

# Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 19th October, 1977

The SPEAKER (Mr Thompson) took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE

On motion by Mr Shalders, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr McPharlin (Mt. Marshall) on the ground of urgent public business.

## LOAN BILL

### *Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by Sir Charles Court (Treasurer), and read a first time.

## ACTS AMENDMENT (STUDENT GUILDS AND ASSOCIATIONS) BILL

### *Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr P. V. Jones (Minister for Education), and read a first time.

## POLICE FORCE AND ROAD TRAFFIC AUTHORITY

### *Amalgamation: Motion*

MR T. H. JONES (Collie) [2.22 p.m.]: I move—

That since answers by the Minister for Police to questions asked in this House on August 3, 1977, clearly indicate that—

- (a) all members of the Road Traffic Authority are members of the W.A. Police Force; and
  - (b) all members of the W.A. Police Force are authorised to carry out traffic patrol duties, irrespective of whether they have been assigned to the Road Traffic Authority,
- therefore, in the opinion of this House—

- (i) the Road Traffic Authority is a costly and unnecessary duplication of the W.A. Police Force; and

- (ii) in order to further the maintenance of law and order in W.A. the enforcement of all laws of the State should be the responsibility of a single Police Force, without the disruptive, wasteful and inefficient fragmentation caused by the existence of a separate, yet similar, traffic authority.

The motion is very clear and endorses the attitude the Opposition had when the separate Road Traffic Authority was established by this Parliament in 1974. It will be necessary for me, with your permission, Sir, to refer briefly to part of the argument which took place in October, 1974, when the legislation to establish the RTA in Western Australia was debated in the House.

I am of the opinion that the views expressed by the Opposition at that time are still valid. There has been no change in the attitude strongly expressed by Opposition members at that time, but there have been obvious changes in the attitude of people who were not opposed to the legislation which was introduced by the Minister for Traffic of the day.

I wish to indicate the attitude of respective parties to traffic control generally in Western Australia so that we will have a clear appreciation of how all parties viewed the establishment of a separate traffic authority in 1974.

Firstly, I will refer to the policy of the Liberal Party which, to a degree, has not been put into operation. Later in my remarks I will clearly demonstrate that the Government has fallen down in a number of areas. Under the heading, "Controlling the Roads for Safety" the Liberal policy speech states—

The Liberal Party is seriously concerned about the mounting road toll and believes the answer lies in a single central authority to deal with it.

We will establish a Ministry for Traffic and Road Safety.

We will make this Authority completely independent of the Police Force—

I want to emphasise the word "completely" because during my submission I will clearly indicate that the RTA is not completely independent of the Police Force.

Mr O'Connor: That is your major complaint then?

MR T. H. JONES: I have unlimited time so if

the former Minister for Traffic will repeat his interjection, I will endeavour to answer him.

Mr O'Connor: I will raise it later.

Mr T. H. JONES: The policy speech continues—

—and give it the power to cover all aspects of traffic control, licensing, road safety and road and vehicle engineering.

We will ensure that the Authority maintains close liaison with Local Government, and has strong representation from local authorities.

It is becoming increasingly clear that Police Traffic Control in itself is not the best answer to the road toll.

Of course this can be argued because members would know that in every State, with the exception of Western Australia, the control is under the Police Force of the State. The policy speech continues—

The record of local control in 89 Shires is at least as good as the separate control of the Traffic Police in 28 local authorities.

No matter what way traffic is controlled in each area, we must have some unity for the State as a whole when we are confronted with such a serious problem as the road toll.

Present policy has only fragmented the attack on this problem.

To digress for a moment, I wish to say that there is no unity in the Police Force. Later on I will indicate that the views expressed at the police conference very strongly demonstrate that the morale of the Police Force has been affected by the establishment of the RTA. I will not be quoting my words, but the words of the Police Union itself which is facing problems associated with the RTA in Western Australia.

The Liberal Party policy on this subject concludes as follows—

We will give this attack more drive and direction.

That was the policy of the Liberal Party prior to the introduction of the RTA. By the time the Government had introduced the legislation to establish the RTA it had already broken its promise to make it completely independent of the Police Force. In this respect I will refer to my speech notes delivered when I handled the Bill on behalf of the Opposition in 1974.

The RTA is not completely independent of the Police Force as answers to questions asked in this

House on the 3rd August, 1977, clearly indicate. Members of the RTA are members of the Police Force according to those answers. Therefore that promise of the Liberal Party has not been fulfilled.

In my motion I indicate that the RTA has not proved workable. It is an unnecessary duplication of work which would be far more easily done by one single authority—the Police Force—having complete control over the whole of the State.

I wish to make three points. The RTA is a typical victim of the workings the Liberal Party policy making machine. The RTA is the result of a promise which was unworkable, in the first place, unable to be implemented, in the second place, and replaced by an equally unworkable policy in the third place.

If we look at the ALP policy, we find clearly spelt out what we would do should we become the Government. The ALP policy on the matter is firm. The ALP believes in State-wide police control of traffic. The policy is quite clear and received a mandate from the Western Australian people. However, it was denied the people by the Legislative Council when the Tonkin Government was in power.

The present Government has been told by everyone, including the Police Force, that its proposals were unnecessary, costly, and a duplication of what could be achieved through State-wide control of traffic by the police.

Before the RTA legislation came before the House numerous newspapers in Western Australia attacked the move. They supported the views of the Labor Party on the question, and I will refer briefly to two of them. One was *The West Australian* in its editorial of the 14th March, 1973, and in view of the circumstances and experience we have had with the RTA, the editorial has been proved to be correct. It reads—

#### Traffic Wrangle

The political football of country traffic control has been kicked around far too long. It is both tragic and incomprehensible that this should continue while lives are being lost at an appalling rate on country roads.

The only worthwhile development in the drawn-out controversy is that many country councils have shifted their ground since the days when their resistance to the idea of State-wide police traffic control stemmed from a desire to protect their revenue. There is now a basic area of common accord: that one authority should be responsible for controlling traffic throughout W.A.

However, the Country Shire Councils' Association—encouraged by political opportunism of the Liberal and Country Parties—persists with its advocacy of a single authority separate from the police. It is a proposal that seems to be based more on traditional hostility than logic.

There would be no sense in creating, at enormous cost to the taxpayer, an authority that would virtually duplicate the widely-respected law enforcement agency we already have. Such a move could reduce the effectiveness of the police force because innumerable aspects of its work are linked with vehicles and traffic control. On the other hand, expansion of the police force to control all traffic undoubtedly would equip it better to combat crime generally.

Of course, that is what we on this side of the House said in 1974, especially in relation to one-man stations where the services of a traffic patrolman could be used to better advantage.

Sir Charles Court: That statement was proved wrong on two counts. First of all, the people liked it and re-endorsed it in 1977; and, secondly, it caused a cut in the road toll.

Mr T. H. JONES: We will see whether or not the people like it now. Let us look at what the union has to say about it—not what the member for Collie or the Labor Opposition has to say. I will refer to the report of the comments made at the recent conference of police unions. Their comments were loud and clear, and it will be seen from those comments that all those concerned with police and traffic in Western Australia do not go along with the formation of the Road Traffic Authority.

