The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Frankly, I do not know why the penalty has been removed, but I will find out before we complete the third reading.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 14 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Bill reported with amendments.

BETTING INVESTMENT TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by The Hon. A. F. Griffith (Minister for Mines), read a first time.

BILLS (2): RETURNED

1. Statute Law Revision Bill.
2. Statute Law Revision Bill (No. 2).

Bills returned from the Assembly without amendment.

House adjourned at 10.39 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, the 2nd November, 1965

CONTENTS

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

QUESTIONS (13): ON NOTICE

STATE ELECTIONS: TAKING OF POSTAL VOTES

Authorised Institutions and Persons

1. Mr. FLETCHER asked the Minister representing the Minister for Justice:

(1) What hospitals, including "C"-class and other institutions, are at present eligible to be prescribed as "institutions" during State elections in accordance with subsection (8) of section 95 of the

Electoral Act to which the Chief Electoral Officer can authorise in writing a person to perform duties outlined in subsections (8), (9), and (10)?

(2) What categories of persons, other than officers of the Electoral Department, can be authorised to perform such duties as outlined above?

Mr. COURT replied:

(1) Eligibility to be prescribed as an institution in accordance with subsection (8) of section 95 of the Electoral Act is not defined. The following institutions are prescribed in the schedule to the Electoral Act regulations as those to which the provisions of the lastmentioned subsection apply:—

Braille Society Rest Home for the Aged Blind, 14 Sunbury Road, Victoria Park;
Edward Millen Home, Victoria Park;
Glendalough Home, Leederville (also known as Little Sisters of the Poor, Glendalough);
Mount Henry Women's Home, Canning Bridge;
Nazareth House, Geraldton;
Nazareth House, Hilton Park;
Salvation Army Eventide Home, Nedlands;
Salvation Army Graceville Women's Home, 79 Lincoln Street, Perth;
Salvation Army Old Ladies' Home, 15 Harvest Road North Fremantle;
Silver Chain Cottage Homes, 21 Wright Street, Perth;
Sunset Aged People's Home, Dalkeith;
Woodbridge Women's Home, Guildford;
Wooroloo Hospital.

(2) No specific categories of persons are provided for. It is the practice to seek the services of at least one responsible member of the staff of each of the above-mentioned institutions to be authorised in writing by the Chief Electoral Officer, in accordance with the provisions of subsection (8) of section 95 of the Act.

HOUSING COMMISSION LAND AT WOODLANDS

Successful Applicants

2. Mr. TOMS asked the Minister for Housing:

What are the names of the successful applicants for lots in the recent S.H.C. sale at Woodlands?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

Forty-four applications were received. Of these, five were ruled ineligible; nine did not exercise their option to select lots; and two withdrew applications after selection of lots.

The following 28 names are the remaining successful applicants:—

J. A. Robottom
C. J. Lawtie
J. W. Fraser
K. R. Spurling
G. D. Badge
H. V. Steenson
W. W. Ridley
A. L. McAuliffe
W. J. Duff
J. Broderick
R. J. Whittome
G. C. Read
T. B. Quain
R. F. Gilmour
G. J. Pannekoek
W. H. Crawford
K. G. Abbott
R. J. Doyle
R. W. Taylor
R. S. Hoffner
A. J. Thornett
I. L. Thompson
P. L. Tanham
J. B. Hahnel
J. A. Wellington
S. G. Bardsley
B. J. Mathews
I. S. Philip

WORKERS' COMPENSATION: MEDICAL BOARD

Examination and Assessment of Claims

3. Mr. MOIR asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

(1) Will he supply the date of the first examination and assessment of claimants for compensation by the Medical Board constituted under the provision of section 8, subsection (1D) of the Workers' Compensation Act?

(2) Where did this take place?

(3) What was the number of applicants examined?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

(1) The 22nd March, 1965.

(2) Perth.

(3) Six.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION: PNEUMOCONIOSIS CLAIMS

Mines Medical Officer: Approvals

4. Mr. MOIR asked the Minister for Labour:

(1) How many claims for workers' compensation for a disability due to pneumoconiosis were approved

for payment by the S.G.I.O. on the assessment of the Mines Medical Officer alone between the 14th December, 1964, and the 1st April, 1965?

First Schedule: Application of Clause 3

(2) Was clause 3 of the first schedule applied to any of these applicants?

(3) If so, to how many?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

(1) Twelve, which includes one who was subsequently examined by the Medical Board appointed under the Workers' Compensation Act although his claim was accepted in the first place on the assessment by the Mines Medical Officer.

(2) No.

(3) Answered by (2).

CHEST X-RAYS

Tuberculosis Cases Detected

5. Mr. MOIR asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

(1) In reference to the reply to question 13 on the 27th October, will he agree that a rather alarming situation is revealed; viz., that 970 new cases of tuberculosis were detected as a result of the compulsory chest X-rays carried out by the department during the four years under review?

Frequency of Examinations

(2) Does he not consider that in order that earlier detection of the disease may be possible more frequent examinations of the public be carried out than the four to five year period revealed in his reply?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

(1) The numbers quoted referred to total new cases of tuberculosis from all sources, as required in the original wording of the honourable member's question.

Cases detected through mass surveys were:—

1961—26
1962—60
1963—45
1964—33

(2) No.

ESPERANCE HARBOUR WHARF

Service Roads: Commonwealth Grant for Maintenance

6. Mr. MOIR asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Will the Esperance Shire Council receive a grant from the Government for the maintenance of the roads over which cargo from the new wharf will be transported from the port boundary junction to its destination pending the final decision of the ultimate method of conveying cargo to and from the wharf?

(2) If so, how much?

(3) If not, why not?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

It appears this question would have been more appropriately addressed to the Minister for Works, so it falls to my lot to answer it. The reply is:

(1) At this stage no consideration has been given to a grant to the Esperance Shire Council.

The Main Roads Department maintains the main road and substantially assists with maintenance on important secondary roads and school bus routes, as well as providing funds for the improvement of the developmental road system in the Shire of Esperance.

(2) and (3) Answered by (1).

FIRE BRIGADES AT ALBANY AND BUNBURY

Local Authority Contributions

7. Mr. HALL asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Can he advise the amount contributed from the general rate for fire brigade protection at Albany and Bunbury for the years ended the 30th June, 1964 and 1965?

Permanent and Volunteer Officers: Basis of Stationing

(2) What is the basis on which the Fire Brigade Board operates as to stationing permanent fire brigade officers and men in association with volunteers at the towns mentioned?

(3) Can he advise whether oil bunkering of ships has any bearing on the appointment of permanent fire brigade personnel in association with volunteers at the ports mentioned?

(4) How many permanent officers and firemen are stationed at Albany and Bunbury respectively?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

(1) The Fire Brigades Board's financial year ends on the 30th September and local authority contributions were as under—

	Year ended September 1964			1965		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Albany	2,549	6	4	2,513	13	8
Bunbury	2,268	1	0	2,378	16	8

(2) Regard is had to town population and the fire risks involved. Both Albany and Bunbury are port towns with populations in excess of 12,000.

(3) All factors, including oil bunkering of ships, are taken into consideration.

(4) One station officer and three firemen at both Albany and Bunbury.

NORTH-WEST DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD.

Government Guarantee for R. & I. Bank Advances

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

(1) Why did the Government consider it necessary to guarantee the account of North-West Development with the Rural and Industries Bank in respect of the advances made in connection with the purchase of the Broome Freezing and Chilling Works?

Government Payment of Interest on Advances

(2) In view of the fact that E. S. Clementson informed shareholders of North-West Development and related companies under his control that he expected North-West Development to earn 27½ per cent. on capital after making the requisite tax provision, why is the Government paying the interest on advances to the company?

Financial Arrangement with Government

(3) Will he supply details of the financial arrangement entered into so that the State's liability in respect of this matter may be known to Parliament?

Mr. COURT replied:

(1) This was not a question of a new guarantee. It was a continuation of an existing guarantee. At the time North-West Development Corporation Ltd. took over the Broome Freezing and Chilling Works Pty. Ltd. the latter company was already indebted to the Rural and Industries Bank.

(2) The Government was paying the interest on £100,000 at the rate of 5¼ per cent. to Broome Freezing and Chilling Works Pty. Ltd. prior to the change in major shareholding to North-West Development Corporation Ltd. Owing to the heavy expenditure by the new company and the great importance of the new works to the West Kimberley plus the fact that the deep water jetty would not be in operation until 1966, it was agreed that the interest subsidy would continue for three years. Also, the payment was conditional on the company trading at a loss in each of the three years during which reorganisation was taking place. Therefore any statement made by Mr. Clementson has little, if any, bearing on the arrangement.

(3) The financial arrangement entered into, which strengthened the Government position, was as follows:—

(a) *Accommodation.*

Existing accommodation of £200,000 to Broome Freezing and Chilling Works Pty. Ltd. supported by the Government guarantee to continue.

(b) *Repayments.*

Consecutive half-yearly instalments of £14,000 the first of which was payable on the 1st January, 1965, and the last on the 1st July, 1969, then by two half-yearly instalments of £28,000 payable on the 1st January, 1970, and the 1st July, 1970, and the balance on the 1st January, 1971.

(c) *Securities.*

First mortgage and first debenture over assets of Broome Freezing and Chilling Works Pty. Ltd. Mortgage and debenture over the pastoral lease applying to Leopold Downs Station. The debenture and mortgage are collateral to charges over Broome Freezing and Chilling Works Pty. Ltd.

(d) *Audited Financial Accounts.*

The company to submit audited annual accounts each year.

(e) *Insurance.*

All assets to be adequately covered and the bank's interests endorsed on the policies involved.

HOUSING COMMISSION LAND AT WOODLANDS

Access Roads: Specifications, Construction, and Cost

9. Mr. TOMS asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) What were the specifications for the construction of roads in the Woodlands area recently sold by the State Housing Commission?

(2) By whom were the roads constructed, and what was the cost per chain?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

(1) *Specifications:*

Clearing and earthworks as necessary for the full width of road reserve.

Formation boxed out for a width of 22 ft. and foundations 22 ft. wide overall of 6 in. consolidated limestone graded, rolled, and 3 in. watered consolidated rock base 20 ft. wide rolled, graded, waterbound and primed 20 ft. wide—priming—bitumen emulsion and ¼ in. metal.

Final bitumen surfacing to be to a width of 18 ft. of hot bituminous pre-mix type.

(2) Perth Shire Council: approximately £122 per chain as follows:—

	£
85.5 chains of roadway	9,260
Drainage	1,200
	10,260

In addition, 4.6 chains of access footway at a cost of £160.

SHIRE COUNCIL REVALUATIONS

Number, Appeals, and Resultant Tax Increases

10. Mr. DUNN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government:

Could he advise—

(a) the number of shire councils revalued over the past five years;

(b) the number of appeals in each shire against the valuations;

(c) the number of successful appeals for each shire;

(d) the amount and percentage increase in revenue for each of the following as a result of the valuations—

(i) land tax;

(ii) vermin tax;

(iii) regional development tax?

Mr NALDER replied:

(a) 49 Shire Councils.

287 Country Towns.

1961–62	9 shires	69 country towns
1962–63	6 "	54 "
1963–64	13 "	65 "
1964–65	11 "	53 "
1965–66	10 "	46 "

(b) and (c)—

		Appeals	Successful
1961–62	Bassendean	7	3
	Canning	7	7
	Cockburn	1	1
	Gingin	2	1
	Gosnells	5	3
	Kalamunda	6	.
	Mundaring	2	.
	Peppermint Grove	1	1
	Perth	8	2
	Swan-Guildford	6	2
	Wanneroo	1	.
	Melville	1	.
	Mosman Park	6	5
1962–63	Armadale-Kelmscott	3	1
	Augusta-Margaret River	6	6
	Bayswater	10	10
	Beverley	1	.
	Boddington	4	1
	Bridgetown	2	1
	Collie	1	1
	Dundas	3	3
	Esperance	11	1
	Gosnells	5	1
	Kalgoorlie	17	4
	Koorda	3	1
	Lake Grace	2	2
	Leonora	7	6
	Manjimup	40	28
	Meekatharra	2	1
	Murray	7	5
	Perth	47	11
	Serpentine-Jarrahdale	1	1
	Swan-Guildford	2	2
	Wandering	1	1
	Waroona	4	4
	Yilgarn	1	1
1963–64	Augusta-Margaret River	3	2
	Bridgetown	3	3
	Carnamah	2	.
	Collie	6	2
	Cue	5	5
	Dundas	2	.
	Esperance	1	.
	Greenbushes	3	3
	Harvey	5	1
	Kalgoorlie	5	2
	Manjimup	7	3
	Nyabing-Pingrup	1	.
	Roebourne	1	1
	Westonia	1	.
	Williams	1	1
	Yilgarn	1	1
1964–65	Bridgetown	1	1
	Capel	6	5
	Collie	1	.
	Cuballing	3	.
	Dardanup	5	4
	Donnybrook	1	1
	Dundas	2	1
	Goomalling	1	1
	Harvey	2	1
	Kalgoorlie	24	6
	Kellerberrin	1	.
	Kojonup	1	.
	Kulin	6	2
	Leonora	3	3
	Manjimup	4	1
	Merredin	1	.
	Moora	12	.
	Nannup	1	.
	Pingelly	2	.
	Yilgarn	2	2
1965–66	Not yet compiled or available.		

(d) Figures are not available for individual local authorities but the following denotes the overall and percentage increase in total collections per year.

	Land Tax		Vermin Tax		Regional Development Tax	
	£	Per cent.	£	Per cent.	£	Per cent.
1960–61	423,103	28·2	117,115	15·0	commenced	
1961–62	175,744 (decrease)	16·3	8,899 (decrease)	6·8	14,314	6·4
1962–63	2,334	·2	8,375	6·8	49,539	21·1
1963–64	72,446	5·7	23,433	18·0	9,127 (decrease)	4·0
1964–65	92,575	6·9	33,329	21·7	42,316	21·7

FLUORIDE TABLETS

Free Issue: Fremantle City Council Scheme

11. Mr. FLETCHER asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health:
(1) Is he aware—
(a) of a 5th June, 1965, Press comment "Fluoride Scheme Interest Spreads";
(b) that other local authorities are interested in the Fremantle City Council's free fluoride distribution scheme;
(c) that the acting Chief Health Inspector of Fremantle City Council had stated that at least half the estimated 6,000 children in the Fremantle district would receive the free tablets?

Free Issue by Government to Local Authorities

(2) On the grounds of cost from other sources and with a view to improving juvenile dental and general health, will he seek ways and means of encouraging other State local authorities to emulate Fremantle City Council in this respect by, if necessary, making fluoride tablets available free of charge from the Public Health Department to local authorities for distribution?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) No. Free drugs are frequently wasted or otherwise abused. Any parent who is prepared to give a child a daily tablet of fluoride throughout childhood is unlikely to be deterred by the cost of 10s. per annum that would arise from purchase through normal channels.

To provide free tablets for 200,000 children would cost the State £100,000 per annum. This amount is greatly in excess of the cost of fluoridation of water supplies. The latter is a much more effective way of preventing dental caries.

GOVERNMENT BOARDS

Number in Operation

12. Mr. JAMIESON asked the Premier:
(1) How many Government boards are in operation in Western Australia at present?
(2) Would he supply a list of these boards?

Mr. BRAND replied:

(1) There are 88 boards which pay all or some of their members a fee. In addition, there are a number of other boards whose members do not receive payment. If the honourable member desires details of these, it will be necessary to circularise departments to obtain the information.

(2) The list is as follows:—

Schedule of Boards, Commissions, etc., Paying Fees to Members.

Premier, Treasurer, and Minister for Tourists:

Superannuation Board.
Public Service Appeal Board.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Agriculture and Electricity:

State Electricity Commission.
Milk Board.
W.A. Egg Marketing Board.
Midland Junction Abattoir Board.
W.A. Potato Marketing Board.
Metropolitan Markets Trust.
Cinematograph Operators' Board.
Electrical Contractors' Licensing Board.
Electrical Workers' Board.
Veterinary Surgeons' Board.
Land Settlement Board.
War Service Land Settlement Appeal Board.
Argentine Ants Committee.
Dried Fruits Board.
Soil Conservation Advisory Committee.
Agriculture Protection Board.
Veterinary Medicines Advisory Committee.
Poultry Industry Trust Fund.
Banana Industry Compensation Trust Fund.
Fruit Growing Industry Trust Fund.
Apple Sales Advisory Committee.
Potato Growing Industry Committee.
W.A. Onion Marketing Board.
Dairy Products Marketing Board.
Barley Marketing Board.

Minister for Industrial Development, Railways, and the North-West:

Charcoal Iron and Steel Industry Board of Management.

Minister for Education and Native Welfare:

Government School Teachers' Tribunal.

Minister for Mines and Justice:
- W.A. Coal Industry Tribunal.
- Coal Mine Workers' Pension Tribunal.
- Companies Auditors Board.
- Land Agents Supervisory Committee.
- Mine Workers' Relief Fund.
- Coal Mines Accident Relief Fund.
- Coal Industry Board of Reference.
- Parole Board.

Minister for Lands, Forests, and Immigration:
- National Parks Board and Acclimatisation Committee. (Zoological Gardens.)
- Emu Point (Albany) Reserve Board.
- Surveyors' Licensing Board.
- Rural Relief Trustees.
- Pastoral Appraisement Board.
- Nomenclature Advisory Committee.
- Land Board.
- Bush Fires Board.
- State Dairying Industry Advisory Committee.

Minister for Works and Water Supplies:
- Fremantle Harbour Trust.
- Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Board.
- Albany Harbour Board.
- Bunbury Harbour Board.
- Drainage Rating Appeal Committee.
- Metropolitan Water Supply Board Appeal Board (Valuations).
- Irrigation Commission.
- Warren and Lefroy Rivers Advisory Committee.
- Gascoyne River Advisory Committee.
- Swan River Conservation Board.

Minister for Local Government, Town Planning, and Child Welfare:
- Metropolitan Region Planning Authority.
- Building Advisory Committee.
- Local Government Boundaries Commission.
- Town Planning Board.
- Metropolitan Valuation Appeal Court.
- Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust.

Chief Secretary and Minister for Police and Traffic:
- Inebriates Advisory Board.
- Lotteries Commission.
- W.A. Fire Brigades Board.
- Totalisator Agency Board.

Minister for Housing and Labour:
- Factory Welfare Board.
- Retail Advisory Committee.
- Builders' Registration Board.
- Painters' Registration Board.
- Hairdressers' Registration Board.
- State Housing Commission.
- Building Societies Advisory Committee.

Minister for Transport:
- Transport Advisory Board.
- Taxi Board.
- Metropolitan Transport Trust.

Minister for Health and Fisheries and Fauna:
- Medical Board.
- Physiotherapists' Registration Board.
- Chiropodists' Registration Board.
- Food Standards Advisory Committee.
- Pesticides Advisory Committee.
- Board of Visitors, Mental Health Services, Claremont, Greenplace, Whitby Falls, Lemnos, Heathcote.
- Sunset Board of Visitors.
- Fauna Protection Advisory Committee.
- Fishermen's Advisory Committee.
- Vermin Control and Fauna Conservation Co-ordinating Committee.

