passed on gradually; no matter how much the tax might be on an article it ultimately finds its way to the consumer, who pays it.

There is one other factor about this particular tax. For the first time individual people are paying. A lady approached me the other day. I presume she has an income outside this country. She said her accountant pointed out to her that she was not paying receipt duty, and she must do so. She said that she had never paid, and she is a supporter of ours. She looked me right in the eye and said, "It looks as if I will have to pay a little each month in receipt duty on my cheques." So she will, and so will hundreds of other people.

Might I point out to the House that the level of taxation in this State is no higher than the taxation in any other State.

Some taxes here might be a little higher, but on the average they are not higher.

It is because this new tax appears to be reasonable, equitable, and a satisfactory means of obtaining money that other State Premiers are closely examining the system, as they see in it a principle or a requirement which is essential, I believe, to State taxation. It has a growth factor. It is a tax that grows and it will relieve the need to come here every year to adjust land tax and a hundred-and-one other taxes. It grows with the turnover of the State and the economy generally. If by any chance we get too much I can assure members that I will be the first to make a reduction of some kind.

I only want to raise one other matter that was referred to by the Leader of the Opposition. He asked me to inform him about the Lotteries Commission. I do not want to be unfair about this, but he made a statement that since the amendment to the Act was passed last year requiring a certain amount of money to go towards hospitals, the Minister has to approve of all the amounts which the Lotteries Commission can distribute.

I have here the Lotteries Control Act, and referring to the balance of moneys remaining after the commission has paid its way generally, and the other expenses of conducting lotteries, etc., it is provided—

The balance remaining after deduction of the expenses referred to in paragraph (e) of subsection (1) of this section and payment of the prize moneys shall, together with the amount of any unclaimed prizes and all other moneys received by the Commission under the provisions of this Act or otherwise, be paid by the Commission to a special bank account in its name or invested in Commonwealth Inscribed Stock in its name and thereafter the amounts standing to the credit of the account may from time to time with the approval and consent of the Minister be applied by the Commission to any charitable purpose or in the purchase, acquisition, maintenance and improvements of lands and buildings for the purposes of this Act.

Mr. Tonkin: The point here is not that the whole amount available shall be approved in bulk, but each individual allocation has now to be approved by the Minister.

Mr. BRAND: It always has by the Minister concerned.

Mr. Craig: It is always approved before it is allocated.

Mr. BRAND: There is another provision in the Act which states—

The Auditor General shall make a continuous audit of, and report to the

Minister from month to month upon, the affairs of the lottery or lotteries conducted.

There are safeguards. I would point out that in the Act there has always been a requirement for the approval of the Minister. As far as I am concerned, since the amendment was made there has been no alteration. The Minister told me that during his time he has always required the Lotteries Commission to come forward with a list for his approval before any disbursements are made.

I was pleased that the Ministers replied to the points which were raised by members relating to problems of salaries and bushfires. I did quietly take a look at the area referred to by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, in Miss Landquist's district. I must admit that I did not see anything which should have caused all the consternation, except that the people had a point in that the Bush Fires Board and others concerned had overlooked what could be described as a nicety to send a circular to the people to indicate that a fire hazard existed.

Mr. Graham: The people were not told that.

Mr. BRAND: It would have been a nicety on the part of the authority at least to have advised the people of its intention to go into their properties to do something which had to be done in the interests of avoiding a hazard. I agree with the Minister that no bouquets would have been presented to the Bush Fires Board, the Minister, or the Government had there been a fire in any part of the city, or in any other area. If there had the blame would have been on us. No matter what excuses might be put up, the blame would have been placed on us.

I hope that as a result of working with the local authorities, the Bush Fires Board, and others, any anomalies which have developed can be resolved. If that is done we will retain a large measure of safety and security in areas where bushfires are dangerous, whether they be in the country or the city, without the kerfuffle and bad feeling that arose.

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 Mr. Brand (Premier), and transmitted to the Council.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

MR. BRAND (Greenough—Premier)
[9.2 p.m.]: I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

In moving this motion, I would like to inform members that the House will not be sitting during Royal Show week. I say this now to give members fair warning so they will be able to make plans.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.3 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 2nd August, 1967

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

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

SITTINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Royal Show Week

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE asked the Minister for Mines:

I would like your permission, Mr. President, to ask the Leader of the House a question without notice.

The **PRESIDENT**: Permission granted.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: My question is: Can the Minister advise the House of any arrangements that might have been made in connection with Show Week?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

The Premier, in another place last night, said the Legislative Assembly would not be sitting during Show Week; and so that members of this House will be in a position to make any necessary arrangements, I can answer the question by saying that we in this Chamber will not be sitting during Show Week, either.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: Thank you.

QUESTIONS (10): ON NOTICE

MARKETING OF POTATOES ACT

Contraventions

1. The Hon. V. J. FERRY asked the Minister for Justice:

(1) How many convictions have been obtained over the period the 1st January to the 31st July, 1967, against persons contravening the provisions of the Marketing of Potatoes Act?

(2) What has been the nature of these offences?

(3) How many legal actions are pending against alleged offences under the Act?

(4) What is the nature of the alleged offences?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

(1) to (4) The information requested is being obtained and will be made available as soon as possible.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

Charges and Trading Results

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

(1) What charge per unit is made by the State Electricity Commission for—

(a) domestic power to householders; and

(b) domestic and industrial power to farmers within the metropolitan area?

(2) Outside of the metropolitan area, which towns and districts are supplied by the State Electricity Commission, and what are the charges in each town and district for—

(a) domestic power to householders; and

(b) domestic and industrial power to farmers?

(3) Are all supplies profitable—if not, which are unprofitable?

(4) What was the overall profit or loss from trading in electricity made by the State Electricity Commission in each of the last five years?

(5) Is it the intention of the Government to extend S.E.C. services throughout the State at a uniform charge to consumers?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

(1) (a) 1.9c per unit plus fixed charge of \$1 per quarter.

(b) For consumers engaged in primary production on a commercial scale

First	12 units per month	5-80 cents per unit
Next	12 " " "	4.10 " "
Next	4,976 " " "	2.70 " "
Next	135,000 " " "	1.85 " "
Next	360,000 " " "	1.65 " "
All over 500,000	" " "	1.40 " "

(2) List of Towns and Districts Supplied by State Electricity Commission Outside the Metropolitan Area:

Albany, Allanson, Argyle, Augusta, Australind, Baandee, Baker's Hill, Balingup, Beelerup, Belka, Benger, Beverley, Boyanup, Boyup Brook, Bridgetown, Brookton, Broomehill, Brunswick Junction, Bullfinch, Bullsbrook, Bunbury, Buckingham, Burekup, Busselton, Capel, Carbanup, Chidlow, Clackline, Collie,