Sir Charles Court: I am talking about the views of the people.

Mr T. H. JONES: I intend to express the views of the union. The formation of the Road Traffic Authority has interfered with the morale of the Police Force in Western Australia. These are the men who are concerned—not the Premier, not the member for Collie, and not the Opposition. The views I will put forward are those of policemen. I will answer the interjection from the Premier later.

Mr O'Connor: Will the member also give details of the dramatic decrease in road fatalities?

Mr T. H. JONES: I certainly will answer that question.

Sir Charles Court: It will be interesting; the member for Morley is shuddering in his seat

already. He wants an opportunity to introduce his Bill.

Mr T. H. JONES: Not only has *The West Australian* come out in opposition to the formation of the RTA, but the *Sunday Independent* of the 16th June carried an article stating that the first casualty of State Government belt-tightening obviously should be the proposed highway patrol.

The highway patrolmen were to be in light blue uniforms, and the words "Highway Patrol" were to be painted on the sides of their vehicles. They were to dress differently from policemen, but nothing has eventuated in that regard. The former Minister for Traffic cannot deny that.

Mr O'Connor: Yes, I can.

Mr T. H. JONES: Does the Minister deny that they do not have a different uniform?

Mr O'Connor: I can deny that anyone said they would have a light blue uniform.

Mr T. H. JONES: I will refer to Press reports indicating the Minister made that statement. He is recorded in *Hansard* as having said it.

Mr O'Connor: No, I did not say it.

Mr T. H. JONES: The Minister should be patient.

Mr O'Connor: I will be.

Mr Jamieson: Reg Court told me that the former Minister wanted this. I spoke to him and he told me he had argued with the former Minister.

Mr O'Connor: Do not take any notice of rumours; look at the facts.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Collie.

Mr T. H. JONES: thank you, Mr Speaker. Now that the conversation has finished I will get on with my speech. It seems the former Minister for Traffic is very touchy on this issue. One would assume he is still responsible for the Road Traffic Authority. He is having a lot more to say than is the present Minister for Police and Traffic, and I wonder why. I believe that in his own mind the former Minister for Traffic knows the blunder which has occurred. I am aware he cannot admit to the blunder here. However, if he were able to comment in another place he would agree with me that the formation of the RTA was an unnecessary duplication, and has been an extra cost burden on the taxpayers of Western Australia. I do not expect the former Minister to admit the mistake here. However, I am wondering what he will have to say after listening to the views of the policemen and the patrolmen.

As I have said, it is noticeable that the former Minister for Traffic is very touchy and concerned about what I am saying. I have been on my feet for only six minutes, and while the Minister for Police and Traffic has been listening to me, it seems the former Minister for Traffic is concerned; and he has reason to be because of the cost of the duplication in the formation of the Road Traffic Authority in Western Australia.

Sir Charles Court: He did a great job as the Minister for Police and Minister for Traffic.

Mr Old: The colleagues of the member for Collie are not listening to him.

Mr T. H. JONES: The article in the *Sunday Independent*, of the 16th June, continued—

At its very best, the Highway Patrol will result in costly and unnecessary duplication with no guarantee that it will achieve a reduction in the road toll.

Mr O'Connor: That has proved to be wrong.

Mr T. H. JONES: To a degree.

Mr O'Neil: To what degree?

Mr T. H. JONES: So, we know the view expressed by the *Sunday Independent*.

Mr O'Neil: That is a very reliable newspaper!

Mr T. H. JONES: It is a newspaper to which the Minister for Police and Traffic subscribes. I have seen his comments in it.

Mr Old: I have never bought a copy of it in my life.

Mr T. H. JONES: The Liberal Party and the National Country Party use it when it suits their needs.

Mr O'Neil: I do not buy it any longer.

Mr T. H. JONES: If *The Tribune* had space available members opposite would use it if it suited their purpose.

Mr O'Connor: Some of your members do contribute to that paper; we do not.

Mr T. H. JONES: Is that so?

Sir Charles Court: According to *The Tribune* it is grateful for donations!

Mr T. H. JONES: I subscribe to the Salvation Army every week when I purchase *War Cry*, but I am not a Salvationist. Is there anything wrong with that?

Mr Old: No.

Mr Clarko: Where do they find the member for Collie?

Mr T. H. JONES: Does the Minister deny the right of members of the ALP to contribute to

various newspapers? Are we not living in a free world?

Mr Jamieson: No!

Mr T. H. JONES: We are free to purchase any document we wish.

I will refer to the editorial which appeared in *The West Australian* on the 22nd June, 1974. The editorial is headed, "Sharp Right Turn", and reads—

Two conclusions can be drawn from the latest pronouncement by the Minister for Police, Mr O'Connor, on the proposed highway patrol.

Mr Old: From which paper is the member quoting?

Mr T. H. JONES: If the Minister for Agriculture had been listening, he would know. It is time some members opposite bought hearing aids.

Mr Old: I did not hear the quotation from the *Sunday Independent*.

Mr T. H. JONES: If the Minister wishes, I will repeat the article.

Mr Old: I did not hear it.

Mr O'Connor: The member for Collie has plenty of time.

Sir Charles Court: It is your time; help yourself.

Mr T. H. JONES: The Minister for Agriculture can read my comments in *Hansard*. To continue with the editorial in *The West Australian*, of the 22nd June, it reads—

One is that the Government is confused and does not know where its traffic-control policy is leading it. The other, which is much more acceptable, is that it has come to its senses, seen the folly of an ill-conceived election commitment and has decided to put State-wide traffic control where it belongs—in the hands of the police.

That is what I said.

Mr O'Connor: What is the date of that editorial?

Mr T. H. JONES: It is dated the 22nd June, 1974.

Mr Tonkin: A good paper!

Mr O'Neil: The member for Collie would be aware of what Speaker Guthrie said about quoting from editorials.

Mr T. H. JONES: The editorial concluded by saying—

The choice is between a police force and a police farce . . .

We will see what the Police Union has to say; it also believes it is a farce. The Police Union is the most important organisation associated with the Police Force, and the control of traffic and law and order. The union considers it is a farce.

Mr Old: What about the people living in the bush? What do they think?

Mr T. H. JONES: They also think it is a farce. When the RTA was introduced, it would have been of advantage for the police officers in small stations to combine the two duties.

Mr Old: I am talking about the views of the people.

Mr T. H. JONES: I have received dozens of letters. As a matter of fact, this motion has been prompted by many people who have urged the Labor Opposition to do something about the situation.

Mr O'Neil: You will quote all those letters?

Mr T. H. JONES: I will not, for obvious reasons.

Mr O'Neil: I did not think so.

Mr T. H. JONES: The Minister is aware of the reasons. However, I will quote the strong views of the Police Union. I will quote those who have asked questions, and we will see whether or not the Minister is prepared to take up the cudgel. However, I do not intend to quote police inspectors, police sergeants, or members of the Police Force.

Mr O'Neil: You referred to letters from the public.