RAILWAY TRAVEL TO NEW SOUTH WALES

Sleeper Accommodation: Bookings

13. Mr. COURT (Minister for Railways): During last Wednesday's sitting, I promised, on behalf of the member for Kalgoorlie, to make some inquiries about bookings from Kalgoorlie to the Eastern States. I made some inquiries, but I understand that before I completed them the honourable member received all the information he wanted, so that he no longer desires the matter to be persevered with.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

FLAX INDUSTRY AT BOYUP BROOK

Government Expenditure

Mr. ROWBERRY asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

Concerning the flax industry which operated at Boyup Brook until recently, would the Minister give the following information:—

(1) What was the total amount of—

(a) Western Australian Government funds spent in aid of this industry;

(b) Federal Government expenditure?

Private Investors and Location of Shareholders

(2) What was the total amount invested privately?

(3) How many shareholders, and where were these shareholders resident?

Growers: Number

(4) How many farmers were engaged in growing flax for the industry?

Employees: Number and Present Circumstances

(5) How many people were otherwise employed?

(6) Have all of these people found other employment?

(7) If not, how many are still unemployed?

Reasons for Closure

(8) What were the principal causes which led to the industry folding up; and any other relevant information such as—did it go into voluntary liquidation?

Mr. COURT replied:

I thank the honourable member for giving notice of this question. I have endeavoured to get as much information as possible as I understand he wants the answers urgently.

(1) (a)

	£
Advances from loan funds	244,459
Grants and subsidies	106,056
Commitment to R. & I. Bank: Guaranteed overdraft	50,000
	400,515
Less repayments	66,791
	£333,724

(b) Amounts paid to the company by way of bounty by Commonwealth Government—not available at this short notice.

(2) Subscribed capital of Blackwood Flax Co-operative Co. Ltd. was £13,601.

(3) Total shareholders numbered 287. Of these, approximately 180 were resident in the south-west of the State and the balance in other parts of the State and the Eastern States.

(4) This depended on the area of crop planted, but usually averaged between 35 to 40. This, of course, was only part of their farming activities at those times.

(5) From September to November, which was the highest normal period during any year, 55 were employed at the mill. At the time of closure, 28 were employed.

(6) As far as can be ascertained, the majority have either obtained or been offered other employment.

(7) Answered by (6).

(8) The main reasons for ceasing operations were—

(a) Uneconomic outlook for the industry.

(b) Unfavourable price for products.

(c) Commonwealth bounty not available.

(d) Inability of the company to sell its products.

At an extraordinary meeting of shareholders, the State Government, as debenture holder, was requested by the shareholders to appoint a receiver.

ROAD MAINTENANCE (CONTRIBUTION) BILL

Third Reading

MR. O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Transport) [4.50 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR. BICKERTON (Pilbara) [4.51 p.m.]: I wish to reflect a little on this measure which the House has seen fit to pass through the second reading and Committee stages. I have no complaint about the result. After all is said and done, I realise that the numbers are stacked against me. The House has made its decision, and one has no complaint about that. Further, I have no intention to use my head to demolish a brick wall. But I still feel that this Bill is not in the best interests of the State, because Western Australia relies greatly on the heavy haulage of goods. In fact, I doubt very much whether there is any portion of the State where road transport, in some form or another, is not used.

In addition, there are some parts where only heavy forms of transport can be used, because that is the only method of haulage that is economical. Our State is so vast and the goods hauled are taken over such great distances that the use of smaller trucks which would be exempt from this legislation would be out of the question. I realise that heavy haulage presents its problems according to the condition of the roads; but in a State that relies on

heavy haulage so much, the answer to those problems lies in the construction of roads to suit the type of transport we are compelled to use rather than in taxing that particular type of transport to an extent where it becomes extremely costly to transport goods in the areas to which I refer, and particularly in the north.

I very much doubt whether there is any road transport organisation that is happy with this legislation. Of course, I admit it is not often than anyone is happy about taxing measures that are passed by Parliament. In this case, however, I am of the opinion we are hitting very hard the people in remote areas where the cost of living is one of the highest in Australia. Further, we are hitting at people who we hope will remain in those remote areas, and we are handicapping, to a great extent, industries which at this stage of their development are already finding it difficult to survive in those parts.

There is no doubt, either, that this Bill will hit the primary producer very badly, and I feel sure it will have the effect of crippling some of the smaller mines in the north-west. The Premier is determined to have his matching money, but we went through all this aspect of the question on the second reading and there is no point in mentioning it again. Nevertheless, I would have thought that, with the experts at his disposal, the Premier would find some other means of raising this matching money instead of being determined to use this method which hits heavily primary producers in the first instance, and industry generally, and will increase the costs of users of road transport to a considerable extent.

If the people in the north could have their say on this matter, and if this matching money is so necessary, I wonder whether they would rather agree to an overall increase in the registration fees for vehicles because it appears to me that that might be a fairer method. In fact, I feel sure that anyone whose registration fee was increased by £2 a year would be a lot happier than he will be with the provisions in this Bill when he knows that every apple he eats will cost him an extra penny; every pumpkin he buys will cost him an extra threepence; and every gallon of petrol will cost him more than what he is paying now.

Mr. O'Connor: The private motorist is not the one who is causing the damage to the roads.

Mr. BICKERTON: I realise that; but the private motorist is the one who is going to pay the increases on all goods that will be carted to the north-west when this legislation is passed. We went through all that on the second reading. If it were not for the traffic of commercial vehicles travelling to the north the state of the roads would not be of such great concern. We could hardly afford to construct a first-class road and maintain it in good condition purely for the benefit of the private motorist. One of the primary purposes of constructing good roads is to develop the country through which the roads pass.

Mr. O'Connor: They also give access to the various properties.

Mr. BICKERTON: That is so; but by the same token, unless the owners of those properties are able to have the goods and requisites necessary for running their properties transported to them, one could have 20 motorcars which could be used to travel to and from a property, but they would not be much use in developing it.

Mr. Craig: Would you not say that the subsidy on petroleum products compensates them to a great extent?

Mr. BICKERTON: No; I would not, because, unfortunately, before we received the subsidy we had a rise in the price of petrol which completely nullified it.

Mr. Craig: No.

Mr. BICKERTON: Yes we did, and it will not be long before there is another rise in the price of petrol. Further, since the subsidy was granted on petroleum products there has been a 10 per cent. increase on haulage rates, which has been applied by the hauliers' association, so any benefit the people in the north may have gained by the subsidy on petroleum products has been nullified by that increase. The subsidy payable on petrol may have maintained prices at their previous level, but that has definitely been nullified by the increases that have been made in the charges for the haulage of goods required for production.

In this State we seem to get carried away with what other States are doing. It is rather amazing how one State, when its Government realises that another State has introduced a certain piece of legislation, wants to introduce a similar piece of legislation if it suits it. That is why we are introducing this legislation because it will operate in other States of the Commonwealth. However, if another State introduces amendments to legislation which do not suit this State it is a different matter altogether; they are vigorously opposed. For instance, we know that there are certain sections in workers' compensation legislation in other States that are an improvement on the sections in our legislation; but the arguments put forward are that, because those sections are applicable in some other State it does not necessarily mean they are applicable in Western Australia. That is the reason why any amendments to improve the legislation in this State are defeated.

I could cite many other instances where this State has chosen Eastern States legislation that suited the Government, but has rejected that which did not. The Eastern

States are in an entirely different position from Western Australia because they are more heavily populated. In most cases they are equipped with adequate railway systems, which give people a transport alternative for the cartage of goods; and, indeed, where legislation similar to this does apply, exemptions are granted regardless of whether the legislation is good or bad.

However, that is not the argument at this stage. In the case of heavy haulage, not too much notice should be taken of what applies in a small and very highly-productive State such as Victoria. In fact, as we rely so much on heavy haulage it would be a great advantage to us if some of the restrictions that apply to the operators of heavy haulage vehicles in other States did not apply in Western Australia.

Perhaps we would be much better off. We could say that we are aware this tax would hit the hauliers right, left, and centre, but if they could keep their costs down they would be welcome to operate in the State under much better circumstances and conditions. Why should we have to fall into line with the other States, when the circumstances in our own case are as different from theirs as chalk is from cheese?

I know the cost of administration has already been touched on, and the Minister has estimated that it will be about £50,000. That might be the start. It will not surprise me if another new Government department is formed; and if it is it will be at a greater cost. In these matters if the experts estimate the cost at £50,000, then I suggest a closer estimate would be in the vicinity of £80,000.

This is another piece of legislation which will, no doubt, encourage the road hauliers to dodge the tax, and they will be looking for every possible loophole to get around it. I imagine one method would be to use a vehicle of less than eight tons on short routes—perhaps on routes from Perth to places like Bunbury—where heavy vehicles are now being used. I imagine they would use two vehicles each of eight-ton capacity to dodge the tax. However, as the operating costs of the two smaller vehicles would be higher than the cost of one heavy vehicle—for a start two drivers would have to be engaged—the people in those centres, such as Bunbury, would be copping it in the neck, because of the increase in the haulage rate brought about by this measure.

It appears to me that the roads will have to be kept up to standard so that heavy transport can utilise them without causing the damage which it is now supposed to cause. I am still not satisfied that, in respect of interstate hauliers, the introduction of a form of road toll on east-west transport is not the best method, because most of the heavy traffic plies between the Eastern States and Western Australia. If such a proposal were introduced, and if the matter were looked into further, no doubt the interests of the road hauliers could be safeguarded by some such form of toll, as a contribution towards the cost of the roads in Western Australia.

The Minister said that nothing had convinced him that sufficient research could be made to find ways and means of making interstate hauliers pay towards the cost of our roads, other than the proposed method. Of course, this method will penalise not only the people of this State, but also the road hauliers and industry generally, because in the long run it is the average citizen who will pay the tax.

I received a letter—as, I suppose, have many other members—from the Farmers' Union this morning. It appears that that organisation is quite upset at the introduction of this measure. I do not intend to read the letter, as no doubt most members have copies. I do not know whether the Farmers' Union is the only body that is displeased with the Bill, and it will be interesting to hear the Minister informing the House how much opposition to its introduction he has received from various organisations, from transport operators, from mining companies, and the like.

I shall leave the matter at that, as I realise that the numbers are against me in this House. I hope that when the measure is dealt with in another place the Minister there will defer the consideration of the matter until such time as it is looked into further, with the hope that a better method of raising the money required to obtain the matching grant from the Commonwealth Government will be found.

MR. NORTON (Gascoyne) [5.4 p.m.]: As the member for Pilbara said, since the measure was before us last all country members have received a letter from the Farmers' Union requesting members to protest against it, because that organisation considers the tax will hit the primary producer very hard. So the members of the Country Party know exactly what that letter contains, and what a number of their constituents are thinking. I would like to hear the views of those members in relation to the contents of the letter.

It is appropriate for me to point out that they have already seen the Minister in respect of this matter, but they could not get any satisfaction from him in respect of exemptions from the proposed tax, such as those which are contained in the Victorian legislation. They are interested in the exemptions which would be of assistance to them, particularly in relation to primary production. The Bill should have contained a provision to exempt all primary produce, because in the long run it is the primary producer who will be hit the

hardest. In fact he is the only person, apart from those working with and for him, who will be hit hard.

With the exception of the remote areas mentioned by the member for Pilbara, where mining companies operate, the whole of the outback of Western Australia is engaged in primary production which relies 100 per cent. on heavy haulage for the transport of produce and the goods required. If the producer carts his own produce he would have to meet the tax personally; but where a cartage contractor is engaged then, although he initially pays the tax, it is passed on eventually to those whom he serves. So in the remote areas the tax is passed on to the primary producer and the people who are developing those parts of the State.

On Friday last the *Daily News* published a leading article on this matter. It is as follows:—

A Strange Attitude

> The State Government puts itself in a peculiar position when it virtually decides—at least in terms of road maintenance—that the heavily-populated southern part of the State should not subsidise the development of our north.
>
> It is a strange attitude to adopt at a time when there is strong and widespread feeling in Australia that the southern States, particularly Victoria and NSW, should be called upon to assist northern development.
>
> Obviously any Commonwealth money spent in the north of Australia would have to be diverted from developmental activities in the south.
>
> In opposing a proposal for northern areas to be exempt from a new road maintenance charge on heavy vehicles the Government has ignored the likely effects of that levy.
>
> Isolated northern communities depend heavily on road transport for everyday business and domestic supplies. They already pay heavily for these supplies because of the long distance covered by transport vehicles.

That sets out very clearly the effect of this tax. It points out that in the case of consolidated communities, such as those in Perth, the tax will not apply; and that it will apply only to those who are far removed from the populated centres, and who have to rely mainly on road transport for the cartage of their commodities and produce.

During the second reading debate the member for Mt. Marshall said that the Government had no mandate for introducing this Bill. He pointed out that both the Liberal Party and the Country Party gave an undertaking in the last election campaign that there would be no increase in taxation on primary production. Yet under this Bill a very substantial tax on primary production is proposed. The Minister has asked where the required money would come from. It is natural for us in the Opposition to say the money should come from the Commonwealth.

A small article appeared in the *Northern Times* of the 8th April last. It pointed out that the Premier expected to receive quite a large amount of money, other than matching money, from the Commonwealth Government. The article is as follows:—

N-W PROJECTS

> Speaking at the Engineers' Conference in Perth, Mr. J. Parker, director of engineering in the North West referred to two new projects for the North West.
>
> He said it was proposed to build a second beef road scheme to open up the Kimberley and Pilbara areas.
>
> The other proposal was the multi purpose irrigation project for the Fitzroy and Margaret Rivers.
>
> At present the government was seeking Commonwealth help for a £7,700,000 beef road scheme.

Mr. Parker is well qualified to make those statements, because he holds a very important position in the Government department.

If the Commonwealth Government can make this money available—and the Premier seems to think it would if he were to ask for the money—then in respect of the development of our outback areas it should make special grants—perhaps not as big as the grant referred to in the article I have just read. In fact, the grant which the Premier is seeking from the Commonwealth is twice as large as the amount which the Commonwealth Government has offered in the form of matching money. Most of the money required to obtain the matching grant will have to come from the remote areas of the State. In opposing the third reading I should point out that this State will not be starved for road funds if it goes about raising the money in the right manner. It is not the heavy hauliers who will pay the tax finally, but John Citizen living in the remote areas.

MR. TONKIN (Melville—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [5.12 p.m.]: Ordinarily I would not have intervened in this debate, because the proposals would not be expected to affect the people in my electorate; but a few minutes ago I received a telephone call from a constituent of mine, who is engaged in heavy haulage in the north. He is most disturbed about the proposal in the Bill, and he says it threatens to put him out of business. He explained that his trips run into some 900 miles at a time, and he estimates that the proposed tax will cost him at least £60

a trip; and as he transports cattle, the approximate impost will be about £3 per head. Someone will have to pay that extra cost. If he cannot recover the cost from the primary producer then there will be nothing left in the business for himself, and he will have to discontinue his service.

Mr. O'Connor: What is the make and the capacity of his truck?

Mr. TONKIN: He told me the capacity is nine tons. He says that sufficient thought has not been given to the actual impost of this tax upon those who will have to carry it; that he has given considerable thought to the matter; that he can see no alternative; and that the impost will be so heavy upon those for whom he carts that there will be very great disturbance in his business.

I suggest, even at this late hour, that the Government go further into the matter in order to ascertain whether the seeking of matching money in the way proposed will not in the long run cost the Government more than it will receive in payments from the Commonwealth. I dealt with this aspect recently when I said that we should not go after matching money simply because it was available; and that we should consider the cost—not only the direct, but also the indirect cost—of obtaining such matching money as is offered in the various spheres of government.

It might very well be that, in connection with the proposal in the Bill, to qualify for the matching money from the Commonwealth Government for the provision and maintenance of roads we will impose upon industry and the people of this State a burden which in the ultimate will be far more costly than the benefit we will receive from the matching money.

I personally feel that aspect of the matter has not been sufficiently well considered by the Government and the result is we have this legislation, the real effect of which is not being fully appreciated.

MR. RHATIGAN (Kimberley) [5.16 p.m.]: Like other speakers on this side of the House I suggest that the Government have another look at this Bill—even in another place—before putting it into effect. If the Government is sincere in its efforts to populate the north, this is one of the worst measures it could possibly bring before this House. It will undoubtedly increase living costs right throughout the north.

From what I have read in the Press the Commonwealth Government appears as though it is now sympathetic towards the further Ord River Dam scheme. Therefore will the Premier tell the House what effect this extra cost will have on that scheme? That is only one item. The member for Murchison and I represent the two largest electorates in Western Australia—the Murchison and the Kimberley—and the great cost that is going to be placed upon the people who live in those remote areas and who are endeavouring to develop them is far beyond the imagination of members of this House and the Minister for Transport.

It appears as though this Bill will go through this House because of the numbers on the Government side. Irrespective of what any individual on the Government side might think, he evidently is not going to express his opinion. This is one of the worst measures I have known in regard to the development of the north-west, apart from the little subject I mentioned the other night.

So I suggest to the Minister and to the Premier that this Bill be given further consideration by the Government in another place with the object of making amendments to it.

MR. O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Transport) [5.18 p.m.]: At this stage I do not wish to take up a lot of the time of the House in connection with the third reading because most of the points brought up today were discussed in the House last Thursday. Only two or three new points have been brought forward by members and I would like to deal briefly with these.

Firstly, the member for Pilbara said he did not think this charge should be made against road hauliers and suggested that private motorists pay the money. I think it is ludicrous to suggest that private motorists should be expected to pay for the damage done to roads by heavy hauliers.

Mr. Bickerton: I said by all motor vehicles.

Mr. O'CONNOR: That would include the private motorist.

Mr. Bickerton: Of course.

Mr. O'CONNOR: If the member for Pilbara had a good look at this Bill and at the ruling by the High Court in Victoria in connection with this matter he would find it was stated in information put before the High Court that vehicles of four tons and those over four tons caused a disproportionate amount of damage to the roads—between .37d. and .41d. per ton mile; and it is for this the charge is being made. I do not see why the private motorist should be asked to have a levy on his license fee in connection with this road damage; and I do not agree with this point brought forward by the member for Pilbara.

The member for Gascoyne mentioned something about exemptions in Victoria, and stated the same exemptions should apply here. He also mentioned that the Farmers' Union had been to see me in connection with this point and asked for these exemptions. I would like to bring to

the attention of the House the fact that while in Victoria some exemptions are given there is no reduction whatsoever in license fees. In this legislation we intend to give a half reduction in license fees, which will run into something like £175,000 per year. It is all very well for anyone to say we would like the best of that State's legislation and the best of another State's legislation, but we cannot have the best of everything. In Western Australia we have tried to do the best we can.

Mr. Rhatigan: It seems we are getting the worst of everything.

Mr. O'CONNOR: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition normally goes into his figures very well and quotes factual figures to the House, but those he quoted to me in connection with the nine-ton truck are not correct. He stated that the man who rang him today said it would cost him £60 to do a 900-mile trip with a nine-ton truck. If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition works out that figure he will find the actual cost is in the vicinity of £11. I have had the figure checked, and I think if the Deputy Leader of the Opposition works it out he will find that £60 is not correct.

Mr. Tonkin: It was for a nine-ton load on the vehicle.

Mr. O'CONNOR: That is correct. It would cost about £11. I worked it out for a nine-ton load on a vehicle with a six-ton tare, which would be a heavy tare for a nine-ton load. If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition works it out he will find that the figure could not be £60 or anything like it—it would be £11; or, at the outside, £12.

Mr. Tonkin: I must admit I did not work it out. The gentleman who rang me quoted £60 for the trip.

Mr. O'CONNOR: I thought the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would have checked the figure before quoting it to this House, just as I checked the figure he gave me.

Mr. Tonkin: I did not give it as my figure.

Mr. O'CONNOR: The figure quoted by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is incorrect and the amount would be somewhere less than £12 on a 900-mile trip with a nine-ton load and a six-ton tare—and that would be a heavy tare. We have to bear in mind that the person concerned would have a half reduction in license fee. I am not sure what the license fee of a nine-ton capacity truck would be, but I should think it would be in the vicinity of £50 or £60. Therefore, this would be taken off the figures for a period of a year. In other words, the party concerned would have a reduction of some £25 to £30 off his license fee.

I cannot see any reasons for altering the decision this House made the other night. As I said previously, I do not wish to dwell too long on this subject because most of the points were covered during the debate on the second reading on Thursday.

Question put and passed.

Point of Order

Mr. BICKERTON: Mr. Speaker, I did not hear you declare the vote.

Mr. Graham: You did not declare the vote.

Mr. Bickerton: Divide!

The SPEAKER (Mr. Hearman): I think the honourable member is late, because I made the declaration.

Mr. Bickerton: I did not hear it.

The SPEAKER (Mr. Hearman): That does not mean to say I did not make it; but in deference to your statement I will call for a division. Twice I have been interrupted.

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

Ayes—25

Mr. Bovell	Mr. Hutchinson
Mr. Brand	Mr. Lewis
Mr. Burt	Mr. W. A. Manning
Mr. Court	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Craig	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Crommelin	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Dunn	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Durack	Mr. O'Connor
Mr. Elliott	Mr. O'Neil
Mr. Gayfer	Mr. Rushton
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Williams
Mr. Hart	Mr. I. W. Manning
Dr. Henn	*(Teller.)*

Noes—19

Mr. Bickerton	Mr. Jamieson
Mr. Brady	Mr. Kelly
Mr. Davies	Mr. Moir
Mr. Evans	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Fletcher	Mr. Rowberry
Mr. Graham	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Hall	Mr. Toms
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Norton
Mr. W. Hegney	*(Teller)*

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr. Runciman	Mr. May
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Curran

Majority for—6.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILLS (2): RETURNED

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

Bills returned from the Council with amendments.

STAMP ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

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

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This measure contains a number of proposed amendments to the Stamp Act and it is being introduced for the following reasons: firstly, to raise additional revenue for the purposes referred to when the Budget for the current financial year was presented to Parliament; secondly, to prepare the Stamp Act for the introduction of decimal currency; thirdly, to allow the use of a modern and efficient system for stamping documents and recording collections; and, finally, to remove from the Act certain sections which no longer apply and to resolve several difficulties which have arisen with assessment under existing conditions.

When I introduced the Budget for this year I analysed the financial position of the State and explained why it was essential to increase certain taxes and charges. I therefore do not propose to cover this ground again, but I will remind members that unless additional revenue is raised in this current financial year we will finish with a deficit of a substantial order which would have to be made good from the State's loan allocation. This, of course, would be most undesirable, particularly at this stage of the State's development, when there are so many pressing needs to satisfy from our slender capital resources.

When presenting the Budget I advised members that it was proposed to increase stamp duty collections as from the 1st December, under a number of headings. Stamp duty on bills of exchange payable on demand or sight, which includes cheques, is to be raised from 3d. to 6d. This increase is estimated to yield an additional £234,000 in the current financial year and £400,000 in a full year's operation. At present the rate of duty is among the lowest in Australia. In Victoria and Tasmania the rate is 6d. and both Queensland and South Australia have announced that they intend to increase their rates to this level. In New South Wales the rate is 4d., but no doubt it will be raised with the advent of decimal currency, which will be introduced on the 14th February.

Conveyances or transfers of property currently attract duty of 12s. 6d. for every £50 or part thereof of value. It is proposed to retain this rate for all transactions where the consideration does not exceed £5,000. Where the amount exceeds £5,000, it is proposed to levy duty at the rate of 15s. per every £50 or part thereof of the excess above £5,000.

In New South Wales duty is payable at the rate of 25s. for every £100 or part thereof up to a value of £7,000. The excess above this figure is charged with the duty of 30s. per £100 of value. Victoria levies the same rate as this State but only up to the value of £3,500. The excess above this value attracts a rate of 15s. for every £50 or part thereof.

The new stamp duty rates which it is proposed to charge on conveyances and transfers of property in this State are expected to yield £76,000 during the current financial year, and £130,000 in a full year.

Share transfers now attract 3d. for every £5 of the value of the shares transferred, with the exception of shares held in mining companies, which are charged with only 1d. per transfer. The rate of transfers of shares, other than those of mining companies, is considerably below that charged in New South Wales and Victoria, where the rate is 9d. for every £10 or part thereof of the consideration. It is proposed to increase the rate in this State to 1s. for every £12 10s. or part thereof of the value of the shares transferred. The increased rate is estimated to add £13,000 to collections this year and £22,000 for a full year's operation.

A stamp duty of 10s. for every £100 or fractional part of £100 is currently charged on the value of new motor vehicles licensed and on the value of secondhand motor vehicles transferred. It is proposed that this be increased to 15s. per £100. The increased yield from this higher rate for the current year is expected to amount to £90,000. For a full year an additional £175,000 should be received. The corresponding rates in Victoria and New South Wales are 20s. per cent. and 10s. per cent. respectively, although I understand the latter State intends to reduce the rate to 8s. per cent. This is mainly, I think, to honour an election undertaking.

Broadly, all the increases which I have detailed are in line with the average of the rates charged in New South Wales and Victoria. Collectively, they are expected to produce additional receipts totalling £413,000 this year and this amount has been included in the Estimates now before Parliament. Provision is made in the Bill to impose these increases and bring them into operation from the beginning of next month.

On the 14th February, 1966, decimal currency will be introduced into this country and from that date all assessments made under the provisions of the Stamp Act will have to be in the new currency. Under the existing law there are a large number of rates such as 1d. and 3d., which will not convert exactly to decimal currency. For this reason action is necessary under the Stamp Act to ensure that the changeover in currency operates smoothly and with the minimum of inconvenience to the public.

The specific items dealt with in the Bill to prepare for the introduction of decimal currency are—

exchange of stamps;
letters of allotment or renunciation and scrip certificates;

receipts given to or by a principal or agent;
transfer of shares in an incorporated mining company carrying on the business of mining within the State;
receipts given by or to a building society;
contract notes and options given for the sale or purchase of shares or securities;
betting tickets;
bills of lading or shipping receipts;
mortgages, bonds, and debentures;
hire purchase agreements.

I shall deal with each of these items in turn. Under present legislation, the Commissioner of Stamps is empowered to exchange stamps affixed to documents under certain defined conditions and it is mandatory that he charge a fee in these cases. He has, however, no power to exchange or refund money on unused adhesive stamps.

With the introduction of decimal currency, a number of stamps of existing currency held by the public will not be readily usable. This is particularly true of threepenny stamps.

It is therefore desirable that power be given to the Commissioner of Stamps to exchange those stamps for stamps of equivalent value in decimal currency. In these circumstances it would be unreasonable to charge a fee for the exchange as the need to effect these transactions arises from circumstances completely beyond the control of the individual. These are also occasions when the cash refunds for stamps are justified. For example, duty stamps may be held by the executor of a deceased estate for which he has no use, or where an individual or company ceases business and has on hand a quantity of duty stamps.

At present the commissioner has no power to make cash refunds. For those reasons, provision has been included in the Bill to permit the commissioner to exchange old currency stamps for those in decimal currency, to make cash refunds, and waive fees when the circumstances warrant these actions.

It would be convenient to deal with the next four items together as they are all of a similar character. In this State there are a number of documents subject to a stamp duty of 1d. These are petty and irritating taxes and with the introduction of decimal currency, present conversion problems as there is no exact new currency equivalent of a penny.

The four types of documents subject to this small tax are letters of allotment or renunciation of shares, principal and agents' receipts, the transfer of shares in mining companies, and receipts given by building societies.

Duty on shares, scrip and letters of allotment or renunciation raises approximately £1,200 per annum. There is no corresponding duty imposed in Victoria and in New South Wales letters of allotment or renunciation only are taxed, but at a higher rate. In cases of receipts given by agents to principals or by principals to agents, fully stamped receipts are required as evidence of transactions between agents and third parties. For this reason the stamp duty on receipts given by principals to agents or by agents to principals is reduced to 1d. on each receipt. This rate of duty yields less than £500 per annum.

Duty on transfers of mining shares yields only an estimated £250 each year. In New South Wales these transactions are exempt but they are taxed in Victoria.

In the case of building societies, representations have been received requesting that they be relieved of the need to affix 1d. duty stamp to receipts given and received by them on the ground that these and certain other documents are exempt in New South Wales. The applicants also point out that receipts given by building societies in Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, and Tasmania, are exempt. The total amount received annually from these small transactions is approximately £3,000.

Because of the difficulties which are involved in collection and policing, and the problem of conversion to decimal currency, it is proposed to repeal the provisions relating to these small impositions, and clauses to this effect have been inserted in the Bill.

Contract notes issued by stockbrokers to an agent or principal advising him that shares or securities have been purchased or sold on his behalf attract stamp duty at the following rates:—

Where the value is under £50, 3d.;
From £50 to £100, 6d.;
From £100 to £500, 1s.;
From £500 upwards, 2s.

All these with the exception of the threepenny rate will convert exactly to decimal currency. It is therefore proposed to eliminate the one that does not, and accordingly the Bill provides that transactions under £100 will, after the 1st January, 1966, be charged at the rate of 6d. As there are relatively few transactions under £50, the gain to revenue from this proposal will not be of any great significance.

There is also a provision in the Act which allows option notes to purchase or sell shares or securities, to be stamped at half the contract note rates. If the option is taken up the note confirming this action attracts further duty, again at half of the rates imposed on contract notes.

In order to avoid difficulties arising from the conversion to decimal currency, the Bill contains a provision to exempt options

on shares or securities valued at less than £100 but if taken up full rates are to be charged on the transaction. Under these arrangements unexercised options of below £100 will not attract duty, but as the number of these transactions is very small there will be little loss of revenue.

The current rates imposed under the Act on betting tickets are 1d., 1½d., and 3d. per ticket. These amounts will not convert exactly to decimal currency. Bookmakers purchase in bulk lots and therefore if a duty per 100 tickets is imposed with a slight change of rate in one case, the problems of conversion will be solved. The 1½d. and 3d. tickets are to be taxed at the rate of $1 25c., and $2 50c. respectively for every 100 tickets which are the exact equivalents of the present rates.

The 1d. duty equals 8s. 4d. per 100 tickets, and it is proposed to increase this rate to 85c. which is the equivalent of 8s. 6d. in the existing currency. This increase is of a very minor character. It is also proposed in the Bill to make provision for each ticket to carry the imprint, "W.A. Stamp Duty Paid".

Bills of lading or shipping receipts for goods carried coastwise are subject to stamp duty at the following rates:—

For goods not exceeding half a ton weight or measurement, 3d;

Exceeding half a ton, but not exceeding one ton, 6d;

Exceeding one ton, 1s.

Again, it is only the threepenny rate which cannot be converted to an exact equivalent of decimal currency. The Bill therefore provides that goods not exceeding a ton weight or measurement shall attract a duty of 6d., which is estimated to produce additional revenue of approximately £200 per annum.

As the remaining items in this group—namely, mortgages, bonds and debentures, and hire purchase agreements—have almost identical conversion problems, they can be dealt with together. Under these headings the following scale of stamp duty applies:—

Amounts not exceeding £50, 1s. 3d.;
Exceeding £50 but not £100, 2s. 6d.;
Exceeding £100, but not £150, 3s. 9d.:
Exceeding £150, but not £200, 5s.;
Exceeding £200, but not £250, 6s. 3d.;
Exceeding £250, but not £300, 7s. 6d.;
Exceeding £300; for every £100 or part thereof, 2s. 6d.

This scale applies to mortgages, bonds, and debentures, but for hire purchase agreements it is limited to agreements between traders; and, in this case, where the difference between the initial payment and the cash price of the goods is less than £10, no duty is charged. The scale also applies to agreements under which goods are rented on hire to individuals and concerns by various business enterprises. These agreements are taxed under the heading of "bond", as they secure the payment of rentals for goods hired.

This type of business has greatly expanded in recent years. Various items ranging from heavy industrial units down to small items such as electrical appliances and car racks are available for hire for a day or longer periods. This applies also to the hiring of toys, such as mechanical trains and the like. We see a lot of that sort of thing these days.

It is on small items that the present minimum duty of 1s. 3d. is excessive. Representations have been made from time to time for some reduction in these cases and this has been provided for in framing a new scale to overcome conversion problems. The present scale is in £50 steps up to £300, and where the duty is fixed at 2s. 6d. or multiples of 2s. 6d. there is no problem as this rate converts exactly to decimal currency. It is with the existing amounts of 1s. 3d., 3s. 9d., and 6s. 3d., which appear in the scale, that problems of conversion arise, as these amounts end in pence for which there will be no exact decimal equivalents.

Bearing in mind the need for a reduction in duty in the case of small hiring transactions, and the conversion problems posed by the existing scale, it is proposed to repeal it completely and substitute the following:—

Where the amount—

	s.	d.
Is £10 or more but does not exceed £20		6
Exceeds £20 but not £40	1	0
Exceeds £40 but not £60	1	6
Exceeds £60 but not £80	2	0
Exceeds £80 but not £100	2	6
Exceeds £100; for every £100 or part thereof	2	6

Amounts of less than £10 are to be exempt from duty.

Mr. Kelly: Shylock rides again!

Mr. BRAND: The proposed new rates are generally lower than those existing up to amounts of £80, and in some cases higher thereafter. If the proposed new scale is adopted it is not anticipated that the revenue yield will be materially different from the existing return.

I turn now to the third reason for introducing the proposed amendments, namely, to permit the introduction of a new system of stamping documents and collecting duty.

Under existing arrangements, stamp duty is impressed on various documents by manually operated, antiquated machines which require constant inking and the changing of stamp dies during use. These machines keep no record of the number or value of the stamps impressed on documents. This system is inefficient by

modern standards, being laborious and time-consuming, and constitutes a security risk.

The introduction of decimal currency in February next will render existing £. s. d. stamp dies useless and advantage has been taken of this change in currency to introduce a modern system of imprinting duty with electrically operated accounting machines. The proposed new system of recording duty on documents is planned to commence operation on the day on which the Commonwealth Government introduces decimal currency.

To this end the procedure for imprinting documents has been approved by the Auditor-General, the necessary forms have been prepared, and the accounting machines ordered. It will provide a better service to the public and remove the security risk associated with the present arrangements as well as automatically providing an accurate dissection of stamp duty receipts.

With the introduction of the new system of imprinting duty it will be possible to reduce the number of returns made by members of the business community who pay stamp duty in one amount each month. At present they are required to forward monthly returns in duplicate. One copy, impressed with the duty, is returned and the other is retained for checking by the Stamp Office. It is proposed, where practical, to incorporate a form of detachable receipt in these returns. This will be officially receipted by a machine and returned to the taxpayer, thus reducing the number of required returns. To do this, however, an amendment to section 17 of the Act, which at present compels the commissioner to denote payment by impressing or affixing stamps, is required.

Various concerns from time to time issue a series of documents to the public, such as debentures, which are subject to stamp duty. Occasionally they are sent out unstamped. When this is discovered it often presents considerable difficulty and some expense to recover them in order to have the stamp duty recorded on each document.

This difficulty would be overcome if the commissioner were empowered by amendment to section 17 of the Act to issue an official receipt for the payment of duty inadvertently overlooked. The Bill provides for the commissioner to be given this power.

Under section 18 of the Act provision is made for all documents to be so written that the stamp duty may be denoted on the face of the document. With the new accounting machine system it is essential that 1½ in. be left at the top of all documents for the imprinting of duty. An amendment is incorporated in the Bill to meet this requirement.

Of the remaining proposals in the Bill the first one repeals certain sections which are no longer necessary. Under sections 46 to 48 of the Act, bankers who wish to issue bank notes are required to obtain a license to do so from the commissioner and to pay a quarterly amount based on the value of the notes in circulation.

The provisions relating to bank notes were inserted in the Act in 1922 and were superseded many years ago by Commonwealth banking legislation. No revenue is collected under these sections today and they serve no useful purpose. For this reason the Bill contains a clause proposing the repeal of sections 46 to 48.

The next two amendments are concerned with stamp duty imposed on the licensing or transfer of motor vehicles. The assessment of this duty is based on the value of a motor vehicle at the date of purchase or transfer; and, in the case of a transfer, requires the completion of a valuation form for submission to the licensing authority. Under the arrangements for licensing vehicles in this State the duty is collected by 126 licensing authorities and remitted to the Stamp Office.

To enforce the payment of duty, the Commissioner of Stamps relies on section 28 of the Act which provides that no instrument liable to stamp duty may be registered by any person whose duty it is to effect registration of the instrument unless it is properly stamped. This, in effect, means that the licensing authority cannot license the vehicle or renew a license unless the stamp duty is paid.

However, there is no section in the Stamp Act which makes it an offence not to stamp a motor vehicle license; consequently the stamp duty payable on a motor vehicle license cannot be recovered in the courts as is the case with other stamp duties levied. Because the Commissioner of Stamps, or a person authorised by him, is unable to take legal recovery action, difficulty is being experienced by the licensing authorities in collecting stamp duty in a number of cases. The Commissioner of Police, the licensing authority for the metropolitan area, advises that over 200 such cases have arisen since the imposition of stamp duty on motor vehicle licenses. These occur where—

- The transfer fee is forwarded, but no stamp duty is paid.
- The transfer fee and stamp duty are forwarded, but no valuation of the vehicle is given.
- The transfer fee and stamp duty are forwarded with the valuation, but the stamp duty is short paid.
- The transfer fee is recovered by court action but the stamp duty remains unpaid as there is no power under which to recover it in court.

Follow-up action is taken by letter but in many cases it produces no result.

In order to ensure that the State is able to collect the duty payable it is proposed in the Bill to insert a provision in the Act to make it an offence not to pay the duty and to give the commissioner power to recover the duty by action in the courts.

During the last session of Parliament an amendment was made to the Traffic Act to enable the licensing of "off road" vehicles. These vehicles may be generally described as mobile industrial machines and are termed "off road" vehicles because they only use the roads to move from place to place under limited and specified conditions.

Under existing arrangements most "off road" vehicles are issued with permits and therefore do not come under the provisions of the Motor Vehicle (Third Party) Insurance Act. This Act applies only to vehicles required to be licensed and complying with the conditions of licensing. Therefore the owners of vehicles issued with permits are required to obtain third party insurance cover under contracts with insurance companies. The cover obtained under these contracts has proved unsatisfactory and for this reason the Traffic Act was amended during the last session of Parliament to permit licenses to be issued in place of permits.

As the Stamp Act applies only to licenses, no duty has been paid in the past on transfers or purchases of vehicles issued with permits. When new regulations to the Traffic Act are promulgated these "off road" vehicles will be licensed and become subject to stamp duty on purchase or transfer. A limited number of "off road" vehicles are very expensive and would be subject to a very heavy impost of duty. For this reason it is proposed to limit the total value on which duty may be charged to £10,000. This means that every motor vehicle, including "off road" vehicles, will be subject to duty on purchase or transfer, but where a vehicle is valued in excess of £10,000, stamp duty will be payable only on £10,000. Provision has been included in the Bill to prescribe this limit on the duty payable.