Mr T. H. JONES: I have many letters from the public asking the Opposition to do something in the House about this problem. It is not my intention to divulge the names of those people.

Mr O'Connor: Do you not think it is strange that your efforts to crucify the police have now altered?

Mr T. H. JONES: The Police Union has now woken up, and some members of the union, including people on the executive, agree with me that they were sucked in by the Government. If the Minister wants it clearly and plainly I will give it to him.

Mr O'Connor: Who were they?

Mr T. H. JONES: I will not say who they were. Suffice it to say even some members of the executive of the Police Union agree with me. If the Minister does not know what Mr Hutchings said, I will tell him so that he will know what the police think about this wonderful Road Traffic Authority of Western Australia.

I was about to complete the extract regarding

the Police Force or the police farce. It continues—

Mr O'Connor has recognised that this is no choice at all.

We will see. On the 7th June, 1974, the then Minister for Police had this to say about uniforms—

Patrolmen would wear uniforms different to those of the Police Department. They would drive light blue marked cars, though unmarked cars and plain clothes police patrolmen would still operate.

The Minister cannot deny that he made that statement.

Mr O'Connor: Turn it around so that I can see it. It is a typed article.

Mr T. H. JONES: It is a typed article from the Press. This is how I prepare my submissions.

Mr O'Connor: What was the date of the article in the Press?

Mr T. H. JONES: The 7th June, 1974.

Mr O'Connor: Was it in *The West Australian*?

Mr T. H. JONES: I think so. It is quite clear why we are moving this motion today. The Government has not done what it promised the people it would do. It talks about mandates, but where are all the innovations it was going to put into effect? They have not materialised. The Government was just getting the people in, and the decision to establish the Road Traffic Authority in Western Australia was a sop to the National Country Party. This was the best agreement they could come to; hence the fragmented Road Traffic Authority which has been set up in Western Australia.

Mr Nanovich: But they are doing a good job, you must admit that.

Mr T. H. JONES: We will see in a moment. I will quote what I said in 1974, and it still stands.

Several members interjected.

Mr T. H. JONES: If members opposite will be patient and give me the opportunity to make my submission, they will have the opportunity to stand on their feet, if they are permitted to do so, and give me their views. I will look forward to hearing from the member for Bunbury.

Numerous conferences have been held throughout the world in relation to traffic control, generally. A Royal Commission inquiry was held in the United Kingdom in 1962 and it found that traffic control should be the responsibility of the police. Several statements have been made by the Commissioner of Police in Tasmania, who has always expressed the view that traffic control is

an integral part of police work. Generally speaking, with the exception of Western Australia, the control of traffic is vested in the police in the various States. This is the only State which has a separate authority—or a purported separate authority—to deal with traffic control.

I have referred to numerous Press reports—not to my views or the views of members of the Opposition—which clearly express the views of the Press, generally, and, with the exception of *The Sunday Times*, they are parallel to my views.

On the 15th October, 1974, when introducing the Road Traffic Bill, the Minister said the Bill had four prime objectives. He said—

The long-term objective of the legislation may be described in these terms—

- (a) To bring unity of purpose and direction to the performance of most of the many functions involved in the administration of traffic within the State;
- (b) to increase the efficiency and effectiveness with which these functions are performed with a clear aim of achieving a significant reduction in accident rates;
- (c) to provide a focus for research into all aspects of traffic administration—not just accident research;
- (d) to create a forward-looking body which as a result of its own research and inquiries will lead Australia in traffic administration.

Mr O'Neil: Every objective has been achieved.

Mr T. H. JONES: We will see. In his second reading speech the Minister went on to say that clause 7 described the composition of the authority and provided for seven members, who would be members of the Public Service and who would take the oath of allegiance of the Police Force. Further on he said—

I have said already that they are members of the Police Force. However, they will be under the control of the traffic authority. They will work under the conditions under which they now work, except that they will be better off because, with the additional numbers involved, promotion will be speedier.

A little later on we will see what the Police Union has to say about that. I then interjected and asked—

They will be under the control of the Public Service Board?

The Minister replied—

No, as I said, the administrative staff will be under the control of the Public Service Board. To clarify the position, in cases of emergency—whether it be a riot or something of that nature—members of the traffic patrol may be called in and used in conjunction with the Police Department generally. However, the job we want them to do is to look after traffic.

Of course, that has not eventuated. I can quote many instances—one involving myself—where the patrolmen are on duty only for a limited period. This is our main argument. If they were doing the police work of law enforcement as well as traffic patrol work they would be serving the public to better effect, particularly in country centres.

On one occasion I was involved in a minor traffic accident at four o'clock in the afternoon, and the patrolman at Collie was off duty; so a policeman came to take particulars of the accident. In small centres such as Donnybrook and Boyup Brook where there are control stations, patrolmen are on duty for only eight hours a day and much of the work of traffic control has to be carried out by the policeman, whose real function is law enforcement.

Mr O'Neil: I thought you were proposing he should do both, anyway.

Mr T. H. JONES: I am proposing that. I said it would serve the people better if at one-man stations they performed the dual function. The then Minister said they would have separate identities. The present Minister for Police knows that the answers he gave to my questions clearly support my contention. The answers he gave in this Parliament last week spelt out the hours during which patrolmen are on duty at all the stations. There are 50 one-man police stations in Western Australia where there is only limited traffic control. The Opposition is saying if the officers at those stations could carry out the other functions of police patrol work and law enforcement as well as traffic control, we would be better off.

I asked the Minister the following question—

Before you sit down I wish to ask you a question. You have explained the general administrative requirements under the Bill. Would you explain in more detail the duties of the patrolmen as compared with policemen doing the same work?

Mr Taylor: Particularly in the small towns.

Mr O'CONNOR: The honourable member should know that the difference is

that there will be one authority right throughout the State. Its job will be entirely traffic except in special circumstances. If, for instance, a traffic patrolman apprehends the driver of a vehicle which has a body in its boot, the patrolman will hand the matter over to the law enforcement group to handle the situation from then on.

That is the point I have been making. If a patrolman stops a driver for a traffic infringement and then finds a body in the boot of the car, he must then hand the body over to a policeman to look after. The Minister has told us this quite clearly.

Mr Skidmore: An untidy way to get rid of a body.

Mr O'Neil: We have not had one yet!

Mr T. H. JONES: What would happen at a one-man station?

Mr O'Connor: You would hand it over to yourself then.

Mr O'Neil: To whom are the police complaining?

Mr T. H. JONES: They are complaining generally in the Press—

Mr O'Neil: I said: To whom are they complaining?

Mr T. H. JONES: I would assume they are complaining to the Police Department.

Mr O'Neil: You are assuming it. Are you assuming also that they are complaining?

Mr T. H. JONES: I would assume for the benefit of the Minister—

Mr Skidmore: That is terribly good stuff from the Minister.

Mr T. H. JONES: I would assume, knowing the Police Union—

Mr O'Neil: We have heard about dozens of letters from the public and we have heard what you have assumed.

Mr T. H. JONES: The former Minister has stopped and the present Minister is taking over. It is quite clear that the Minister does not hold the Police Union in very high esteem—

Mr O'Neil: Which one?