The last three items in the Bill deal with other assessment and collection problems. They relate to the new Cattle Industry Compensation Act, statutory declarations required under various Acts administered by the Minister for Agriculture, and dutiable documents issued by building societies.

During this session of Parliament new legislation dealing with compensation for cattle infected with tuberculosis was passed. Under the new Cattle Industry Compensation Act a single fund to meet compensation payments was established. The compensation fund is financed by the Government and the industry in equal shares. The industry's contribution is to be provided by a levy of stamp duty on sales of cattle.

Prior to the recent enactment of the Cattle Industry Compensation Act, three compensation funds existed under separate legislation. Two of these—namely, the Dairy Cattle Industry (Butter Fat) Compensation Fund and the Beef Cattle Industry Compensation Fund—were financed to the extent of 50 per cent. by levies of stamp duty on the sales of cattle and butter fat and appropriate rates were prescribed in the second schedule to the Stamp Act. The third fund was controlled by the Milk Board.

It is proposed to provide maximum rates of contributions to the new fund at the level currently existing for contributions to the original Beef Cattle Industry Compensation Fund; namely, 1d. in the pound of value of cattle sold, subject to a maximum contribution for any one animal. The actual rate in the pound to be charged is to be declared by the Governor and I understand this is to be ½d. in the pound.

The new rate proposed will not present conversion problems. It will be converted to the equivalent fraction of a cent per dollar, and in each case multiplied by the number of dollars for which the animals are sold. Stamp duty will then be paid to the nearest cent.

The Bill contains provisions to repeal the existing items in the second schedule to the Act and replace them with an item detailing the new arrangements which will bring the provisions in the Stamp Act into line with the new Cattle Industry Compensation Act.

The Acts administered by the Minister for Agriculture under which statutory declarations are required are—

Alsatian Dog Act
Noxious Weeds Act
Stock Diseases Act
Veterinary Medicines Act
Beekeepers Act
Cattle Industry Compensation Act

Under each of these Acts certain persons are compelled to furnish statutory declarations to the Department of Agriculture. These declarations attract stamp duty of 1s. each under the existing provisions of the Stamp Act. All of the declarations are made in connection with matters which are either for the protection of rural industry or the public and do not benefit the declarants who are compelled to furnish them by Statute.

Many of the declarations are received without the necessary duty affixed. To follow these up would involve the department in unwarranted expense as well as creating unsatisfactory relations with the members of the public involved. As the duty amounts to less than £100 per annum, and the cost of collection may well exceed this amount, it is proposed to exempt from stamp duty declarations made under the Acts I have detailed and the necessary provision has been included in the Bill.

I referred earlier to representations in connection with stamp duty that had been received from the Building Societies Association. These representations were not confined to receipts and the issue of share scrip which I have already dealt with, but they also sought exemption from duty on cheques issued by building societies, and the question was also raised of the assessment of duty on what are known as deposit receipts.

These deposit receipts go beyond an ordinary receipt for money, in that they are given for deposits made with societies and refer to matters other than the receipt of money. Although societies in the past have not paid more than the statutory receipt duty of one penny on these deposits the question has been raised as to whether these documents should be stamped as debentures at a much higher rate.

As both Commonwealth and State Governments are encouraging building society activity, and cheques and deposit receipts are not subject to duty in New South Wales and Victoria, it is proposed to provide the exemptions sought, and these have been included in the Bill.

In this measure, as I have already mentioned, provision has been inserted to bring certain increased rates of duty into operation on the 1st December, 1965. The remaining provisions, with two exceptions, will come into operation on the 1st January, 1966. One exception is the provision relating to betting tickets. This will not come into operation until the 14th February, 1966, as it is advisable to provide the longest period possible in this case to enable new tickets to be printed. The other is the provision relating to the exchange of stamps, which is also to operate from the 14th February.

This Bill, in addition to providing essential revenue to the State, will assist the changeover to decimal currency, enable the introduction of a modern system to give a better service to the public, and remove a number of difficulties associated with the administration of the Act.

Debate adjourned until Thursday, the 4th November, on motion by Mr. Hawke (Leader of the Opposition).

PUBLIC WORKS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Returned

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

BETTING INVESTMENT TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed, from the 28th October, on the following motion by Mr. Brand (Treasurer):—

> That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. HAWKE (Northam—Leader of the Opposition) [6.3 p.m.]: This Bill aims to amend the Betting Investment Tax Act. Under the existing law bets of under £1 are taxed at the rate of 3d., and those of £1 and over are taxed at the rate of 6d. per ticket, or bet. The approach contained in this Bill to the situation appears to me to be rather weird, because it is intended, should the Bill become law, to impose a uniform rate of tax of 3c after the appropriate date in February of next year on every bet made.

I think there is every justification for having a sliding scale of taxes in regard to betting investments. If I remember correctly, when the parent legislation was before Parliament, some members on this side of the House advocated a sliding scale of tax in regard to betting transactions. At that time we considered, as we still do, that the small punter who makes a betting investment of less than £1 should pay only a very small tax per bet or per ticket—if any tax at all; those who bet between £1 and £5 should pay for each investment a higher rate; those who bet between £5 and £20 a higher rate again; those who bet between £20 and £100 would pay a still higher rate; and those who bet in larger amounts than £100 a higher rate again.

However, our arguments as put forward on that occasion were not accepted. The Government had decided there should be only two rates of tax; the first rate of 3d. on all bets below £1, and the other rate of 6d. on every bet of £1 and over. Even that system was much more reasonable than the one proposed in this Bill. The one proposed in this measure is not reasonable in any degree—not in any degree at all—because, as I said a moment or two ago, the proposal in this Bill is that all bets be taxed at the same rate of 3c, irrespective of whether the bet is for 5s., for £50, or for an amount of more than £50, as I understand some bets are.

In his second reading speech the Treasurer praised the system of taxing according to the total sum of each investment. He said, and I quote—

> It does not appear to be very reasonable that whether the bet is 25s., £100, or £1,000, one should still only pay 6d. or 5c.

Then the Treasurer apparently turned a somersault on that fairly logical aproach and started talking about convenience—the convenience of imposing a uniform rate of tax; and the convenience of collecting a uniform rate of tax.

We would have a very strange taxation system indeed in Australia if the Commonwealth Parliament and the State Parliaments adopted this convenient approach which the Treasurer now parades as being a system containing much merit. In the taxation field convenience

should have been only a minor consideration. Surely the paramount consideration should be equity, justice, and fair play. This Bill goes backwards on those principles; very much backwards. It proposes to increase the rate of tax upon those who bet in amounts of less than £1, and to reduce the existing rate of tax on those who will continue to bet in amounts of £1 and over.

The present small punter, if I might describe him as such, now pays 3d. per bet, or 3d. per ticket, taxation; but under this Bill he will pay 3c. The bigger punter who invests £1 or over up to an amount of £100 per bet, and who now pays 6d. per bet or ticket, will get off with 3c by way of taxation on each bet in the future.

Surely there is no justification in this sort of approach by members of Parliament. It might be all very well for the officials in the Treasury Department who handle this business to say, "With this decimal currency system coming in it would be convenient to have only one rate of tax, irrespective of the amount of each bet made, and irrespective of the fact that up till now we have had a system operating which imposes a lower rate of tax on the smaller punter with his small bets, and a larger rate of tax on the bigger punter with his larger bets.

I do not accept the argument of convenience at all; I see no merit in it whatsoever. What would be wrong if we increased the rate of tax slightly on the person who makes a large investment or decreased the amount of bets slightly on the one who makes a small investment and thus reduce his tax? Why cut the rate of tax on the bigger punter by half, and increase the rate of tax on the smaller punter by 33 per cent., or thereabouts?

Mr. Craig: It would not be that much.

Mr. HAWKE: I have not worked out the exact figure, but the proposal in this Bill will increase the rate of tax on the small punter as against what has been operating, and what is operating now; and it will reduce the rate of tax on the larger punter as against what has been and what is still operating at the present time.

How can anybody put forward any acceptable argument in support of an approach of that kind? It is not a fair approach; it is not an equitable approach; and it is not just. This Bill is breaking down a principle which had some merit—the principle of a tax of 3d. per betting ticket for those who bet in amounts of under £1, and a tax of 6d. per betting ticket for those who bet in amounts of £1 and over. That system had, and still has, some merit; not as much as I would have wished it to contain, but it did have some merit.

Now we have this proposal to destroy even the amount of merit contained in the present system, and to replace it with a flat rate tax, irrespective of whether the punter bets 5s. each way or £50 each way. The Treasurer has tried to create the impression that the Government is hard up for revenue, and I agree that, in some respects, it is. Governments are always hard up for revenue; their appetite is insatiable.

If the Government is hard up for revenue, and if it has to find the ways and means to impose an additional tax upon the people, how can the proposal in the Bill before us be explained?—because in this Bill the Government proposes to reduce the rate of tax upon all punters who bet in amounts of £1 and over; to reduce that rate of taxation quite substantially. Yet we are to have proposals to increase taxation upon motorists. We had a Bill this afternoon at the third reading stage to place a tax on essential road services. There are other proposals coming up to increase duties in one direction and fees in another direction.

There has been an increase in railway freights and fares; there has been an increase in fares by the Metropolitan Passenger Transport Trust; and an increase in fares in the State Shipping Service. Yet this Government is proposing to reduce taxation upon the larger punter in Western Australia.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. HAWKE: I have already explained why I oppose this Bill, as I very strongly do. There appears to me to be little or no sense in the proposals compared with the existing basis of taxation in this field. I have already dealt with the Treasurer's only argument in support of the proposed change, which is the argument of convenience. He did not even point out whose convenience would be advantaged or met. Presumably, in the first place, it is the convenience of those who print the tickets; in the second place, the convenience of those who have to collect the tickets; and, thirdly, presumably the convenience of the Treasury officers who have to deal in the main with the imposition of this tax.

The argument of convenience does not go down with me. If the proposals in this Bill had been based on other grounds, then the support of those grounds by the argument of convenience, if that had been a possibility, might have made some favourable impression upon my thinking in connection with the Bill.

I have already referred to the fact that the Government is very busy in this period of time imposing additional charges and taxation of every description upon various sections of the people. Most of the increased charges and taxation already levied or to be levied are upon essential industry

and essential activities within the community. Yet here we have a proposal in this Bill to very substantially decrease the existing rate of tax upon those who bet big —the bigger the amount of bet, the more tax reduction would they receive under these proposals, as compared with the existing system.

Where is the logic in the thinking of a Government which increases railway freights, most of which are paid by primary producers, not all of whom are prosperous? Where is the logic in the thinking of a Government which increases freight on the ships which trade with the north-west and which, for the main part, carry freight of an essential character to the people in the industries up there? What is the logic in the thinking of a Government which increases taxation in several other directions and then comes along with a Bill like this to amend the tax on betting transactions slightly to increase the rate of tax on the smallest punter and, in the same Bill, considerably to reduce the rate of tax on the bigger punter?

Mr. W. Hegney: Forty per cent.

Mr. HAWKE: How private members of the Government came to swallow this Bill, I am at an absolute loss to understand.

Mr. Norton: They would swallow anything.

Mr. HAWKE: How some of the Ministers in the Government came to swallow it beats me. Is it the procedure of this Government when Cabinet meets and a proposal comes up from the Treasury which the Treasurer has accepted, to accept the proposal without any consideration or any serious thought, simply because of the source from which it emanates? I refuse to believe all the Ministers in the Government, or a majority of them, seriously considered this Bill or came to understand properly its major implications. I cannot believe private members on the Government side studied the Bill and compared the proposed rates of tax on betting with the existing rates. Surely there is no private member on the Government side who would agree that at this time when the Government is imposing terriffic additional taxation burdens upon essential industry and upon essential activities within the community we should, as is proposed in this Bill, reduce the rate of betting tax on those who bet in amounts of £1, £5, £50, £100, and £200 at a time!

If this proposal had come from a bunch of idiots in the community, I could have the better understood it. If it was the product of a lazy Government which does not care or does not study what it is doing, I could have understood it. But the members of the present Government are supposed to be responsible. They are supposed to give careful and equitable consideration to one section of the community as against another. They are supposed to see that taxation burdens are fairly imposed on the different sections of the community.

In addition I would think it is the responsibility of every Government and every Parliament to ensure that taxation, when it is imposed, is imposed with a reasonable degree of equity and fair dealing. None of those propositions could possibly have applied to this Bill. The Bill is absolutely wrong in principle. It is unjust in what it seeks to establish, as compared with what is operating at the present time.

I am not surprised the Treasurer when introducing the Bill and explaining its provisions was not able to put forward one argument which had any logic in it or had any appeal in it on the basis of imposing fair taxation burdens upon those concerned. If this Bill proposed to reduce the existing rate of tax upon the small punter and considerably to increase it upon the large punter, it would have had some merit because it would have been based to some extent upon the ability-to-pay principle. It is not in any degree based upon that principle. In fact, it is a total departure from it. The existing system does pay some slight recognition to the principle of ability to pay, inasmuch as there are two separate rates of tax—the rate of 3d. in the pound on each investment under £1 in value, and the rate of 6d. in the pound on every investment of £1 and over. That does pay some heed and some respect to the principle of ability to pay.

The new principle proposed in this Bill turns a complete somersault on that principle. It proposes to wipe it out altogether in this field of taxation and to put each punter, whether he has a 5s.-each-way bet or a £50-each-way bet, with a liability to pay tax on his investment of only 3c. So I would hope Ministers of the Government who now have had the real effect of this measure clearly placed before them—

Mr. W. Hegney: Hear, hear!

Mr. HAWKE: —would undertake to have another look at this Bill; and I would hope that private members on the Government side would also give some thought to that idea and do whatever is within their power to prevail upon the Government to have this Bill redrafted in order that it might contain some degree of merit and some degree of equity. At the present time it is a Bill which has no merit, as I have said before and as I again emphasise. It is a Bill which no-one in point of justice could possibly support.

I have no doubt the Treasurer and his officers searched their minds for a long time trying to find arguments in support of the proposals in this Bill. The only argument they could come up with when the Bill was presented to Parliament was the argument of convenience. Fancy coming to Parliament with a taxation Bill and

supporting it only with the argument of convenience! As I have tried to point out, there is, of course, much more than convenience in this. There is inequity, injustice, and stupidity in it.

Had the situation been such at this time that the Government was not imposing increased charges and taxation in all directions, and especially upon essential industry and activities, and this Bill had come along in this form, there might then possibly have been some justification for it. However, as the situation stands, and as it is likely to stand for a long time, in regard to total taxation and other financial burdens to be put upon the people of Western Australia, this Bill deserves nothing but very strong criticism and opposition.

MR. DAVIES (Victoria Park) [7.44 p.m.]: I also wish to oppose this Bill, firstly because it is the first occasion on which the matter of decimal currency has officially come before this House, and I think it signifies something we are going to see a lot of in the next four or five months during the conversion to decimal currency; that is, a little rise inflicted on the public because the figures cannot be exactly converted to the new type of currency.

I intend to oppose this practice at every stage, because although the increases that are imposed may be very slight in each individual case, overall they amount to a considerable figure and can have a detrimental effect on the cost of living of the ordinary fellows in the basic wage range and other similar wage ranges.

I have yet to appreciate the great advantages that will accrue from the conversion to decimal currency. Indeed, I believe there will be a number of disadvantages to the ordinary citizen.

Like the Leader of the Opposition, I feel it is totally inequitable that the division of taxation we previously had should be dispensed with. I cannot see the slightest reason for it. In every form of taxation that we can think of, when the tax is not related to a fixed amount which applies to everybody but where the figures involved vary, we find the taxation increases with the amount of the figure involved.

We have only to look at the tax imposed on the sale of secondhand cars. That is according to value. We have only to look at probate, which is assessed according to the value of the estate. Again, we have only to look at income tax. Here a higher amount is paid on large incomes. I think this principle could well be embodied in the Bill; namely, that according to the amount of the wager, a tax should be paid.

The Treasurer when introducing the amendments to the stamp Bill tonight pointed out that there is a system whereby the tickets used by the bookmakers—I am not well up in racing terms—will be printed in bundles of 100 and the tax will be assessed according to the type of ticket issued and the manner in which the bet is made. Here some arrangement has been arrived at whereby there is not a fixed tax but a tax assessed according to the amount of the bet involved; and I think this principle should be extended to the Bill before us.

I am particularly concerned because all these taxing measures apply to the working man just the same as they apply to the man who, although he works, may have a far greater income; and particularly I am concerned with the application of these measures to pensioners. No relief is provided for them at any time.

I understand it is impossible to place a half-crown bet with a T.A.B. agency at the present time. This, in itself, is a hardship for many punters who like to have a small wager, because they have to bet in five-shilling units. As I have said, this has become something of a hardship for them and it has deprived them of some of their pleasure.

Here again they are going to be hit by having to pay this slightly increased tax, small as it may be; and it is going, over the period of time, with all other rises that will come in with the conversion to decimal currency, to prove something of an added burden to a section of the community that can least afford to pay additional imposts.

I would like to see the Government reconsider the measure. I would like to see it reduce the taxation to 2c for the punter who invests less than £1, and to increase it for the punter who invests in amounts over £1. Even if it was some slight increase over what is proposed, I believe the people who bet in amounts over £1 are in those sections of the community that are most able to meet the tax.

So I support the Leader of the Opposition in the remarks he made. There was not much left to say after he had spoken, but I repeat that I oppose this initially because of the slight increase that will be imposed as a result of the measure; and I believe it is only one of many increases that will be made with the gradual changeover to decimal currency. This tax will impose a slightly increased burden on sections of the community that are least able to bear it; and, as all these slight increases build up, the people whom we should be trying to help will be in a worse position.

Mr. O'Connor: What rate do you suggest?

Mr. DAVIES: The punters can be taxed as much as the honourable member likes. I believe we should adopt the amount of 2c for the punter who has a bet of less than £1, and perhaps there could be a sliding scale beyond that. It could be 5c for amounts between £1 and £5; and 10c for amounts beyond £5.

A member: That would be impossible.

Mr. DAVIES: I do not think it would be impossible. Surely in a great organisation such as the T.A.B. has proved itself to be, there must be some people with sufficient brains to work out a suitable form of graduated taxation.

Mr. Jamieson: They could work out a tax at 6d. in the pound easily enough.

Mr. DAVIES: I am unable to comment on it because I do not know enough about racing. This affects a section of the community that I am not terribly sympathetic towards. In many respects this industry is a luxury one, particularly when we consider the people who are able to invest large amounts in this sort of gambling. I am not against gambling in any way; this is a matter of an individual's particular wishes; but I believe this industry could stand greater taxes and that the sections of the community that indulge in it, and that bet in large amounts, are the sections that should be the hardest hit by the tax.

The T.A.B. report shows what the turnover tax was last year; and I am sure that from these figures the officers of the board could estimate the turnover for the coming year. The report also shows the amount of the investment tax last year. Once again I am sure the officers of the board would, from the statistics, know how much tax is needed to be imposed on the various types of bets in order to return the same amount of turnover during the year.

Mr. Dunn: Does it not mean the more you bet the more you lose?

Mr. DAVIES: That is the responsibility of the individual; and, I repeat, it is a section of the community that I am not sympathetic towards. However, the industry exists, and I believe it is reasonably controlled at the present time; and it is the right of the individual to spend his money as he likes. I do not believe it is the right of the Government to impose the same amount of tax on everybody irrespective of social standing, income, or the manner in which the people spend their money.

Mr. Dunn: If you agree that the more you bet the more you lose, you are affecting the loser.

Mr. DAVIES: I do not know whether I have not made myself clear, but I do not care whether members of the public win or lose. I have not the slightest sympathy with them if they lose, and I am not inclined to cheer with them if they win. It becomes their own right to do as they wish with their money; but some people are able to control their gambling instincts and probably have only a minor bet of a few shillings for enjoyment. I do not believe those people should be paying the same tax as persons—I understand there are such people—who bet for income purposes.

Mr. Dunn: You are penalising the biggest loser.

Mr. Jamieson: You should have a winning bets tax and the biggest winner would pay the most.

Mr. DAVIES: I will not get into a further argument on the virtues of gambling, or of winning or losing. I merely want to make the plea, that in some circumstances, where conversion to decimal currency is involved and slight increases are proposed, if there is to be an adjustment, wherever possible the adjustment should be downwards; and I believe this is an ideal instance—it is the first one that has come to the House—where we can make some slight reduction because of the necessary conversion. For those reasons I oppose the Bill.

MR. COURT (Nedlands—Minister for Industrial Development) [7.56 p.m.]: I rise to reply on behalf of the Treasurer. First let me say that no tax is popular, and I suppose this one is no exception. There are people who want to see it abolished altogether. But we have to have the revenue from one source or another, and if it is not raised this way we will have to accept the inevitable and raise it in another way.

I assure the Leader of the Opposition that not only the Ministry, but also the members on this side who support the Government, understand exactly what is in the Bill. It has been explained carefully, and I think the method finally decided upon by the Government is, having regard for all the circumstances, the logical one.

If we view this matter in its right perspective, it must be agreed that the Opposition is making something of a mountain out of a molehill because, first of all, people do not have to bet any more than they have to drink alcoholic liquor. But they seem to want to bet, and to drink, and it has been traditional to have taxes on these things.

I suppose that no matter what we do, or try to do, there will be some inequity when we get down to pure taxation law. There are some taxes of this nature that we have to impose on a broad basis to achieve the overall result we seek to achieve with the minimum administrative difficulty and the minimum inconvenience to the public.

It is true that on a previous occasion the Opposition did suggest there should be a graduated form of tax. This suggestion was carefully studied by the Government at the time, but it was not found desirable to introduce it in this particular measure. The Leader of the Opposition said there was little or no sense in this proposal. I say there is some sense in it.

Mr. Hawke: Three cents in clause 4.

Mr. COURT: I say that, because of the reasons the present form of tax was decided upon. The Treasurer, when introducing the Bill, explained that of every eight bets that had been analysed, seven were of £1 or less. In other words, one only was in excess of £1. On the present system this produced 2s. 3d., which, when converted, is 22½c. When we drop this down to 2c we get a yield of only 16c. In other words, somebody will have to make up the difference in revenue from some other source, and, I suggest, a much less desirable source than this, because this is something people do not have to do.

Mr. Jamieson: The amount of betting is growing all the time.

Mr. COURT: So are the demands on the State. If the 3c system is adopted as a flat rate system, it is easy of administration, and I do not think it is going to cause any great heartburnings to the people who bet. I do not think they are going to get terribly excited on a Saturday because there will be a flat 3c instead of the 3c on one amount and 5c on another. If we impose the figure proposed by this legislation we will receive 24c for every eight bets. For all practical purposes this is as near as we can get it to 22.5c. The Leader of the Opposition would not seriously advocate that we should have some fractional figure which, of course, would be incapable of implementation.

Mr. Davies: How many 5s. units are invested compared with £2 units?

Mr. COURT: I would not know; but I do know that of every eight bets made seven are of £1 or under.

Mr. Hawke: Could you give us the number of bets of £1 and over?

Mr. COURT: I am not that good. If we have 3c and 5c, as was suggested in passing by one member of the Opposition, we would finish up with 26c for each eight bets, but I can imagine that if we had put that method of imposing the tax before the Legisative Assembly we would have had a big outcry that we were making a profit on the change to decimal currency.

Mr. Hawke: There would have been no outcry from me.

Mr. COURT: If the Leader of the Opposition desires to raise some extra revenue for the State, I am sure our Treasurer would not be relucant to accept it. But in bringing this measure down the Treasurer was trying to arrive at a figure that would offset the argument that we were endeavouring to make a profit out of the change to decimal currency.

Mr. Hawke: You are trying to make a profit on all bets that are in excess of £1.

Mr. COURT: If the system is carried through to its logical conclusion investment tax would be levied at varying levels of bets at £1, £5, £10 and so on. The suggestion put forward by the Leader of the Opposition was that we should follow it up the scale, but that suggestion would be impracticable.

I also wish to make some reply to the member for Victoria Park who made some comment that this was something of a test case on the change to decimal currency.

Mr. Davies: I did not say it was a test case.

Mr. COURT: The honourable member said it represented the shade of things to come in regard to the change to decimal currency. I can assure him that if the Government intends to impose a further tax for the purpose of gaining extra revenue it will make it clear that the tax is being imposed and for what purpose.

However, in every instance when we are bringing down a Bill to give effect to the change from decimal currency as distinct from more tax or to increase charges, every endeavour is being made to ensure that there will be no profit-making in the changeover to decimal currency. When decimal currency legislation is introduced, and when, for practical purposes, we have to give a little, or take a little, the honourable member will know that the Government has endeavoured to make the change-over as equitable as possible. Whenever the Government seeks to obtain extra revenue the Treasurer is making it quite clear that he is doing so not because of the change in decimal currency, but merely because it coincides with the changeover. All members will find that when decimal currency legislation is introduced this fact will be made very clear.

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

Ayes—25

Mr. Bovell	Mr. Hutchinson
Mr. Burt	Mr. Lewis
Mr. Court	Mr. W. A. Manning
Mr. Craig	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Crommelin	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Dunn	Mr. Naider
Mr. Durack	Mr. O'Connor
Mr. Elliott	Mr. O'Neil
Mr. Gayfer	Mr. Runciman
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Rushton
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Williams
Mr. Hart	Mr. I. W. Manning
Dr. Henn	*(Teller)*

Noes—19

Mr. Bickerton	Mr. Jamieson
Mr. Brady	Mr. Kelly
Mr. Davies	Mr. Moir
Mr. Evans	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Fletcher	Mr. Rowberry
Mr. Graham	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Hall	Mr. Toms
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Norton
Mr. W. Hegney	*(Teller)*

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr. Brand	Mr. May
Mr. Nimmo	Mr. Curran

Majority for—6.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr. W. A. Manning) in the Chair; Mr. Court (Minister for Industrial Development) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3 put and passed.

Clause 4: Section 3 repealed and re-enacted—

Mr. HAWKE: The Minister for Industrial Development did not advance any argument in support of the proposal in this clause. He did not even put forward an argument of convenience, but simply said the Opposition was making a mountain out of a mole hill, and the Treasury must have at least the same income from this source in the future as it does at present. Maybe we can differ on the question of whether a mountain is being made out of a molehill: much depends on one's outlook and attitude towards taxation. For my part, I see virtue in the principle of taxing according to the ability to pay.

Under the present system instituted by this law that principle exists, although not nearly to the extent that would satisfy me. Nevertheless, the principle exists, owing to the fact that the tax is 3d. when the bet is under £1, and double 3d. when the bet is £1 or more. There is some justice in that. I did not hear anybody object to the Treasurer getting as much money under this proposal as he does under the existing legislation. In fact, I thought I indicated that, in my opinion, he should get more, especially in view of the fact that the Treasurer and Government are getting ever so much more from those who use the railway system to transport their goods. The Treasurer is getting much more from those who use the State ships to transport their essential commodities, and from those who use the Metropolitan Passenger Transport Trust vehicles. Also, in every other direction he is getting much more where he proposes to increase taxation or the charges levied upon the community.

If taxation is to be increased in any direction—admitting for the moment the necessity for the increase—taxation in a non-essential activity of this kind might well be increased. Yet the Treasurer and his colleagues go to quite a deal of trouble to ensure that in this taxation field they will, under the new proposals, raise only about as much as they raised under the existing system. So I emphasise that, for my part at any rate, I am not opposed to the Treasurer getting at least as much taxation in this field under the new system as he is getting at present under the existing set-up.

I would have no objection to his getting more because, after all is said and done, betting on horses is not a necessity for those who indulge, and it is a field in which, in a time of emergency, or semi-emergency, such as the present one seems to be, more taxation could, without much argument, be raised. But the Government does not propose to raise any additional taxation from this field. What the Bill will do when it becomes law is to bring into operation a nasty procedure; because the proposals in the Bill, when they are put into operation, will increase the present rate of tax upon those who invest less than £1 on racehorses or trotting horses, and will reduce substantially, on a percentage basis, the present rate of tax on those who have £1 or more on a horse at a gallops meeting or a trotting race meeting. That is what this clause in particular seems to do.

It is all very well for the Minister for Industrial Development, in the Premier's absence to say that one ticket in every eight does this and that seven tickets out of every eight do something else. It is all very well for the Minister to talk about how much would be raised by way of cents if this rate of tax were imposed, or some dual rate of tax were maintained. That is all very well as padding and cover-up material. I can well understand the facial expression of the Minister for Industrial Development when he put forward this embroidery. He was handling the situation with much enjoyment, because he realised he was putting on a face and trying to excuse the destruction of a good principle.

The existing system does differentiate between the tax applicable to a small bet and that to a larger bet. There is some merit in, and justification for, such a principle. Yet the Bill proposes to abolish that, and to place all bets on the one footing. If this were the first time the tax was being imposed there might be some justification in favour of it. The Minister for Industrial Development and his colleagues admit they understand and strongly support the altered system. I am pleased to have his admission that all private members who support the Government fully understand the proposal, and support it 100 per cent. That frank and open admission will make it clear to everybody concerned that the Government did not walk into this with its eyes closed. It will make it clear to the public that the Ministers of the Government and those who support the Government do not believe in some graduated tax system according to the ability to pay, and are willing to destroy the existing system by putting in its place a system of taxation which has flat-rate application, irrespective of the amount of the bet or the ability of the punter to pay.

I can see no justification for this Bill; nor can any justification be offered in any shape or form. It is a backward step in the field of taxation, and it shows a very peculiar attitude on the part of the Ministers of the Government and their supporters. I am sure they will receive a very considerable amount of criticism in the future for the action they are now taking.

Mr. COURT: I thought I had made it clear that the Government had studied alternatives, and had decided this was the best way to implement the tax. The principle of a graduated system of taxation is not novel or foreign to the make-up of the Government. When one refers to a graduated tax one is thinking of an entirely different type of tax; for instance, income tax.

Most complicated legislation and formulas are introduced to achieve equity in a graduated system. That is why such laws become so complicated, because as one anomaly is tidied up, several others are created. Not by the widest stretch of imagination could we bring the tax on bets into such a category. People do not have to bet. The Leader of the Opposition made the point that he was not concerned if more money was to be raised.

Let us examine the principle in the existing legislation. There is only one division between the amounts of bets. When only one bet out of every eight is affected, the principle of a graduated tax has not been implemented. The problem has only been stroked. After assessing the whole position the Government decided it was best to have a flat rate of tax which everybody will understand throughly, and which will remove some administrative inconvenience and difficulty. For that reason it was considered desirable to implement the system proposed in the Bill. In emphasising the system of a graduated tax the Leader of the Opposition is trying to build into this situation something out of character with the type of tax that is being imposed.

Mr. HAWKE: The existing system has worked very satisfactorily, and for a very long time there has been no complaint. No doubt when it was first imposed there were complaints. The point which the Minister for Industrial Development refuses to discuss is essential to the principle involved. It is a fact that the Bill proposes to increase the rate of tax on the small investor, and to reduce it very considerably on the larger investor.

Mr. Court: I have not refused to discuss that point. I have made it clear what is intended in the legislation. You are making far too much out of a very small thing in the lives of the people.

Mr. HAWKE: That is where the Minister and I disagree very strongly in our approach to issues of a public character.

Mr. O'Neil: Is the size of the bet a clear indication of ability to pay?

Mr. HAWKE: Broadly it is. Let me reduce the argument to this basis: The present system imposes a tax of 3d. on each bet of £1 or less, and a tax of 6d. on each bet of more than £1. This system has some degree of fairness and graduation.

The Bill proposes to destroy this set-up, and to replace it with a flat rate of taxation, irrespective of the amount wagered. I cannot support such a proposal, especially in these days when the Government is increasing heavily the taxation upon essential industry and essential activity.

Lewis: It will increase the tax on the small bets by half a cent.

Mr. HAWKE: I am not concerned with the amount of the increase; I am concerned mainly with the reduction that will apply to the larger bets. I think it is a pretty rotten principle when the Government reduces the rate of tax on a group which can better afford to pay, while it increases the rate of tax on people who are less able to pay. That is the vicious part of the Bill which stirs my feelings, and which causes me to oppose it strongly.

I refuse to be convinced that it was beyond the ability of the Treasury officers to put up proposals which would retain the prevailing rates of tax. However, the Government has not chosen that course, but has introduced a system which will increase the rates of tax on the small punter, and reduce considerably the rate on the larger investor. How any body of men which is supposed to represent the public interest can support such a proposition is beyond me.

Mr. Dunn: Don't you think that your proposal could be applied to cigarettes and beer, whereby the person who smoked more cigarettes and drank more beer than another would pay a higher tax?

Mr. HAWKE: I am not confident or optimistic enough to think that I can make any impression on the thinking of the member for Darling Range. At present we have a system of taxation which imposes a tax of 3d. on each betting transaction of £1 or less, and a tax of 6d. on each betting transaction of more than £1. The Government proposes to destroy that system, and to introduce in its place a new system which will increase the rate on the small punter, while at the same time reducing considerably the rate on the larger punter. Of the two proposals, I say the existing one has a great deal in its favour. In fact, the proposed alternative has nothing in its favour.

Mr. O'Connor: Do you think the tax should be set at 5c?

Mr. HAWKE: I am not worried whether it is 5c or some other figure. I am strongly opposed to a taxation measure which reduces the rate of tax on one

section, and at the same time increases the rate on the other section. There is no justification, equity, or principle in the Government's proposal. If this was completely new legislation then something might be said in its favour. However, it is not new legislation; it is legislation which proposes to take the place of existing legislation and it breaches very badly, in my view, the principle to which I have given attention.

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

Ayes—25

Mr. Bovell	Mr. Hutchinson
Mr. Burt	Mr. Lewis
Mr. Court	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Craig	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Crommelin	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Dunn	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Durack	Mr. O'Connor
Mr. Elliott	Mr. O'Neil
Mr. Gayfer	Mr. Runciman
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Rushton
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Williams
Mr. Hart	Mr. I. W. Manning
Dr. Henn	*(Teller.)*

Noes—19

Mr. Bickerton	Mr. Jamieson
Mr. Brady	Mr. Kelly
Mr. Davies	Mr. Moir
Mr. Evans	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Fletcher	Mr. Rowberry
Mr. Graham	Mr Sewell
Mr. Hall	Mr. Toms
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Norton
Mr. W. Hegney	*(Teller.)*

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr. Brand	Mr. May
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Curran

Majority for—6.

Clause thus passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr. Court (Minister for Industrial Development), and transmitted to the Council.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 3)

Second Reading

MR. NALDER (Katanning—Minister for Agriculture) [8.36 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill is known as the Local Government Act Amendment Bill, 1965 (No. 3). There are six clauses contained in the measure and these cover amendments to the Local Government Act that have been requested by local authorities.

The first of these seeks to amend section 231. This section deals with the power of a council to make by-laws in respect of metered parking and has been introduced at the request of the City of Fremantle for the purpose of providing for the introduction of meter parking in that district. Provision is also made in this clause for modified penalties, similar to those contained in the City of Perth Parking Facilities Act, to be imposed.

Although generally these amendments follow those in the City of Perth parking legislation, some slight variations have been found necessary in order that the definitions may conform with those in the road traffic code.

The next amendment, contained in clause 3 of this Bill, concerns section 232 of the Act, which deals with the regulation and control of the installation of petrol pumps. This amendment has been found necessary as a result of a judgment in the Supreme Court which declared *ultra vires* a draft model by-law made under the provisions of section 232. This means that there is now no power that would give a council grounds for the absolute prohibition of a license to install a petrol pump. The purpose of the by-law was to ensure that petrol pump installations were confined to land either set apart for that purpose under a zoning scheme, or by-law, or approved by the council with the concurrence of the Minister after allowing people the right to object to the proposal.

A council was also empowered by this by-law to refuse to grant a license for petrol pumps if, in its opinion, the district is already adequately served with petrol stations. In the case where zoning control operates, a council may refuse to grant a license for an unzoned property; however, if the zone is poor or non-existent, a number of petrol stations may become established and in competition alongside one another even though opportunity may exist elsewhere in the area.

Therefore the amendments in this clause will, firstly, allow a council to refuse a petrol pump license if, in its opinion, a sufficient number of such pumps are already installed in a district. Secondly, provision is made for the consent of the Minister to be obtained before a petrol pump license can be granted for the installing of pumps at a site on land not zoned under a scheme or by-law.

The next amendment in this Bill seeks to amend section 300 of the Local Government Act. Under the proposed amendment to this section, a council is to be given the care, control, and management of watercourses. This additional control will enable a council to remove obstructions in rivers within its district whenever it becomes necessary.

The necessity for this amendment became evident when the council of the Shire of Swan-Guildford found it had no authority to enforce the cleaning out of a watercourse on private land. To prevent damage to roads in the vicinity, it is considered this authority is essential to a council. The proposed amendment will

grant control under the Local Government Act, subject to the provisions of the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act, the Water Boards Act, and any direction in writing of the Minister for Works.

Clause 5 proposes the addition of two paragraphs to section 650, the section that deals with proof in legal proceedings not being necessary in certain items, unless evidence to the contrary is given. The additional items to be included are similar to those contained in section 23 of the City of Perth Parking Facilities Act. They provide that in prosecutions or other legal proceedings for parking offences, proof is not required regarding the constitution, extension, or reconstruction of a parking region, or the establishment of a parking facility, unless to refute evidence given to the contrary.

Finally, by clause 6, a new section 669A is proposed to be included in the Act. This section is similar to an existing provision in the City of Perth Parking Facilities Act, and gives authority for the regulation and control of traffic jointly by the Commissioner of Police and a council where by-laws relating to parking regions apply.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Toms.

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed, from the 28th October, on the following motion by Mr. Court (Minister for Industrial Development):—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. EVANS (Kalgoorlie) [8.41 p.m.]: In volume 1 of the *Tasmanian Statutes* in the foreword the Attorney-General of that State said the following:—

> Sir Cecil Carr has stated that "if English law will not allow us to plead ignorance of its contents, the State owes us the duty to supply us with the means of knowledge . . .". With that statement there can be no disagreement. One way in which the State can supply the means of knowledge is by publishing, with reasonable regularity, the statute law in a convenient and readily acceptable form and with adequate indices and tables to facilitate reference to it.

The foreword goes on—

> It is with that object in view that the publication of this work has been undertaken.