Mr T. H. JONES: —because of the statement he has just attributed to the union. Will anybody say that the Police Union is not a competent organisation? Can you, Mr Speaker, appreciate the situation when they hold a conference? Policemen are brought in from all parts of the State to discuss issues, and does the Police Union do anything about issues raised? Of course it

does. It is a very competent body and the Minister for Police knows it. The statement he made reflects on the integrity of the Police Union of Workers of Western Australia.

Mr O'Neil: You are saying that they complained to someone, and I am asking you: To whom did they complain?

Mr T. H. JONES: What would the members of the union do? I have here the records of the police conference, and I will be referring to those in a moment. Like any responsible union executive, I assume that once matters have been raised and considered at a conference, the union will take up the matter with the proper authority. The Minister will know about the issues raised. Queries were raised about the strength of the Police Force, about accommodation, and about other matters that have already been looked into.

Mr O'Neil: That is correct.

Mr T. H. JONES: It does the Minister no credit to refer to the union in the way that he did.

Mr O'Neil: The member for Collie is talking about matters raised in respect of traffic control. I have met the Police Union once, and I have an appointment to meet with its members again at a conference. I am asking: Have the policemen complained to you? To whom have they complained about the traffic control situation?

Mr T. H. JONES: The policemen have complained publicly, and I have had discussions with the union executive. I do not go behind bushes in these matters.

Mr O'Neil: Who has complained to you?

Mr T. H. JONES: A number of policemen have complained to me on an individual basis.

Mr O'Neil: That is the question I wanted answered.

Mr T. H. JONES: I have taken the liberty of discussing this matter with the Police Union in order to ascertain its attitude. Its attitude is clear, and the union has spelt it out very clearly. The Minister will not deny this when we come to the question of the points raised at the police conference.

Mr O'Neil: All I wanted you to say in this House was that individual policemen have come to you to complain. Thank you very much.

Mr Skidmore: If we name the various policemen who have complained, your unbiased Commissioner of Police would be breathing down their necks in a few minutes.

Mr O'Neil: I am enjoying this—it is all going into *Hansard*.

Mr T. H. JONES: It is not just policemen who

have complained to me, but also police sergeants. I do not intend to name these policemen but members know I am not in the habit of telling lies.

Mr O'Neil: You have gone far enough—I do not want any more.

Mr T. H. JONES: Police sergeants have complained to me about this and I am not going to deny it. The Minister knows about it and he must take some notice of the Police Union. Mr Hutchings said, and I repeat, the morale of the policemen in Western Australia has been affected by the establishment of the Road Traffic Authority. I am not making the statement; it was made by the President of the Police Union, and during the proceedings of the conference I referred to, he was not taken to task for his statement.

Mr O'Neil: The conference you are talking about happened to be a seminar.

Mr T. H. JONES: I hope that takes care of all the points raised by the Minister for Police.

I would like now to refer to the point of view expressed by the Opposition when the Road Traffic Bill was introduced in this House in 1974. I handled the Bill on behalf of the Opposition, and as reported in *Hansard* of the 24th October, 1974, my opening remarks were—

This is a Bill to establish the road traffic authority of Western Australia. I would like to indicate clearly, and spell it out, that while we on this side of the House agree with the setting up of a separate authority, we do not go along with the proposed administration of that authority. We feel it is a disgrace, and a cover-up on the part of the Government.

During my speech I hope to indicate my reasons for that statement. The Liberal Party and the Labor Party went to the people in March with different policies.

I went on to say—

I make it quite clear that we do not argue about the setting up of some authority to control traffic throughout Western Australia. However, we do argue and argue strongly, that the authority to be established under this legislation will be placed in the wrong hands. This authority should be under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Police. No doubt, other speakers will support my contention as the debate continues.

So I am restating the views we held at that time. To continue—

The Bill is important; it concerns not only the Police Union but also local authorities

throughout the State and traffic inspectors employed by local authorities. Irrespective of the comments of the Minister during his second reading speech, the position of these people is insecure.

I was referring there to the question of the re-engagement of the local authority patrolmen, and this matter has caused some problems in certain areas. I admit that the Police Department did its best but unfortunately there were grey areas and some men were not able to be placed in similar employment. I went on to consider the policy that the Liberal Party presented to the people before the election. I spelt out the Liberal Party policy, and I have already mentioned this through a Press report in *The West Australian*. I went on to say—

Let me repeat what the Liberal policy speech said. It said that it would make the authority completely independent of the Police Force.

This was our opinion then and it is still our opinion. The Road Traffic Authority is not independent of the Police Force. Can any member on the other side deny that? Can any member deny that the Road Traffic Authority is a semi-authority attached to the Police Force?

When speaking to the Road Traffic Bill in 1974, I said that patrolmen will have to take the police oath of allegiance. Does not that action associate them closely with the Police Force generally in Western Australia?

I went on to ask the Minister a question as follows—

Does the Minister say the authority will be independent of the Police Force?

The Minister replied—

I shall reply to that in due course.

I then went on to talk about the highway patrol and the proposed blue uniforms for the patrolmen—by the way, we have not seen these uniforms yet. That was our view at the time, and I do not want to canvass my whole speech again because it is not necessary. We opposed the legislation then and we are still opposed to its principle at this time.

What did the National Country Party have to say about it? Where did its members stand on the issue? Of course they had very little to say; we did not hear very much from National Country Party members during the whole debate on the Bill.

Mr Bertram: There is not one NCP member in the House.

Mr T. H. JONES: They are not interested, quite obviously. There is not one National Country Party member listening.



Mr Bertram: It is a name, not a party.

Mr Grayden: There is one National Country Party member over there.

Mr H. D. Evans: He has more trouble with wheat weevils at this stage.

Mr T. H. JONES: I believe he has problems with the Wheat Board at present. Let us look at what the member for Katanning, the Leader of the National Country Party, had to say—

The Bill before us, I feel, is a fair compromise . . .

Obviously it was the best compromise the Liberal Party could attain with the Country Party, and he admitted that. He then went on to say—

I must mention conflicting statements made by the member for Collie last Thursday when he intimated that in his opinion this was a police takeover and a complete sell out.

After an interjection, he continued—

He expressed the opinion that the provisions in the Bill were due to Country Party pressure within the coalition Government. While I appreciate that he believes we are strong—and the point does not go unnoticed—police control is not one of the planks of our platform. We have been opposed to police control and, as far as we are concerned, we continue to be opposed to it. But, as I said, I believe the proposal in the Bill is a reasonable compromise and one which will work.

He made that point on two occasions in the small submission he presented. We said in 1974, and we still maintain it, that the separate authority would not work, and no-one will convince me that it does work. I said a moment ago that if the former Minister for Traffic had his way he would not have a bar of the separate authority; but unfortunately the separate authority is here. In his reply to the debate, the then Minister for Traffic said—

Members have not been able to put forward a method which is cheaper than the one proposed.

I will show him in a moment just what this separate authority has cost the State to establish, what it has cost the State in overtime, and what it has cost the State in wages. It has proved to be an unnecessary duplication. The Minister for Traffic in 1974 had the audacity to say that no-one could show him that. We argued most forcibly that the Government would rue the day it decided to lay down to the National Country Party and agree to

the establishment of this small, police-controlled authority in Western Australia.