That ends the quote. I think the sentiment expressed therein by the Attorney-General of Tasmania could also be expressed in relation to the Statute law revision plan that has been adopted by the Parliament of Western Australia, brought into practice last year, and continued with the legislation now before the House.

Last year a Statute Law Revision Bill was passed and some 384 enactments were effectively removed from the up-to-date and viable form of our Statute book. This Bill proposes to repeal a further 719 such enactments. Most of these were passed during the period 1900 up to the present time and all, for various reasons, are no longer effective and it is desirable that these time-expired Statutes should no longer clutter up the Statute book, particularly when the time comes for the reprinting of particular Statutes.

In studying the memorandum issued with the Bill, one finds that most of the enactments relate to events in time which have passed and which are no longer applicable, or relate to circumstances of fact which no longer exist. Therefore these Statutes can clearly be said to be a cluster of expired or time-expired enactments. However, I would like to point out that in my opinion in the case of many of these there is no need whatsoever for such a Bill as we have before the House. We find many of them were to suit a particular purpose.

I could mention such an Act passed in order to close a road back in the year 1910. When that Bill became effective the road was closed and the purpose was served. It was a case of, to quote the previous Attorney-General in the Government, *functus officio*.

There is another Bill dealing with diseased coconuts, which was passed in 1953. Surely to goodness coconuts diseased in that year would be completely disintegrated by now and that Act would have served its purpose and is now null and void!

I feel that if nothing is done a problem will face this House in the future; and I think there should be a general statutory authority so that those time-expired Statutes can be removed without the need for frequent Bills being brought to Parliament to achieve that purpose.

On reading the memorandum itself, I noted that in the third schedule of the document there are two Statutes which were repealed by mistake. The first instance occurred in the year 1909 and was an amendment to the Interpretation Act Amendment Act. By that amendment it was intended to repeal the Interpretation Act, but its number was incorrectly shown as being 50 of 1909 instead of 55 of 1909. So we find that a Statute which was not intended to be repealed was possibly repealed. I do not know, if the matter were challenged in the court, whether the Statute apparently repealed would be held to be repealed at all. Unless one could say that the intention of the legislation was manifestly clear from the wording of the Bill itself, it might not have been effective.

There was another case in 1915 concerning an amendment to the Mines Regulation Act by which it was intended to repeal that Act. In that case the Midland Trades Hall Act was repealed by mistake simply because the number of another Statute was given. I feel there are matters where the administration of our laws should be particularly vigilant so that such things do not occur. Certainly they occurred in the years 1909 and 1915.

Apart from those references it would seem that the Statutes to be repealed deal with times which are past, and they are no longer applicable, or are related to circumstances which no longer exist. I would make another plea to the Minister to give earnest consideration to implementing a statutory authority which would enable such Statutes, which have expired for some reason or other, to be removed without the need for Bills to be brought before this Parliament. We should enable our Statutes to meet the desire that was expressed by The Hon. Roy Fagan in the quotation I made when I commenced these remarks. I support the second reading.

MR. COURT (Nedlands—Minister for Industrial Development) [8.49 p.m.]: I thank the honourable member for his support of this legislation and the study he has made of it. I know it is a subject which is rather near to him and, on behalf of the Minister, I appreciate his support of the proposed Bill.

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. Court (Minister for Industrial Development), and passed.

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL (No. 2)

Second Reading

Debate resumed, from the 28th October, on the following motion by Mr. Court (Minister for Industrial Development):—

> That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. EVANS (Kalgoorlie) [8.52 p.m.]: Section 51 of the Commonwealth Constitution provides that the Parliament—meaning the Commonwealth Parliament—shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to 39 different items of power. Paragraph (xxxvii) of those powers provides that the Commonwealth Parliament shall have the power to make laws for peace, order, and good government with respect to matters referred to the Parliament of the Commonwealth by the Parliament or Parliaments of any States, but so that the law shall extend only to States by whose Parliaments the matter is referred, or which afterwards adopt the law.

We find that with respect to certain Statutes passed between the years 1943 and 1947, this State Parliament transferred to the Commonwealth Parliament certain powers so that the Commonwealth Parliament could legislate in respect of them by virtue of paragraph (xxxvii) of Statute 51 of the Commonwealth Statutes.

Now these Statutes were to give the Commonwealth sufficient power to provide for the peace, order, and good government of the Commonwealth. We find that in each particular case the reference to the Commonwealth was for a specific purpose and was for a specific time. So all these Statutes have now expired, and I raise the same point which I mentioned previously: that I can see no need for any Bill to be here at all to remove these time-expired Statutes. In this instance, however, the State Parliament, in each case in referring these powers to the Commonwealth provided that during the time that the Commonwealth was to have these powers the State would only withdraw its approval by an amending Bill or a repealing Bill being passed by an absolute majority of both Houses of the State Parliament.

The Minister, in introducing the Bill at the second reading stage, indicated that there was some doubt whether the Bill to repeal, or remove, these time-expired Statutes from our Statute book should or should not be passed also by an absolute majority. I cannot see that this stringent application would apply at all. I would even go so far as to say they are time-expired. The legislation stated in the particular case that the Statute would exist until a certain time and no longer, and that time has long since passed. I would say these Acts are completely useless; they are historical enactments, but no more. I would not agree that an absolute majority of both Houses of Parliament is now required to remove them from the Statute book.

I would like to read the preamble of the first of these enactments in which the State Parliament referred certain powers to the Commonwealth Parliament. I quote from the Statutes of 1942-43, being four of 1943 passed by this Parliament. The preamble reads as follows:—

> Whereas it is enacted by the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia that the Parliament of the

Commonwealth shall subject to the Constitution have power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to matters referred to the Parliament of the Commonwealth by the Parliament or Parliaments of any State or States, but so that the law shall extend only to States by whose Parliaments the matter is referred, or which afterwards adopt the laws: And whereas at a Convention of representatives of the Commonwealth Government and of His Majesty's Opposition in the Parliament of the Commonwealth, and the Premiers and Leaders of the Opposition in the several States, which was convened to meet at Canberra on the twenty-fourth day of November, one thousand nine hundred and forty-two, it was unanimously resolved that adequate powers to make laws in relation to post-war reconstruction should be referred to the Parliament of the Commonwealth by the Parliaments of the States: And whereas it was further resolved that the reference, unless prior thereto revoked under the power contained herein, should be for a period ending at the expiration of five years after Australia ceases to be engaged in hostilities in the present war: And whereas it was also resolved that it was desirable that the reference should not be revoked during that period: And whereas the Premiers of the several States have agreed to do their utmost to secure the passage through their respective Parliaments as early as possible, of a Bill in the form in which the Bill for this Act was approved at the said Convention, and in any event to introduce the Bill before the thirty-first day of January, one thousand nine hundred and forty-three; And whereas it was also agreed that in the execution of laws made by the Parliament of the Commonwealth with respect to matters referred to it by section two of this Act the Commonwealth should, so far as might be reasonably practicable, avail itself of the assistance of the States and their officers, authorities and instrumentalities, and, with the consent of the Governor in Council, of any authority constituted under a law of a State: Be it therefore enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

The second Statute passed by this Parliament, and dealing with a reference of powers to the Commonwealth, is to be found in Act No. 57 of 1945, and this particular Statute referred to the Commonwealth Parliament the power to exercise price control. Section 6 of that Act provides—

> Subject in all respects to the earlier repeal of this Act and to any amendments thereof, this Act and the reference of the matter of Prices made by this Act shall continue in force until the thirty-first day of December One thousand nine hundred and forty-seven and no longer . . .

There was a subsequent amendment to that Act which extended its life to the 31st January, 1948; and since that time the Statute has been dead—I would add: because of the failure of the people of Australia to carry the Chifley referendum unfortunately price control in Australia has also been dead.

However, as these documents are now historical specimens, and we have set the pattern in times of great need to show that we are big enough to refer certain powers to the Commonwealth, at least we have achieved something. I hope that there will be no need in the future to make any further reference of powers, but if it is necessary, because of an emergency, the precedent has been set.

I am happy to support the Bill, not for the repeal of this particular power but in order to remove unwanted Statutes so that they will not find their way into any future reprints. However, I still feel there is no need for Statutes such as these to be handled in this way. It should be possible to leave them out of any index or reprint because they have no legal authority—they are legally dead and it should not be necessary to pass legislation such as this. I support the second reading.

MR. JAMIESON (Beeloo) [9.3 p.m.]: Like the member for Kalgoorlie, I, too, think it is high time that when an Act has been passed for some specific purpose it should remain on the Statute book only so long as it is required. Then it should be removed without the necessity for having to pass legislation such as this. It should be possible for Acts which are no longer required to go out of existence automatically. It should not be necessary to have a review, such as we are having at the moment, of Acts such as those that refer powers to the Commonwealth for a specific purpose when the reason for their reference no longer exists.

It appears strange to me that it should be necessary to record in the index Statutes which are no longer legally effective. This only clutters up the index and makes it more difficult to find those Acts which are in force. I think it would be more beneficial to those who have a need to refer to legislation, and the index listing legislation, if Acts which are no longer in force were removed from the index instead of being carried forward as they are

now. I would suggest to the Minister that much more thought should be given to the question of providing for some automatic expunging of these redundant Acts instead of our being forced periodically to consider legislation such as this. To my mind it is high time we provided for that instead of reviewing the Statutes ever year or so, as has been done during the last two sessions of Parliament.

MR. COURT (Nedlands—Minister for Industrial Development) [9.5 p.m.]: I thank the two honourable members who have spoken to the second reading for their comments and suggestions which I shall convey to the Minister for Justice. Without having any technical knowledge of this subject I would not like to express a view beyond saying that it appears to be a little cumbersome that we have to go through this procedure, and there may be some machinery that could be developed under which redundant Acts could be removed from the Statute book after certain events have occurred so that there would be no danger of any injustice or anomalies being created because of their too early removal from the list of Statutes. I will convey the comments to the Minister and I will discuss them with him personally. I would like to remind members that it will be necessary to pass this Bill with a constitutional majority.

The SPEAKER (Mr. Hearman): I would like to point out to members, too, that this Bill will have to be passed by a constitutional majority. I shall put the question in the normal way, but if I hear a single dissentient voice it will be necessary to divide the House. In the event of there being no dissentient voice I will satisfy myself that there are 26 members present and voting.

Question put.

The SPEAKER (Mr. Hearman): I have counted the House and satisfied myself that there are more than 26 members present; and, there being no dissentient voice, I declare the question carried by a constitutional majority.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Third Reading

MR. COURT (Nedlands—Minister for Industrial Development) [9.10 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

The SPEAKER (Mr. Hearman): May I point out that, as with the second reading, the third reading of the Bill will have to be passed by a constitutional majority.

Question put.

The SPEAKER (Mr. Hearman): I have counted the House; and, there being no dissentient voice, I declare the Bill carried by a constitutional majority.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

CLACKLINE-BOLGART AND BELLEVUE-EAST NORTHAM RAILWAY DISCONTINUANCE AND LAND REVESTMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR. COURT (Nedlands—Minister for Railways) [9.12 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

With the introduction of rail services between East Northam and Bellevue, via the new Avon River Valley route, it is intended that the existing train services between Bellevue and Spencers Brook will cease to operate.

The purpose of this Bill is to provide for the closure of this section of line and also two further short sections between Clackline and Toodyay and between Northam and East Northam which will also become redundant. Present planning is for narrow gauge services to commence operation via the new route in January, 1966. These will operate on the dual gauge system. Because of the easier grading, haulage of the remaining narrow gauge traffic via the Avon Valley route will effect a saving of more than £500,000 per annum as against operating the Spencers Brook-Bellevue route. Also, the point has been reached where extensive works would be required on this section which would involve expenditure of £1,500,000 for rehabilitation of the permanent way.

The amount of goods rail traffic handled to and from existing stations between Northam and Perth approximates 10 tons per day, and the provision of an alternative road service to cater for this traffic is at present being negotiated with the Department of Transport. I refer, of course, to the traffic that will be generated at these stations as distinct from the heavy volume of traffic that will pass down the Avon Valley route.

It will be noted that the Bill provides for land comprising the railway to be revested in Her Majesty as of her former estate. Should it be determined that the Railways Department operate an alternative road service, a small area will be necessary at some intermediate stations to provide loading facilities, etc. It is proposed that use of these areas be arranged by reservation after services have commenced to operate and land requirements are clearer. This procedure has been adopted on other closed sections of line in country districts.

With regard to passenger traffic between Midland and Chidlow, it had originally been proposed that the new road-rail passenger terminal would be completed prior to the cessation of rail services between Spencers Brook and Bellevue, and that co-ordinated feeder road services would be in operation between the hills and the new terminal.

As work on the terminal has been delayed arrangements are being made to provide an alternative passenger service for the present users of the Koongamia and Chidlow rail services.

With regard to the Clackline-Toodyay section, this will be redundant as services for the Miling branch line will be operated via the Avon Valley route through Toodyay. Goods traffic on the Clackline-Toodyay section has been virtually non-existent and no inconvenience will be created by the closure of this section of the line. The section between Northam and East Northam will not be required for operation of railway services and closure of portion of this section will do away with a number of level crossings in the Northam townsite. The balance of this section will be retained to provide access to the flourmill and oil companies' sidings.

Section 8 of the Bill empowers the commission, with the approval of the Minister for Railways, to use portion of the existing railway between Northam and Wundowie for the carriage of iron ore to Wundowie to continue until the standard gauge railway is completed to Koolyanobbing.

Under the present arrangement the ore is road hauled from the mine at Koolyanobbing to Southern Cross and loaded into narrow gauge wagons. It is then conveyed by tabled trains to Wundowie. During the transitional period, when the Avon River Valley route is opened for traffic, similar loading and transport arrangements for the ore will operate. I should point out that during that period the section of railway will actually be operating as a tramway, and will not be a common carrier as is the position with normal W.A.G.R. operations. In other words, it will have a specific purpose: to carry iron ore to Wundowie.

On completion of the standard gauge line to Koolyanobbing it is intended that the ore be loaded in standard gauge wagons at Koolyanobbing and transported by tabled trains to Northam. At this depot the ore will be transhipped into specially constructed road vehicles for transport to Wundowie.

I ask your permission, Mr. Speaker, to table a number of plans that are referred to in the schedules to the Bill. I do not think they are required to be tabled by Statute, as is the case when a new line is opened, but it is thought they should be tabled.

The plans were tabled.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Hawke (Leader of the Opposition).

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1965-66

In Committee of Supply

Resumed from the 27th October, the Chairman of Committees (Mr. W. A. Manning) in the Chair.

Vote: Legislative Council, £20,039—

MR. BURT (Murchison) [9.18 p.m.]: I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words on a couple of matters. For the benefit of members, I would first like to say that the Parliamentary All-Party Goldmining Committee which was set up by Parliament last year, presented its report to the Premier this afternoon, with the request that the report be tabled in both Houses of Parliament as soon as possible. Naturally, I will not say anything on the subject matter of the committee's report at this stage. Suffice it to say that the committee held hearings in 12 goldmining centres, and 70 witnesses presented themselves and submitted evidence to the comittee. I feel that the committee's activities were felt and appreciated throughout the goldmining districts and, to a certain extent, in the metropolitan area.

The other matter to which I would like to refer is the administration of the Mines Department. I feel the time has come for a change to be made in a situation which has existed, I think, since the department was first established towards the end of the last century. As we know, the head of the department, and the man responsible to the Minister of the day, is the Under-Secretary for Mines. Under him he has an assistant under-secretary, a State mining engineer, a principal registrar, a superintendent of State batteries, a Government geologist, a senior mines inspector, and a number of other officers in the department.

But of recent years the call upon the Mines Department as a result of the greatly increased mining activities in this State, has meant that companies of world-wide renown have seen fit to come to Western Australia to seek the many minerals that exist in this State, and I feel the time has come for the Government to give consideration to appointing a technical man at the head of affairs in the department.

I say this without reflecting in any way at all on the present and the past under-secretaries of the day. As members realise, Mr. Telfer, who had been Under-Secretary for Mines for many years, retired a month or two ago, and he was succeeded by Mr. Berry, the Assistant Under-Secretary.

I think there is no doubt that Mr. Telfer has always impressed everybody connected with mining with his sagacity and charm of manner. Incidentally, he was only the fourth under-secretary since the Mines Department was established 60 or more years ago. I am quite certain that Mr. Berry will fulfil the activities of that department equally as efficiently as Mr. Telfer. I do feel, however, that such an important post as that of head of the Mines Department in any State should go to a man who is a qualified mining engineer. This is the case in all the other States of the Commonwealth, and I feel the time has come when we should call for applications and create this new position. We could call him the Director of Mines, if we wished, and he would be at the head of the department's affairs.

Applications could be called on an Australia-wide basis, and those in the department could also be considered. The technical men in the department at present are, of course, firstly the State Mining Engineer. He controls the activities of the inspectors of mines, and his purpose, and that of his section of the department generally, is to see that the Mining Act is carried out in full, and that the mining practices are kept up to the mark. He and his department also look after the mechanical side of all diamond drilling activities.

Then we have the Superintendent of State Batteries who, as his title implies, is in charge of the several State batteries that operate throughout the goldmining area. He, of course, is a qualified metallurgist. The third departmental head is the State Government Geologist. While all these gentlemen do their work extremely efficiently and make full use of their qualifications, they are not the persons whom overseas mining company representatives meet finally to discuss major problems that present themselves. That is why I would like to emphasise that a technical mining engineer should be placed at the head of the department, so that he can discuss in their own language, so to speak, the propositions put to the department by the representatives of mining companies.

I feel that the situation in Western Australia, with practically the whole of the State under some permit or other for exploration, whether it be for oil, or for one of the various minerals that abound here, it means that there is a tremendous amount of work involved, and the responsibilities of the head of the department to the Minister and to the Government generally have been greatly increased over the past few years.

One other aspect of the administrative side of this department to which I would like to refer is the diamond drilling by private companies which the Government supervises. The control is now divided between the Geological Survey Section and the State Mining Engineer's Section. This is a two-pronged control which, I feel —and I speak from some experience here— is to a certain extent inefficient.

I represented a company which some years ago enlisted the aid of the Mines Department in a rather intricate diamond drilling project. The company I represented was contributing pound for pound with the Mines Department in the drilling operation concerned. It was a very technically exact operation and, over all, cost some hundred thousand pounds. My company was the meat in the sandwich in the argument that seemed to arise between the diamond drilling section of the Geological Survey Department and the State Mining Engineer's Department, which was looking after the mechanical side of the drilling. I feel that everybody responsible for the drilling operation was seriously and detrimentally affected by this dual control.

I would like to suggest that the Government consider giving all the control of diamond drilling to the Geological Survey Department, and that it should appoint a practical driller at the head of affairs to look after the actual drilling operations. The whole of the technical advice could come from the geologist's department.

I throw those two suggestions in the ring in the hope that the Government will seriously consider, firstly, the appointment of a director of mines to control this department, over and above the other various heads I have mentioned. I do not mean that we should do away with the under-secretary at all, because I think the Under-Secretary for Mines and those under him are extremely essential to the workings of the department. But with the impetus Western Australia is making on the world today, we need a technical man at the head of the Mines Department who would be responsible to the Minister and, if possible, he should be a man who has had some bureaucratic experience.

The next matter to which I wish to refer concerns traffic control. A few months ago we read of the desire of the Government to go into the question of whether local authorities in the country should control traffic, or whether the control of the whole of the State's traffic should be placed in the hands of the Police Department.

I speak with a certain amount of experience, because I regularly drive about 20,000 to 25,000 miles a year, and I have done so for the past 30 years. Most of this driving has been done on country roads and, having some experience, I can speak from the point of view of the driver who has driven in all sorts of conditions, at varying speeds, in varying weather, and on varying types of roads. I think that most people

agree that the cause of the dreadful carnage that takes place from time to time on our country roads, and which reached its height in September of this year, can be attributed to one factor alone, and that is speed.

I know many other errors are made by drivers including those who are affected by alcohol and others who perhaps make some extremely unconscious mistakes. However, it all boils down to the fact that one of the vehicles involved in an accident has been speeding. Alcohol makes a driver want to push his vehicle along a bit faster.

For some time I have thought a mechanical control on the speed of the motor vehicle, such as a governor restricting the speed, would be the best solution; but I am not altogether satisfied that it would be because such a restricted mechanical device could lead to even worse tragedies. For instance, if a man wished to overtake a car he might get half way before he realised that his car was not capable of any greater speed and this could lead to a greater tragedy than ever.

However, a limit of 65 miles an hour would not be out of place throughout the country roads of Western Australia and that speed could be controlled by a State highway patrol—a branch of the traffic police. I understand that a speed limit of 65 applies on most American highways; and whilst we know that many will exceed that limit, the fact that those who do are breaking the law must have some effect on the overall desire to reach a destination a little bit quicker.

Personally I feel a car is not altogether under control of the driver once it exceeds 55. By that I mean that 55 miles is the limit at which a human being can control his vehicle if it experiences a sudden blow-out in a front tyre or a kangaroo or some other animal jumps out in the path of the car. However, an extra 10 miles an hour is not altogether putting the vehicle in the danger zone. If we imposed a limit of 65 miles an hour on all country roads, the tragedies we have experienced and which I am afraid we will continue to experience, would, to a great extent, be limited.

The other matter concerning driving on country roads, to which I wish to refer, is the provision of white guide lines. Anyone travelling in the country finds that these white lines provide a feeling of security and safety, particularly at night or if rain is falling. In this connection I received two letters. One of them, written by the secretary of the Conference of Goldfields Local Bodies to the Main Roads Department, reads as follows:—

> The continued objection by the Main Roads Department to paint a white guide line along the centre of main highways less than 18 feet was viewed with deep concern at a recent meeting of the above Conference.
>
> There can be no doubt that this line is a great benefit to motorists and would be an important factor in reducing the road toll. Delegates considered the Department should give their first consideration to the saving of lives and just forget about the 18 foot restriction.
>
> I was directed to once again ask the Commissioner to reconsider his Department's policy of excluding the white guide line on roads of less than 18 foot width.

Incidentally the secretary of that conference is the Boulder Town Clerk. The other letter, addressed to me and written by a resident of Kalgoorlie, contains the following:—

> As a resident of this town for over 60 years and a motorist for over 40 years I can honestly say that I have never known the Coolgardie-Southern Cross road to be such a bad driving hazard as it is today, due largely to faster cars on the road and the bitumen too narrow for safe passing. Recent deaths on this road illustrate the need for a wider road with a white line down the centre.
>
> Several years ago, about 1960 or 1961, I heard an announcement over 6GF station that by the end of that year the Government hoped to have a white line completed from Coolgardie to Merredin. This idea has apparently died a natural death.

I take it that the reason for the absence of the white line on such an important highday as the Great Eastern Highway, which is the road all interstate traffic uses, is that the bitumen is not 18 ft. wide in certain sections.

I would once again call the attention of the Government to the two suggestions I have made—the first one to limit the speed on country roads to 65 miles an hour, with the establishment of a State highway patrol, to ensure that the limit is observed; and the second, the provision of white lines on any highway made of bitumen.

MR. GRAHAM (Balcatta) [9.36 p.m.]: There are several matters to which I wish to make reference. The first one affects us as members of Parliament and as part of the parliamentary institution.

Members generally have expressed some concern at the effect of resumption on Parliament House grounds and the proposed road system surrounding Parliament House. Unfortunately very few opportunities exist to members to express themselves on matters of general concern without there being a suggestion that an attempt is being made to play party politics, to embarrass the Government, or to curry favour with the public generally.

On other occasions I have expressed the hope that this matter of determining the future of Parliament House grounds should be dealt with at the highest possible level and that anyone who seeks to play party politics in the matter should incur the displeasure of all members who have a sense of responsibility.

Fortunately members have been stirred by what has been announced of intentions in the vicinity of Parliament House, as a consequence of which tomorrow evening certain departmental officers—I understand the Commissioner of Main Roads, perhaps the traffic engineer of that department, the Town Planning Commissioner, and perhaps Professor Gordon Stephenson—will be addressing members with regard to this very matter so that members of both Houses of this Parliament will be fully apprised of the intentions of the Government's expert advisers. Subsequently, of course, members will have an opportunity of expressing their viewpoint, and if the experts' attitude and approach does not meet with their wishes, then, no doubt, the final say will rest with members.

Enough of that, except to say that I am wondering whether the Government or some of its departments know what is going on at the present moment. Several of us, who are members of Parliament, were amazed today, to say the least, to find that in Parliament House reserve, immediately behind the Water Supply Department, a brick building is being erected. On the other side of the road substantial buildings are being demolished to make way for the Freeway and ancillary roads, and yet this very day a building of pressed bricks is being erected on these grounds without the authority of Parliament or the Joint House Committee, speaking on behalf of Parliament. Within a space of a few months all that is in the way of the Freeway will be demolished.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: That particular new one being erected is an addition to a toilet, made necessary because the Main Roads Department will be occupying the Water Supply Department building for about a period of 12 months or so. The other toilet block will be knocked down, so it is a temporary toilet.

Mr. GRAHAM: At this stage of the game it is ridiculous to be erecting a double brick substantial structure in the way of buildings to be demolished. Here let me acknowledge that in at least one case the Minister was co-operative; but people are being hustled out of their business premises in order that demolition shall take place in accordance with a certain timetable. These business people have already left their premises and the buildings have been demolished.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: That is right.

Mr. GRAHAM: And yet there is such an urgency with regard to it—

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I am trying to give you the explanation. The Main Roads Department will be leaving its building which will be knocked over. Those concerned will be occupying the Water Supply Department buildings. The Public Works Department buildings will be knocked over, too, but until the Superannuation Board building is ready to house the Main Roads Department—which will be in about 12 months' time—those in the Main Roads Department need to be sited somewhere, and that is the place.

Mr. GRAHAM: I wonder what strange reasoning that is! Those who have inspected the plan will see that not only a matter of feet of the eastern end of the Main Roads Department will be in the path of the Freeway, but almost all the Public Works Department and Water Supply Department buildings will be in the way. Apparently, though, it is proposed to demolish the Main Roads Department building at a comparatively early stage when, I repeat, nine-tenths or thereabouts of the building will still be on the Parliament House reserve. Yet the Public Works Department building will remain.

Mr. Ross Hutchison: I feel sure you should have been a town planning engineer. That would have been your *forte*.

Mr. GRAHAM: That may be so, but it is impossible for a man to be in very many places at once. I am acepting the recommendation of the Minister.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I am not saying you would be much better, but perhaps you would be a little better.

Mr. GRAHAM: The Minister is perfectly entitled to his opinion, and if he cares to say something flattering of me I would be less than human if I did not applaud or acknowledge his complimentary references; but similarily he is entitled to be as critical as he chooses.

Mr. Tonkin: Beware of the Greeks when they bring gifts!

Mr. GRAHAM: That may be. But in the matter of logic, let us forget about engineering. It is the height of absurdity that substantial brick structures should be erected at this time in the very path of the freeway when buildings are daily being demolished in order to make way for that freeway. I know it is possible to give excuses for anything.

A person wrote to me within recent weeks to indicate how advantage of a situation is being taken by certain elements in the community, and I think this is perfectly obvious when we have regard for the projected changeover from pounds, shillings, and pence, to dollars and cents.

We find in all walks of life and in all sections of trade and professions, that prices, fees, and charges are being stepped up in anticipation of the change to decimal currency. Members are aware that apart from the fraction of a penny, all pounds, shillings, and pence values can be converted into dollars and cents; but for some unaccountable reason there seems to be this necessity for an upward adjustment. Of course the poor little man in the community is getting hit all the time.

I have had an example brought to me. The Decimal Currency Board is undertaking certain responsibilities in the matter of cash registers, but not in the matter of typewriters. To a large extent the pound sign will not be necessary in the future, but the dollar sign will. A certain person in this city made inquiries of a number of firms as to what the charge would be for the conversion of the pound sign to the dollar sign on a typewriter. He asked several firms in the metropolitan area what the price would be and he was quoted exactly the same figure by each one. I do not know whether this comes within the ambit of collusive tendering under a piece of legislation that was passed by this Parliament some half-dozen years ago.

Mr. Gayfer: Was the figure £3 5s.?

Mr. GRAHAM: No, it was £3 10s. in each case. This struck the inquirer as being a ridiculous sum, and he asked the firms just what work was involved in effecting the change. He was told that the part of the typewriter that strikes the paper through the ribbon must be removed and a new piece of type sweated or soldered on and a new symbol fitted on to the keyboard.

This enterprising person then decided to try a little experiment. He referred to the pink pages of the *Telephone Directory* and picked out five firms at random and informed them that he had purchased a secondhand typewriter on which one of the keys was faulty and that he required a new key. He asked how much it would cost to have the faulty key removed and a new one inserted in its place. To use his words, the results were quite startling. One firm quoted £3; two firms quoted £1 10s.; one firm quoted £1 5s.; and one firm quoted 15s. 6d. Surely it is obvious that somewhere amongst these figures rests the true cost, allowing for a profit for the firm. The figure was down as low as 15s. 6d.

Mr. Craig: Could not secondhand keys be used, whereas the dollar key would need to be a new one?

Mr. GRAHAM: It might.

Mr. Craig: I should imagine it would.

Mr. GRAHAM: I do not know that a person would necessarily be satisfied with a secondhand key; but every one of the prices quoted was less than the standard price of £3 10s. which had been quoted by the several firms as previously indicated.

This person inquired the cost of replacing the symbol on the keyboard—that is not the striking key that makes the imprint. The firm that quoted him 15s. 6d. for the entire job said the cost would be a few pence. The firm that quoted £3 said the cost would be 15s.

This businessman, of whom I speak, then got a colleague of his to telephone each one of these five firms that had been selected at random from the pink pages of the *Telephone Directory*, and in each case they gave the figure of £3 10s. to convert the pound sign to the dollar sign. Obviously there is a racket in this matter; and the Government, as a result of using its majority in both Houses to repeal legislation which would have allowed an independent authority to have some say in such matters, is now powerless to do anything about it. That is bad enough, but unfortunately the Government adopts an attitude of "couldn't care less."

Surely when by Governmental decision people are required to effect a change or to do something, as in the matter of compulsory third party insurance, and so on, there should be a public authority to check on the charges that are levied; because no person in the community who has a typewriter is able to escape the cost involved in having a dollar sign placed on his machine. So this has been made a happy hunting ground for certain business people who obviously have put their heads together with the object of fleecing the public because so many people in such a short space of time are obliged to have this change effected.

The matter I next desire to touch upon is one in respect of which I can honestly say I would prefer there was no occasion for me to speak. It involves the behaviour of the chief executive officer of a Government instrumentality. One naturally demurs at making strong criticism of an officer in such a position; and in my case doubly so because I had something to do with his appointment in the first place. But that does not influence me in regard to what I am about to say, except to remark that I am disappointed that this person has turned out to be as unsatisfactory as he is.

I suppose that in the overwhelming majority of cases the greatest financial undertaking indulged in by a person in his life is the building or purchase of a home for himself. It is an important step; and because of the costs involved, not only in the capital outlay but the recurring expense, it is a matter that can intimately affect the life of that person. I suggest, therefore, that anyone who builds a home for himself should have a say with regard to the finer points of it, and so long as there is no offence against safety or aesthetics, no undue burden placed upon any public authority, no interference with the rights of other people, and no danger or inconvenience caused to others, that

person's home should be his castle and he should be the determining authority with respect to it.

Now I find in answer to questions addressed the other day to the Minister for Electricity that the State Electricity Commission has a regulation which states—

> The supply authority shall have the right to decide as to the most suitable position for fuses, circuit-breakers, indicators and meters and termination of service leads.

It is, of course, in respect of meters and the termination of service leads that the home owner or home builder is concerned. It is palpably wrong for an authority such as the Electricity Commission to require a person who has a home designed for himself with certain features and characteristics and architectural niceties, to place a large meter box in the front of his home. I say that, of course, with the qualification I mentioned earlier that if there could be any suggestion of danger, or increased expense or inconvenience to the department, or some harm to anyone, then, particularly if the firstmentioned applied—that is, the danger or safety factor—it should be paramount; but merely to suit the whim of some public servant who might be feeling out of sorts on a particular day, is something that should not be tolerated.

There is no need for me to weary the Chamber with regard to the conditions that were given me by the Minister as to when exceptions might be made. Fancy the State Electricity Commission telling anybody the features that should appear on the front of his home! I suggest it is an impertinence; and I say no useful purpose whatever is served by this edict from the commission.

From time to time tolerance has been shown—an understanding of the rights of people who were spending some thousands of pounds on their homes; but if somebody is feeling out of sorts or particularly sour at a certain stage, then the answer is in the negative and recourse is had to the book of rules. Not only that, but when approaches are made by the people concerned, or by the parliamentary members, something less than courtesy is meted out to them; and I regret to have to say that.

Mr. Nalder: I think that is an exaggeration.

Mr. GRAHAM: The Minister would say that without knowing anything about it.

Mr. Nalder: Yes; I do know.

Mr. GRAHAM: Without knowing anything about it. Members are no doubt aware that the member for Victoria Park had occasion during this session to complain about the self-same thing; and I was unaware of his comments until after my own experience.

We need only have regard for what the unofficial ombudsman—the *Daily News* Ombudsman—writes because of his experiences, to realise that we cannot all be wrong; and I do not intend to fabricate anything or to exaggerate anything as I unfold the story I am about to relate.

I was approached first of all by a building firm on behalf of two persons recently arrived from Great Britain. These people—two ladies by the way—had chosen a design for a house costing in the vicinity of £4,000. There was a feature wall of Toodyay stone and large landscaped windows. These ladies, of course, had no desire that the front door of their house should be adorned with a glass box, or any other kind of box to house the electricity meter.

Prior to this construction, the building contractors had erected many homes in various parts of the metropolitan area where the meter boxes have been placed on the sides of the dwellings, and not in accordance with the terms of the Minister's reply the other afternoon. The electrical contractor performing the work had, on many occasions, placed the terminals and the meter box on the side of the house by the front patio near the front step where it could be conveniently reached. So they proceeded with this house—and I have photostats of the construction—in Poincaire Road, Balcatta, in the same way as they had proceeded with others.

An approach was made to the State Electricity Commission, but nothing was heard from it for nine days, and then some inspectors arrived. Again nothing more was heard and so the work proceeded. About two months later the State Electricity Commission became a little concerned. To this day the commission avers—which may be true or false—that a ticket was placed in the meter box of the house under construction notifying that the meter box could not be placed around the side of the house but had to be constructed in the front of the dwelling, or a post erected in the front garden with a special type of meter box erected on the post.

Let me pause at this stage to ask a question. How businesslike is it for the State Electricity Commission to place a small slip of paper in a meter box in a house still under construction? All members are aware that it is a pastime on weekends for many thousands of people to travel around the various suburbs inspecting partly-constructed homes. We are also aware that there are youngsters and others mischief-bent who commit acts they should not, and a small piece of paper placed in a meter box in a house still under construction would be a magnet for some young people.

However, the contractors for the ladies who were having the house built have no reason to lie, and they tell me that even if the slip of paper was placed in the meter box it was never seen by them and so, in the light of their previous experiences

they proceeded with the job. One would have thought the State Electricity Commission could invest in a five-penny stamp to notify the builders officially what its requirements were. I suggest it is a most slipshod and half-hearted way of sending out such notices; that is, to place a piece of paper in an incomplete house which is entirely without any protection or safeguard.

When the ladies for whom the house was being built heard of the attitude of the State Electricity Commission, at least one of them burst into tears, and appealed to the firm of builders and to the electrician to see what they could do about it. Approaches were made—and I can quote the names of the firm and the officers concerned if any honourable member wishes to hear them—and the engineer or the chief inspector said he would inspect the dwelling and give his decision. This he did by telephone and the decision to change the position of the meter remained unaltered. In other words, bureaucracy had spoken and that was that!

Mr. Davies: In the form of a loud voice from the General Manager of the State Electricity Commission.

Mr. GRAHAM: Yes; and we will come to that officer in a moment. The representative of the building firm made another attempt and pleaded with the inspector to reconsider his decision by pointing out similar establishments to which the power was connected at the side, but in his own words he failed to get a good response from this inspector and he said the tone of his voice was imposing and abrupt without the slightest sign of any consideration to his client.

Eventually the builder was able to smooth his ruffled feathers, and this inspector said he would speak to his superiors to see if they would reconsider the matter; but nothing further was heard. The building contractors then came to see me and they showed me the plans of the house itself, which I have here, wherein it was proposed that the meter box should be placed by the front terrace near the front steps—the most convenient place for the meter reader, because he could proceed up the front path and read the meter at the closest part of the house to the front gate.

Whilst we are on the point, ultimately the State Electricity Commission decided that the meter box should be placed between the two bedrooms, which would necessitate the meter reader walking a distance 25 per cent. greater than he would if the meter box were at the front of the house, and would also necessitate his clambering through rose bushes and other shrubbery, no doubt, to get to the meter. However, that does not matter! The State Electricity Commission has had its way and has shown who is paramount, and the rights of the individual count for nought.

The following morning I spoke to the General Manager of the State Electricity Commission and he was quite courteous. I explained the situation and he told me he was not very happy over this matter of placing meter boxes at the side of the house, but that he would look into it and contact me later. He was as good as his word and I heard from him in the afternoon. His attitude was one of complete arrogance. He did not give tuppence about members of Parliament, the Press, or anybody else. He informed me he was in charge of the State Electricity Commission and he would take charge of the State Electricity Commission. If he said something had to be done it would be done, and he would see that his officers carried out his instructions. He made some slighting reference to the *Daily News* Ombudsman and to members of Parliament.

I kept myself under control because I wanted something for my clients, and I suggested to him that if he could show there was any element of danger involved, or of any inconvenience to the department, or any other factor against placing the meter box at the side of the house, I would agree with him. However, he would do nothing of the sort. He wanted only that the meter box should be placed at the front of the building, and he did not like it being placed at the side.

I do not know what would have happened if the architect had been a little more generous with the landscaped windows and placed them a little closer together, because if he had done that the meter box would not have fitted on the front wall and it would have been placed two bricks distant around the side. By doing that it would, of course, have saved the electrician some money and made it more convenient for the meter reader to carry out his duties. But those considerations did not count.

The attitude of the General Manager of the State Electricity Commission was: "When I say something shall be done, it shall be done." I repeat he had no concern for the person who was investing thousands of pounds in the house. Finally, after an exchange of words on a level to which I am not accustomed in my relations with members of the Public Service, it was suggested that the ladies' builders on whose behalf I was making a plea, could wait on the consumers' engineer. I said to the General Manager, "Before we proceed further, who is the consumers' engineer? Is he a member of your staff? Is he subject to your instructions?" The reply was, "Oh, yes; but he will give a fair hearing".