I would like to refer briefly now to the Committee stage of that Bill, because a number of important points were raised. One was when I asked the Minister a question, and said—

The Minister has evaded the question I asked him. Will they be involved in police duties and patrol duties, or patrol duties only?

The Minister replied—

The honourable member did not ask the question, but now that he has asked it I will be happy to answer it and any other questions he cares to ask. While acting as patrolmen it is anticipated that officers will act on road patrol work only.

Of course, the answers given to questions asked in this House in August of this year completely contradict the answer the then Minister gave in 1974. The present Minister for Police and Traffic is well aware that all RTA motorcycles and cars have "Police" marked on them, and that everyone is beginning to ask, "What has happened to the separate authority the Liberal-Country Party coalition said it would establish in 1974?" Before I conclude my remarks I will refer to the reasons that I have drafted the motion in the manner in which it is drafted, in view of the change that has occurred since the RTA was first established in 1974.

During the debate in the Committee stage, the member for Warren asked the Minister a question. He said—

I would like further clarification in this regard. At a country station staffed by a sergeant and, say, three officers, it may be necessary to transfer two additional patrolmen to that station. Will those two patrolmen, who may or may not be using the facilities of the established station, come under the control of the officer in charge of the station or will they be directly responsible to the authority in Perth?

The Minister replied—

While operating as patrolmen they will come under the control of the authority. If they were under the control of the officer in charge of the police station, they could be sent out to pick up someone who has stolen goods, . . .

But that has not occurred; the present Minister knows full well the traffic patrolmen are under the jurisdiction of the police sergeant. In the case of Collie, which I know very well, the Minister

cannot deny that the patrolmen are under the jurisdiction of the police sergeant at the station. Those patrolmen are answerable to the police sergeant. So there we have another theory put forward in 1974 that has not been carried out, and it is a further reason for this motion.

The Minister is well aware that there is friction in the forces at present, and shortly I will show the amount spent on housing by the Road Traffic Authority, as compared with that spent on the housing of police officers. I point out the amounts are nowhere near comparable. This is something which is causing friction. Last year I toured the lower great southern area and visited all the police stations, and everywhere I went I found there was division occurring between members of the RTA and the Police Force.

Mr Stephens: Who is getting the most money?

Mr T. H. JONES: The policemen were saying, "We can't get new houses, although we have been trying for years to get decent accommodation." They said every appeal they made had been rejected. However, there was no trouble in obtaining houses for RTA personnel. In a moment I will show that as much as \$50 000 was paid for houses in some areas for road traffic patrolmen.

Mr O'Connor: Would that be in the Kimberley?

Mr T. H. JONES: Yes.

Mr O'Connor: Wouldn't any house up there cost that much?

Mr T. H. JONES: Let us not worry about the Kimberley; let us come closer to home. No-one can deny friction has occurred between the two bodies.

I turn now to the views expressed by the President of the Police Union (Mr A. F. Hutchings) in an address he made when opening a police conference held in the Concert Hall on the 22nd and 23rd June, 1977. He clearly spelt out the situation when he said—

We welcome all delegates to this information seminar and I sincerely hope that in the following two days members will receive sufficient up-to-date information and advice to take back to their branches so that they in turn can relay the results of this seminar to their respective branch members.

In turn we who represent the branches on Council will be listening attentively to the views and criticisms brought up by delegates which, of course, will be recorded and, where practical or constructive, acted upon.

A few years ago the union neglected to recognise a very serious morale problem that

had been festering within the Police Force and which some of you will recall culminated in special meetings being called and some of our members expressing their complaints on television without revealing their true identity.

We hope we have come a long way since this, and this seminar is an example of our changed ideas whereby we the union are prepared to provide a public forum for members of the Police Force to express the views of their fellow members.

To this end I have invited the press to be present during the course of this seminar and I think we are all strong enough not to allow this to inhibit our expressions on behalf of those men in the field whom we represent.

Whilst we in Council, and our General Secretary, Jock Fraser, are prepared to accept any constructive criticism, so also should branch members who have possibly provided fuel for dissatisfaction based on sometimes wrong information and adverse personal experiences in the field.

The following is the important part—

We realise the problems building up against members of the police force where daily we become the meat in the sandwich in relation to the industrial confrontations etc. We are aware also of the serious damage to morale caused by the introduction of the Road Traffic Authority.

Can anyone argue against that? Here we have a competent man—the president of the union—who is on record as saying that the morale of the Police Force in Western Australia has been lowered as a result of the introduction of the Road Traffic Authority.

Mr O'Neil: To which union do the RTA patrolmen belong?

Mr T. H. JONES: The Minister knows as well as I do. Is he back in school again talking to his pupils? Let him answer the question himself.

Mr O'Neil: What you are saying is that the president of the union was criticising his own members.

Mr T. H. JONES: If the Minister wishes to take the president to task, let him do so. The president of the union obviously is taking the administration and the Government to task, and the Government does not like it. I repeat that the president of the union said—

We are aware also of the serious damage to morale caused by the introduction of the Road Traffic Authority.

Is the Government going to allow this situation to continue, and take no notice of the views of the President of the Police Union on the matter? I am waiting to see what effect the president's protests, expressed at the conference held at the Perth Concert Hall on the 22nd and the 23rd June will have upon the Government. He continued in even stronger terms—

Members should be aware of the strong resistance that the union and the Council put up to the introduction of this authority and the warnings we gave to the Government in relation to the excessive expenditure and decline of efficiency by the setting up of the ivory tower in Mount Street.

Is that not precisely what the Opposition said in 1974, when the Bill to establish the Road Traffic Authority was before this House? Of course it is, and we are saying it again in 1977. In the opinion of the Opposition, Western Australia has an unnecessary and costly duplication of services and that opinion is shared by the President of the Police Union. He continued—

The duplicity of the Authority has done a great deal to undermine *esprit de corps* in the force.

This is the President of the Police Union speaking, not the member for Collie. Does anyone challenge his authority to speak on this subject? He continued—

However, it is to the credit of our members in traffic that they have persevered—

The only conclusion which can be drawn from that statement is that traffic patrolmen also are frustrated. He continued—

—under long and trying conditions to make this system and consequently save many people from themselves on our roads.

We can only continue to try to get full control of the policing of traffic under our Commissioner.

Mr Speaker, is this not what my motion clearly seeks to achieve? It is obvious that the view I am putting on behalf of the Opposition is supported 100 per cent by the Police Union. The President of the Police Union continued—

Until that happens the public will be paying double administration costs.

Does not my motion refer to a duplication of costs? I will show members in a few moments just how much the setting up of a separate authority has cost this State. The President of the Police Union continued—

However, members of the Traffic Patrol should know, and the public must be told,

that those men who patrol our highways are fully fledged police officers and fully respected members of the W.A. Police Union.

You are all aware of the serious situation which has prevailed in relation to the acute shortage of staff which affects every one of us.

There is no need for me to remind the Minister for Police and Traffic about that matter, because he knows as well as I do that earlier this year, the Police Union was going to take a stand unless there was an increase in the strength of the Western Australian Police Force. The president continued—

We have been continually impressing on the government that the position is reaching a dangerous level. No longer can we stand by and allow our members to take serious risks on their own on these one man patrols on country roads, and we expect the government to recognise the seriousness of our appeal and I sincerely hope that by the completion of this seminar the Minister will have the courtesy to reply to our recent request and inform us of an immediate increase in staff and a direction that the Commissioner implement two man patrols in all areas and at all times of possible danger.

I am wondering what is going to happen in that regard? Will this be yet another call from the Police Force in Western Australia which will go unheeded? Quite obviously, from the attitude of the Minister for Police and Traffic, the Government intends to do nothing to improve the morale of the force. It does not intend to place jurisdiction over the RTA in the hands of the Police Force—a proposal which is strongly supported not only by the Opposition and the President of the Police Union, but also by members of the Police Union throughout Western Australia. What does the Government intend doing about all these important matters raised at the seminar held by the Police Union of Western Australia?

I refer now to other matters raised at the conference, because they also relate to the important question of morale in the force. At page 9 of the report, the General Secretary of the Police Union (Mr Fraser) was reported as stating the following—

To get on to another area which is extremely delicate, that is the housing situation. We all appreciate of course that we are in trouble with regard to houses. For many years the police were given fairly low

priority when it came to providing homes in the country for their families, and of course a lot of the blame probably could rest at the feet of the Police Department and perhaps our own members, because it is only in recent years that we have stood up and said we want vast improvements in this area.

I quoted that passage to demonstrate that the concern I have expressed in this House on many occasions is shared by the members of the Police Union and in fact was expressed at the conference held by the Police Union. The general secretary continued—

Before I go from that I would say that there is possibly some problem arisen because of the separation of the budgets from the RTA and the Police. As you know GEHA is provided with a certain amount of funds. Some of those are allocated to the RTA and some to the police. Now where we have a house, for instance, made available to a traffic patrolman in a town where a general policeman has been waiting for a house it could look as if it is favouritism.

In the opinion of the union, the RTA has preference over the Police Force throughout Western Australia. This opinion confirms the findings I reached after visiting numerous police stations in the south-west and the great southern region. The general secretary went on to say—

There is a simple explanation for this and that is that the traffic authority decide where their priorities are and where they are going to put their money through GEHA, and the Police Department decide where they are going to spend their money and what their priorities are, and of course we have a circumstance where the traffic say "We want desperately a house in Norseman with our part of the money" so a house is built in Norseman.

This indicates clearly that priority is given to members of the Road Traffic Authority.

I move now to page 18 of the report and refer to a question asked by one of the delegates from the eastern goldfields council of the Police Union. His question was as follows—

**EASTERN GOLDFIELDS:** A question off the cuff: Mr Fraser, you said this morning "marble tower up in Mount Street".

**MR HUTCHINGS:** Correction there—I said that, Mr Fraser didn't.

**EASTERN GOLDFIELDS:** On this issue, it's a strong issue, I think—having two

organisations within the Police Department. I was wondering if the Executive Council or Mr Fraser or Mr Hutchings could give us some comments on what action the council deems necessary to be taken re these two organisations. Are we going to keep it or are we going to go against it?

Mr Fraser replied as follows—

We in the union have a policy of direct opposition to the separate organisation being responsible for the policing of traffic. It has created serious problems for our members. However, the situation hasn't been a complete disadvantage. I would indicate that possibly more money has been made available to provide better vehicles, more housing, better equipment; and the Traffic Patrol, which is a police section, is possibly better equipped now than if ever has been. However, we say this with tongue in cheek because if the same amount of money which has been made available to the RTA had been made available to the Police Department, we possibly would have been able to utilise more money in the actual practical provision of vehicles, equipment etc. because we would not have had the duplicity of the administration.

Here again the secretary of the union is supporting our view that the money could have been used to better advantage, a point we strongly argued in 1974.

Mr O'Neil: I suggest you read the whole of his comments again. I think they are very illuminating.

Mr T. H. JONES: If the Minister wishes to read them I shall loan him a copy afterwards.

Mr O'Neil: He talked of more money, more use, better vehicles, and more equipment.

Mr T. H. JONES: But the money could have been used to better advantage if there had not been the duplication of administration. Do not tell half the story; tell the whole story. It is of no use reading half of Mr Fraser's statement; read it all. The most important point is that he said that the money could have been used to better advantage with one authority to avoid duplication. To continue—

But be that as it may, we are not a South American country where the Police Force can overthrow the government.

That means they have been very patient in relation to this question.

Mr O'Neil: Very loyal.

Mr T. H. JONES: To continue—

The government has made a decision. The decision stands as long as that government stands, and unless we can convince them otherwise there's very little we can do while their policy and platform indicates the RTA should be separate.

I'm probably going to breach a confidence here. We are beginning to get some indication that the Traffic Patrol themselves, anyhow, feel it necessary to identify with the Police Force—

This is where the problem of morale is occurring. These are the views of the patrolmen themselves. To continue—

—much more so than they have done in the past. I have been advised unofficially that it is the intention of the Traffic Patrol to put police markings on the car in some area—possibly across the boot—to identify it as a police car as well as a traffic car;

That is part of my motion and is one of the reasons I am moving the motion today. To continue—

At a recent meeting, as a request to the union we found out that our Traffic Patrol last year worked 350 000 hours in overtime;

I shall be shortly showing the cost of overtime, but is it any wonder, with 350 000 hours of overtime being paid to traffic patrolmen last year, that the Police Union is calling on the Government to increase the strength of the force because that volume of hours must obviously decrease the efficiency of the patrolmen; and I say that without reflecting on their ability in any way. I shall give the costs in a moment because they were provided to me by the Minister.

Mr O'Neil: All that overtime worked by the ordinary traffic patrolmen?

Mr T. H. JONES: The Minister should know that because he answered the question for me last week. I shall remind the Minister of what he told me in a few moments.

Mr H. D. Evans: How much is wasted on overtime?

Mr T. H. JONES: We shall consider that when I speak of overtime because I have it tabulated. Further to show the concern expressed, what did the delegation from the Pilbara say? I am sure this will exercise the mind of the member for Pilbara if he is here. He said—

Mr President, would the secretary at this stage be willing to start the ball rolling with regard to the earlier promises that publicity would be given by a direct statement to the

media, which is giving attention today, that we do completely wish to dissociate ourselves from the RTA;

I shall refer to only three other matters which were raised at the police conference.

Mr O'Neil: The information seminar, you mean.

Mr T. H. JONES: Well, the wording does not matter.

Mr O'Neil: I think it does.