I forthwith got in touch with the building firm, which made an appointment to see the consumers' engineer on the morning of the 14th October, 1965. The builder

—accompanied, I think, by a representative of the firm of electrical contractors—waited on Mr. Lake, the consumers' engineer, and presented him with evidence of several buildings where the State Electricity Commission had connected the power to a position on the structures identical to the position at which the meter box had been placed on this house. They told me that they proved, beyond any doubt, that the policy of the State Electricity Commission on the position of meter boxes was inconsistent. They pointed out that there was insufficient time to change the position of the meter because the womenfolk of whom I speak were occupying premises in respect of which a month's notice to vacate the premises had to be given. The building contractors had kept their end of the bargain by having the house ready in time, but it was to be without any electricity because the General Manager of the State Electricity Commission had spoken.

Apart from the time factor the building costs for this house would be increased by some £30. So these ladies, who recently arrived in Australia, apart from having the S.E.C. meter box placed in front of their house, were also involved in £30 extra expenditure merely to please somebody with a liver.

If the Minister is interested he can make a check of certain addresses. In reply to questions asked on the 20th October, 1965, he told me that a departure was permitted from this rule on meters being affixed to the front of houses where it is structurally impossible to place the meter box on the front wall, or where the front door is at the side of the house. That sounds a little Irish, but I think members understand what I mean. If the Minister, or one of his officers, cares to visit Lot 19, Zenobia Street, Palmyra; Lot 38, Belgravia Street, Cloverdale; or Lot 51, Northgate Street, Karrinyup, he will find houses where the meter box—and I have photographs here to prove it—is at the side of the building.

He will find that the front steps of the porch are at the corner of the house, and therefore the closest part of the house to the front gate is the corner where the meter box is situated. Otherwise the meter reader would have to walk half the width of the house, as well as the distance from the front gate to the house. There is no question of inconvenience or anything else.

The Minister can inspect the house on Lot 390, West Coast Highway, City Beach, where he will find the positioning of the meter box is not two bricks from the corner. If my impression of the placing of the meter box—I have seen a photograph of the house—is correct, it is some 12 feet from the front of the building, and not two bricks around the corner where it should be. It is towards the rear of a car port.

If the Minister cares to inspect the house on Lot 17, Teslin Road, Swanbourne, which is adjacent to City Beach, he will find that the meter readers, instead of having to go to the front of the house to read the meter, have to walk around a brick wall in order to get at it, because that is where it is placed.

These are a few cases and only some of the cases of one building firm and one electrical contractor, and they are all of recent date. Therefore it is logical to conclude there are many hundreds of similar cases where the State Electricity Commission has allowed, without danger or damage to anyone, the placing of meter boxes on the sides of houses.

The building contractor and the electrical contractor argued the matter with the consumers' engineer who did not have any reply to make, and who was not prepared to accept the challenge of those people, because they were speaking from facts. I am informed that that engineer finally wound up by saying this matter had been the subject of discussion between the general manager and a member of Parliament, and as the general manager had made up his mind that was the end of the matter. So from the outset it was a time-wasting expedition.

This underling of the general manager, obviously having been told of my conversations with the general manager, felt obliged, irrespective of the merits of the case, to say that he could not do anything, except to be an echo of the general manager.

If every house builder were required to install the meter box on the front of the house, then I would not be making a plea on behalf of these people. I would accept what I have been told by the State Electricity Commission. Whether or not the Minister knows it, he has been led a merry dance. There is no consistency about this matter. Are these favours which are being bestowed on certain fortunate people? Does the heavy hand of bureaucracy fall only in certain cases? Are some of the inspectors of the S.E.C. permitted to show discretion and commonsense, whereas others are browbeaten by the stern and unrelenting attitude of the general manager? I would like answers to these questions. I have not drawn the instances from my fancy, because I have the relevant documents before me.

Mr. Davies: Did the general manager claim that the policy was to reduce the cost of electricity?

Mr. GRAHAM: That is so. The manager made many fatuous statements. I say fatuous, because I have a very high regard for the Public Service of Western Australia and the principal officers therein. Even if one disagrees with them, almost invariably they have some reasonably

strong argument to support their viewpoint. But in the instances to which I have referred there was no argument: I just met with a brick wall. All sorts of trivialities, as instanced by the member for Victoria Park, were put up. In several of the cases which I have outlined there is more inconvenience, and therefore more expense to the State Electricity Commission. If all the cases which have occurred were taken into consideration there would be no increase in costs. Therefore this does not contribute anything in the way of keeping within reasonable proportions the charges for electricity in Western Australia.

Even if a few extra yards had to be covered by the meter readers, what would that matter? Having spent in the vicinity of £6,000 on the land and appurtenances to a home, surely the owner would not mind paying an extra shilling or so a year to meet the cost of a meter reader having to cover an extra few paces! He would prefer that to having the front of his house defaced by a meter box. These things are not designed as an architectural feature; they have no place whatever on the front of the house.

If a meter box can be positioned so that it is more readily accessible, and so as to comply with the requirement of the commission—which is adhered to when it suits the commission, and which is ignored when it does not—then why should not a person who expends such a great deal of money on the building of his home be given some say in the final appearance?

From my reading of *Hansard*, when the member for Victoria Park had occasion to wait on the Minister for Electricity in respect of a proposition for a hall or for some church authority, the Minister had the general manager beside him. According to the member for Victoria Park the Minister might just as well have been absent.

Mr. Davies: The deputation might just as well have waited on the general manager.

Mr. GRAHAM: Apparently the proceedings were taken completely out of the hands of the Minister, and placed in the hands of the general manager (Mr. Jukes). It would appear he exercised a little discretion in front of his Minister, but with results and atmosphere somewhat similar to those I am outlining. I sincerely hope and trust that the Minister will have some regard for these complaints of mine, which are well based and are supported by documents and addresses.

If the Minister is interested I can supply him with more evidence. If he likes I can accompany him to a house, on Lot 298 Poincare Street, Vermont Gardens, Balcatta, to see what has been imposed by Mr. Jukes on two womenfolk who arrived recently from Great Britain, and I can also show him what has been permitted by the commission elsewhere. I say they were permitted by the commission with a good show of commonsense. Surely that should mean something to the Minister! Those on the opposite side of the House who support the Government, and prate so much about private enterprise and the rights of the individual, should examine this matter. If the Minister does not feel disposed to accept my invitation, I am prepared to escort as many back-bench members of the Government as are interested to inspect the properties I have described.

This sort of action by the commission should be stopped. At the present moment there is despotic control; and even when a member of Parliament endeavours to do something for one of his constituents by promoting the constituent's viewpoint, because the member is satisfied that that viewpoint is right, he comes up against a brick wall; and logic, argument, and example do not seem to count for anything.

It seems that the rigid attitude of a public official, who insists that a certain procedure be followed merely because he says it shall be, is to prevail. It is time we took stock of the situation. On a number of occasions during this session of Parliament we heard several members expressing some concern at the trend in parliamentary affairs, where nothing seems to matter except the majority vote to support the Executive. Now it is almost heresy for a private member on the Government side to speak or vote against a proposition sponsored by the Government.

I have noticed a tremendous change in the 22 years that I have been in this Parliament. To digress for a moment, I remember the occasion when every back-bench member of a Labor Government came across to this side of the House to vote against the Ministry. We saw the spectacle of all the Ministers and the Party Whip on one side, and every other member—Labor, National, or Country Party—on the opposite side.

Mr. J. Hegney: They were the Opposition.

Mr. GRAHAM: Labor created its own opposition in many cases. In connection with the City of Perth Parking Facilities Bill which I introduced in 1956, the great bulk of the spoken opposition came from Labor members on the Government side. They called for a division against me, and the majority of those who voted against the Bill were Labor supporters of a Labor Government. That was in 1956. What is the position today?

Mr. I. W. Manning: Tell us a little more about what happened to the late Mr. Lawrence when he voted against Labor.

Mr. GRAHAM: The member for Wellington should be the last in this Parliament to point an accusing finger at any

member who dared to vote against his party, after which something happened. He should know that in respect of political parties certain issues are regarded as platform policies. In all other matters we of the Labor Party are free to express ourselves and to vote as our conscience dictates. That is something which cannot be said of members on the opposite side of the House. In the case of the late Mr. Lawrence, in respect of a party platform matter he, in a moment of weakness and for his own reasons which nobody could contemplate, voted against that important platform matter.

Mr. I. W. Manning: He voted in accordance with his conscience.

Mr. Jamieson: Where was your conscience when the arbitration Bill was before the House last year?

Mr. I. W. Manning: Don't you talk about that!

Mr. GRAHAM: I wanted to deal with that. If the member for Wellington ever becomes a delegate from this Parliament to a conference somewhere else it would not be a matter of conscience, but a matter of dishonesty on his part, if he voted against an instruction of this Parliament. So when I sign the pledge of my party in respect of its platform, I suggest in all seriousness that I am less than a man if I am not prepared to stand by the pledge that I have voluntarily signed.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. W. A. Manning): The honourable member has five minutes.

Mr. GRAHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That will be ample. In the case of the member for Wellington, the most disgraceful scene that possibly this Parliament has witnessed was certainly when he was occupying the Chair and a member on this side of the House was on his feet and asked for the call. The member for Wellington, as Chairman, and with certain obligations in respect of his office, called someone from his side of the House, someone who had not risen from his seat, someone who had not even opened his mouth. Then the member for Wellington wondered that members protested at his violation of all that is decent in Parliament, particularly in respect of the incumbent of the Chair, the man in charge of the proceedings of the Parliament.

Mr. I. W. Manning: Your behaviour left much to be desired.

A Government member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jamieson: Even tried to square off *Hansard!* That is your ilk.

Mr. GRAHAM: We see this type of person who, unfortunately, occupies the Chair from time to time. As members are aware, I swore I would not sit in this Chamber with the member for Wellington in the Chair because he was an affront to Parliament and everything for which Parliament stood, when he could be dishonest in his administration in respect of that particular action; and that was not the only occasion so far as that legislation was concerned.

Mr. I. W. Manning: You could not have been proud of your own performance then.

Mr. GRAHAM: When an Opposition is minus the numbers it is powerless. All it can do is something in the way of making gestures. All that matters to the member for Wellington is the numbers. He does not care about the propriety of the situation or the morality of it. All that he cares about is the numbers, and that was all he was concerned about on that occasion when he violated his office. Fortunately he did not take an oath of office; otherwise he could have been indicted. All those things expected of a presiding officer were violated by him when he cast his shadow over the Legislative Assembly. No wonder, therefore, that member after member expressed himself in the strongest possible terms at the attitude he took!

However, I conclude on the point that this matter of a public servant denying elementary rights to decent citizens embarking on the heaviest investment of their lives and showing no understanding or kindness towards them, and insisting on something being done merely because he wants it done; and this matter of someone being totally oblivious to members of Parliament, to the Press, or to the rights of the people, is one which requires some strength on the part of the Minister.

Whilst I have made my plea and made these utterances, I invite him to call in the persons affected by the particular case, to make personal inquiries and inspections, and to check the officers whose names I have mentioned, and if he does not confirm everything I have said, then someone is being recreant to the truth.

I conclude on the note on which I opened. I only wish it was not necessary for me to speak in these terms. I thought seriously about whether I would speak about the matter at all. I decided first that I would and then that I would not; but finally I felt it was my duty, even if it meant criticising strongly a public servant the original appointment of whom I played some part in and a person with whom I have worked on certain occasions. However, it is because of his attitude and his injustice to the people that someone has to speak about it, and the Minister will not be doing his job if he does not sift this matter carefully in order to ascertain whether what I am saying is right or wrong.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. W. A. Manning): The honourable member's time has expired.

DR. HENN (Wembley) [10.35 p.m.]: I wish to speak tonight on a subject about which I have spoken several times before —I should think at least five times in the

last six years. Like the member for Balcatta, I wondered whether I should speak on this subject at all, but what made up my mind for me was a letter which recently appeared in the newspaper above the signature of the chairman of the Nurses' Registration Board; but I shall refer to that later.

I do want to speak for a few moments on the question of nurses and I want to say at once that I have no grizzle about the training of nurses in Western Australia. I said that five years ago and I am more than pleased with their training. I have no grizzle with the standard required for the entrance, as laid down by the registration board.

What I have a grizzle about is the difficulty which young women experience when they are confronted with the matrons of the various teaching hospitals. There, I think, the trouble lies. I asked some questions and received some answers, and I will refer to these shortly.

I first want to relate the story of a young woman whom I know very well. She wanted to enter the nursing profession so she approached the matron of a very well-known training hospital in the metropolitan area. The first question she was asked was whether she had passed the Leaving, and the girl said she had not. I was actually present at this interview and I noticed a slight disappointment in the matron's expression when the girl replied to her first question.

The next question was, "Have you passed the Junior?" At that stage it was round about December and the results had not come out, and the girl was told that unless she passed the Junior, including certain subjects, she had no opportunity of training. The next question was, "Have you had an aptitude test?" The girl replied that she had and the report was with the Government department which kept these things. The matron thereupon said she would ascertain the result.

I would like to say a word or two about these aptitude tests. I think they should be taken with a pinch of salt, possibly Epsom's salts; I am not sure which kind. Too much reliance is placed on them. The mother of this particular girl was rung up a fortnight later by the matron, who said, "I am sorry your daughter proved to be not adaptable or apt for nursing. Her aptitude test showed she is only fit for mothercraft nursing."

That was a bit of a shock to the mother. But as I happened to be the father of the girl involved, and know my way about the world, I proceeded to get very active. I got so active I was able to go to another nursing school where I prevailed upon the matron to think my daughter was possibly worth a start. I am very glad to say that in this case the matron gave her a go. However, she did say that my daughter would find it very difficult to get through nursing because of her academic prowess up to the time she had left school. That is fair enough, I suppose; but I am mentioning this because it demonstrates the thinking of the matrons today and for the last five years.

Mr. Norton: I wonder whether they had those qualifications when they started?

Dr. HENN: I would not like to say, because it might embarrass them. The result in the case of this particular girl of whom I am speaking was that she commenced her nursing training and passed every exam and enjoyed every moment of it. That is the story of hundreds and hundreds of girls in Western Australia; and I make a plea to those in authority to be not so anxious to maintain or to upgrade the entrance standard for nurses, because I feel that many good nurses are being lost to the profession, despite what responsible people say, and as I can point out.

I asked a number of questions of the Minister, and I am not blaming him in any way when I criticise his answers, because no doubt they came from an officer who would be qualified to supply them. One of the questions that I asked was—

> Is any consideration being given to raising these present academic requirements; if so, why?

The answer was—

> Yes—to meet increasing skills and demands of nursing.

I think the phrase "increasing skills and demands of nursing" is nothing more than a catch phrase, and I want to point out that nursing is possibly easier today than it was 30 years ago. Take, for instance, the example of appendicitis. We have much better antibiotics and anaesthesia today. The patient is not subject to such shock, and therefore the nursing in that case is a much easier proposition today than it was 30 years ago when it was certainly nursing that got the patients through the operation.

The phrase "increasing skills and demands of nursing" is one I feel is being used to boost the nursing profession's image in the eyes of those to whom the profession has had to go to obtain a rise in salary. I appreciate they have had to do that, and they have fought very hard over the years. The matrons must approach the Arbitration Court for a rise and they decided to do so on the question of educational standards because they thought it was a good one. I think they have got to the stage where they should now forget the subject, having achieved their objective. The nurses now receive pretty good wages and have pretty good standards and hours of work which are

much better than they were. Therefore I feel the matrons should leave this question alone in this State for five years at least until we can catch up on the shortage of nurses which we certainly have here today. Furthermore, I must say that it is not only my opinion but the opinion of other people that nurses do not need these higher academic qualifications. One of the other questions I asked was—

> Is it a fact that Junior music is acceptable as a subject, whereas art of speech is not; if so, why?

The answer was—

> Yes. Art of speech is not considered a sufficiently wide subject. It is not accepted for matriculation, whereas music is.

I do not know why a nurse must be qualified in music unless she has to play the harp later on when she goes into the ethereal regions.

Here we see the word "matriculation." This is an indication that it will not be very long before they have to matriculate. This is the crux of that answer: a matriculation requires music, and therefore nurses require music too. It is too ridiculous to talk about. I should say that art of speech would be much more useful than music, unless some new treatment is coming where a nurse can sit down and play some sort of musical instrument while the doctor removes stitches.

Mr. Jamieson: Harmonic therapy.

DR. HENN: Another question I asked was as follows:—

> Have individual teaching hospital matrons discretion to vary the minimal required academic standards for entrance to nursing?

The answer was as follows:—

> Individual schools of nursing may vary the entry standards for their own schools depending on the quantity and quality of recruits presenting themselves, provided they do not accept candidates below the minimum standard set by the Nurses' Registration Board—see (1) above.

We have the requirements for that above. The answer to that question is the very crux of my argument and my belief—that it is the matrons who can vary and do vary the standard required for entrance into nursing. This is where the girls come up against it. I say too much reliance and importance are placed on the academic standard rather than the desire of the particular girl to become a nurse. Another question I asked was as follows:—

> Will he review the whole system of recruitment of nursing trainees in Western Australian hospitals, in view of the large numbers that are being rejected as unsuitable for training?

To this the Minister replied—

> There is no evidence that there are large numbers being rejected as unsuitable for training bearing in mind that applicants for nursing with lower qualifications can train as nursing aides.

I must disagree with that, because I say that a large number are being rejected as unsuitable for training for the very reasons I have given. To say that those who are rejected because of their academic standard —or lack of it—can become nursing aides, is not the answer, because I would like to suggest that if we go on in this way the nursing aides will take over the role of nurses within the next 10 years. It will be the nursing aides who will have everything which I want a nurse to have; we will find that the trained nurse is "academic" and, I will not say useless in the profession, but not as useful as a nursing aide would be.

So I would ask those responsible, for the umpteenth time, to have a final look at this before we raise the standard because we are getting to the stage where it will not be long before the matriculation is required for nursing. I would ask that we mark time for five years or 10 years so that we can catch up. There is nothing wrong with the nurses today and there is nothing wrong with nurses of 20 years ago. I am not sure that they were not better 20 years ago. I would not like to be dogmatic on that point, but they were certainly no worse. They did not have to pass their Leaving Certificate.

Finally, I want to refer to a letter which is above the signature of the Chairman of the Nurses' Registration Board. I will refer to three remarks made in the letter and I do this because the Chairman of the Nurses' Registration Board is a very important person in connection with the subject I am discussing. People who read the letter might think that everything is all right, but I know that hundreds of people do not agree, because of the letters in the newspapers which have flooded in from mothers who are worried. I do not think the newspapers publish one letter every week for the fun of it. Obviously a lot of people are writing in.

One of the statements made by the chairman was that—

> schools of nursing select their own trainees and they will naturally select the best candidates available for the number of vacancies for training. Trainees with low educational qualifications may have difficulty in finding a vacancy in a particular school.

The "low" standard is set by the Nurses' Registration Board! As a matter of fact, trainees are having difficulty in finding a vacancy in any school if they do not have the Leaving Certificate.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Progress

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

House adjourned at 10.55 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 3rd November, 1965

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