Mr T. H. JONES: The Minister should not be worrying whether I call it a seminar or a meeting. What I want to know is what he is going to do about the complaints that were raised. That is the important issue, not correcting me as to whether it was a seminar, a meeting, or a conference. The Minister would be doing the Police Union and the State a far better service if he could indicate what action the Government will take as a result of these protests which are coming so clearly and loudly from all sections of the Police Union. It would be a better proposition if he could advise me of that rather than interjecting and correcting me. He knows as well as I do the position regarding the morale of the Police Force. Something must be done and I am looking forward with interest—

Mr O'Neil: I shall be thrilled to bits to get all these letters from hundreds of policemen all over the State. You can send them to me and I shall read them privately.

Mr T. H. JONES: There is no need for me to send the letters.

Mr O'Neil: You have not got them.

Mr T. H. JONES: I do have them; I shall not let the Minister get away with that. The meat in the sandwich is what was said at the police seminar. What does the Minister say about the views expressed by Mr Hutchings? Does he agree or disagree with them?

Mr O'Neil: They are views he is entitled to have.

Mr T. H. JONES: Does the Minister agree with them?

Mr O'Neil: No.

Mr T. H. JONES: Is the Minister going to do anything about the views expressed with regard to morale?

Mr O'Neil: What do you do about views expressed by someone? He is entitled to have his point of view and I do not deny him that point of view. That was an information seminar. No firm decisions came out of it as to recommendations which ought to be taken by anybody. This is up to

the executive of the Police Union. It was an exchange of ideas by various members of the Police Force throughout the State.

Mr T. H. JONES: But the Minister forgets one thing—the views generally expressed by the delegates at the seminar were the views strongly outlined by the president of the union in this opening address.

Mr O'Neil: Cut it out! Before he even heard what they had to say?

Mr T. H. JONES: Would the leader of any organisation make a statement that was not factual? Of course he would not. It is more than any leader would dare to do.

Mr O'Neil: Why have a seminar if he were going to say, "This is what you fellows think. You can all go home"? You have expressed things and said they are the views of people when in fact they are questions.

Mr Davies: What was the tenor of the predominant views?

Mr O'Neil: The honourable member has just said that the president who addressed the seminar beforehand expressed the views of the seminar. If that is so, why have it? There was a basic reason for holding that seminar and you know what it was.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Collic.

Mr T. H. JONES: The president was advising the seminar of his views and the situation in which the Police Union of Western Australia found itself.

Mr Davies: And they matched the views of the seminar?

Mr T. H. JONES: Yes, and they were similar to views expressed by all sections of the union during the seminar. This is the responsibility of a union leader, whether he be the leader of the waterside workers, the transport workers, the miners, or whoever. Is it not the responsibility of any leader in his opening address to such a seminar? I assume that this happens even at Liberal Party conferences where the leader will say, "This is where we are going wrong, this is what we have to look at." If the leader of an organisation does not do that he is not doing his job.

The Minister for Police and Traffic, who is a former Minister for Labour, knows what I am saying to be correct. This is what seminars are all about. It is the duty of the leader of a union to say, "This is where we are going wrong, this is what has to be done, and these are the grey areas."

Mr O'Neil: And, "This is the way you have to think"?

Mr T. H. JONES: This must be hurting the Minister for Police and Traffic. He does not like the President of the Police Union of Western Australia saying publicly that the morale of the Police Union is affected. He does not like it because he is the Minister for Police and Traffic. The Opposition is asking: When is the Minister going to do something about it?

Mr O'Neil: I want the written proof you said you have from hundreds of policemen all over the State that they are all disgruntled. Let us have the letters and we will have a look at them privately or any other way you like.

Mr T. H. JONES: If the Minister for Police and Traffic does not agree with what I am saying, why does he not talk to the executive of the Police Union?

Mr O'Neil: I do.

Mr T. H. JONES: Ask Mr Hutchings who expressed the views throughout the conference.

Mr O'Neil: I have read the document.

Mr T. H. JONES: The Minister is asking a lot of questions for a man who professes to have read the document.

Mr O'Neil: I was making sure you read it because I did not think you had.

Mr H. D. Evans: If you have read it why have you not resigned or at least blushed?

Mr T. H. JONES: Quite obviously the Minister would not be asking the question if he had read the document. The appeals were coming from all sections of the Police Force in Western Australia asking the police executive to do something about the problems currently facing the force.

It was an informative seminar and it gave the police councils the opportunity to record their protest at the way the administration was being handled and to point out the shortcomings of the Liberal-Country Party Government in Western Australia.

Mr O'Neil: It also gave them the opportunity to point out the shortcomings of their executive.

Mr T. H. JONES: If the Minister has read the document he will know the areas covered. The seminar was addressed by conciliation commissioner Halliwell, by representatives of the housing authority, and by numerous other people. I wonder whether the Minister now knows that I have read the document.

Mr O'Neil: It was a very worth-while and informative seminar. I do not have the right to

object to it as there is no doubt it was worth while.

Mr T. H. JONES: During the seminar the overtime figure of 350 000 hours by road patrolmen was referred to. The shortage of manpower is causing concern and morale problems in the Police Force. I refer to a statement that appeared in the *Daily News* dated the 6th October which reads as follows—

Manpower  
shortage  
irks police

The WA Police Force appears to be facing a serious manpower shortage.

The secretary of the Police Union, Mr Fraser said today the police had been let down in the State Budget.

He said the Police Commissioner had sought 199 extra policemen this financial year.

But it appeared only 120 extra policemen had been allocated for in the Budget.

Mr H. D. Evans: How many policemen would the 350 000 hours of overtime allow for?

Mr T. H. JONES: I have not made the necessary calculation to answer that.

Mr H. D. Evans: I believe it is about 195.

Mr T. H. JONES: That is very interesting. The report goes on as follows—

The 15-man council of the Police Union met all day yesterday to discuss the question.

“We have been quite concerned since the Budget came out,” said Mr Fraser.

“The members consider it is inadequate, and not what we expected.

“It appears from the figures we have been let down, but we will need to examine the Budget closely before taking the matter further.

“We thought the Government would at least come up to the request for 199 extra policemen but we have found there are only 120.

“There is doubt whether that 120 is going to cover wastage.”

The union expects a further 51 recruits this financial year, in addition to the current school which graduates tomorrow week.

This would leave them about 80 policemen short of the original estimate—which some police considered a bare minimum.

“In terms of police operations this is not

sufficient even to supply the needs of the Traffic Patrol,” said Mr Fraser.

So as late as the 6th October the Secretary of the Police Union was complaining about staffing in the Police Force in Western Australia.

I shall now cite the amount of overtime involved in the Police Force for the year ended the 30th June, 1977. In reply to a question the Minister said—

Overtime paid by the Police Department to the 1 834 members of the Police Force employed by it amounted to \$914 565 for the financial year 1976-77.

That is a sizeable figure. Is it any wonder that members of the Police Union and its executive are calling on the Government to bring in some relief by increasing the strength of the Police Force?

In reply to my question of the 2nd August this year the Minister said that overtime payments to the Road Traffic Authority in the metropolitan area for the 12 months ended 30th June, 1977, amounted to \$597 165.26, which is somewhere in the vicinity of \$50 000 a month in overtime. The figure for patrols in the country areas was \$254 320.25. The cost for public servants in the metropolitan area was \$18 273; in the country it was \$739, and for the police generally it was \$117 271.12

These figures show that our complaints are justified and why we believe in the interests of efficiency and of law and order police control and traffic control should be placed under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Police. Such a force could operate with a dual role.

The Police Union is concerned about the increase in bashings and the Minister cannot deny they are becoming more prevalent. The increase in armed hold-ups of chemist shops and small businesses and the bashing of elderly people who can no longer walk the streets in safety is very worrying. We therefore ask that the two forces be combined under the Commissioner of Police so it can perform the dual function of controlling crime and traffic.

Would it not be better for patrolmen to be operating in a dual role rather than merely hiding behind bushes waiting for a speedster to come along? I do not think anyone would deny their services would be put to better use if they were on the road combating general crimes rather than hiding behind trees looking for motorists to make errors. I think this is something to which the Government has to give very serious consideration.

The figures for assaults and bashings show they

are on the increase. For the year 1976 there were 409 bashings. For the first six months of this year the figure has reached 186 which shows this is a serious area that needs to be tackled and the way it can be tackled is as the Opposition has indicated in this motion. For the six-month period from July to December, 1975, there were 73 robberies with violence and already the figure for the first six months of this year is 56. These figures concern not only the Police Force but also the Opposition in this House.

The Minister queried the effectiveness of the RTA. I do not wish to make any personal reflections, but a Press report appeared in the *Weekend News* dated the 1st January this year indicating that 314 people had been killed on the roads after the RTA took over responsibility for road patrols. The report said the Road Traffic Authority takeover of country traffic duties from local authorities could have cost about 30 Western Australian motorists their lives in 1976. I do not know where the reporter obtained his figures.

Mr O'Neil: You said the Minister queried that.

Mr T. H. JONES: No, this was a Press report by Mr John Altham.

Mr O'Neil: If you read *Hansard* you will see that you said I had queried it.

Mr T. H. JONES: In that case I correct myself. The article indicated that the road toll for 1976 in this State was 314—six more than for the previous year.

Mr O'Neil: It was a newspaper reporter then?

Mr T. H. JONES: Who does the Minister think would have written the article? It certainly would not have been an undertaker. The Minister is getting low in the barrel now.

Mr O'Neil: You first of all said it was me and I will admit you have withdrawn that. I wondered whether it was a letter to the editor.

Mr T. H. JONES: There are a couple of skeletons in the cupboard.

Mr O'Neil: It is just something you dragged out to support a very weak argument.

Mr T. H. JONES: It is a weak argument, all right! It is so weak that the Police Union go along with our views. The members of the union are the people who should know the situation. The Minister cannot deny that.

Mr O'Neil: You have yet to prove to me that the Police Union has approached you on this matter.

Mr T. H. JONES: I do not intend to vindicate members of the Police Force and I am sure the

Minister would not expect me to do so. I am sure he would not do so if he were in my position. I know what would happen next day if I did that. The Minister also knows what would happen. I do not intend to place these individuals in that position. If the Minister was in my position he would not do that either.

What does the *Sunday Independent* have to say about the situation?

Mr O'Neil: This will be good.

Mr T. H. JONES: In an article in the *Sunday Independent* on the 19th June, 1977, the following words appear—

The RTA has unkindly and derisively been referred to as "Charlie's private army".

Mr Nanovich: You don't believe everything you read, do you?

Mr Skidmore: They don't believe what they read.

Mr Coyne: It is all true.

Mr O'Neil: Is that an editorial or a statement by a newspaper reporter?

Mr T. H. JONES: The report reads—

The RTA has unkindly and derisively been referred to as "Charlie's private army".

I do not know where they get that caption from.

Mr O'Neil: Neither do I.

Mr T. H. JONES: I do not know what "Charlie's private army" is. The report continues—

It is only one of the jibes from a community which tends to think of the RTA officer as a "second-class policeman".

No amount of public relations work by the Government—even the passage of time—will change that image.

The fact is that the RTA man fits neatly in between the parking inspector and the REAL policeman.

The Minister for Police, Mr O'Neil, tried to tell us during the week that any problems between the RTA and the Police Department are minimal.

Mr O'Connor: He is right too.

Mr T. H. JONES: I would like to know how the Minister knows that.

Mr O'Connor: Because I am in a lot closer contact with them than you are; that is why I know.

Mr T. H. JONES: I am glad to see the Minister back in the Chamber. The report goes on—



But anybody having dealings with both organisations—particularly on the same day about the same matter—will soon realise that there is a gulf between them.

Both organisations cannot—and do not—resist the temptation to snipe at one another publicly and privately.

The president of the WA Police Union, Mr Albert Hutchings, summed up the feeling when he called the RTA “that ivory tower in Mount Street”.

Mr Hutchings, speaking at a special seminar during the week, . . .

I will not go on with that, because it is already reported in Hansard. Further on the report reads as follows—

We feel strongly that the RTA should be disbanded as such and its duties spread among shires in country and outer areas and the police department.

Mr O’Neil: Do you agree that they should go back to the shires?

Mr T. H. JONES: I am not suggesting that. I am just mentioning “Charlie’s army” for the sake of the record. The report continues—

Why can’t the State Government—just for once—recognise and correct its mistake?

“Charlie’s army” should be made to march into oblivion.

That report appeared in the *Sunday Independent* on the 19th June, 1977, Vol. 9, No. 420.

Of course, Mr Speaker, whilst some of the country shires are happy with the present situation, there are a number which are not happy with it. I suppose this is natural when there is a change in an area; but I think the Minister would know, and I know other members are aware of this from speaking to people whilst travelling around their electorates, that the shires are not happy with the RTA administration of traffic control in their areas.

The shires are not happy with the RTA administration, because the hours of control are limited. In some areas there are only eight hours of traffic control each day.

Mr O’Neil: What do the shires want; police control or shire control?

Mr T. H. JONES: The members of the shires I have spoken to want it to operate as a dual function whereby they have the responsibility for police control and traffic control at the one time. However, I will come to that in a moment.

I was about to say that some shires want the administration of the RTA to end. I refer to the

Laverton Shire Council, and the member who represents that area is not in his seat. The Laverton Shire Council town clerk said that his shire thought there was too much duplication in men and equipment for no greater result. This is not a member of the Labor Opposition speaking; this is a representative of a shire which, I suggest, would be a predominantly Liberal area.

*Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.04 p.m.*

Mr T. H. JONES: Before the afternoon tea suspension I was referring to the concern being expressed by some local authorities in Western Australia. I was about to say that the Laverton Shire Council has indicated its concern about the RTA since its establishment and it has said that the shire would launch a motion at the State conference of the Country Shire Councils’ Association to abolish the RTA. A newspaper article reads as follows—

Laverton shire clerk Mr Trevor Ruland said today his shire felt there was too much duplication in men and equipment for no greater result.

He said: “The original intention was that the RTA and police would handle traffic and general law enforcement. However, this has not happened”.

Further on in the article was the following—

The shire was concerned mainly with a lack of traffic control rather than general law enforcement.

Further on the article states—

Carnarvon’s deputy shire president, Mr Wilson Tuckey, who has persistently criticised the RTA, said today he would support the Laverton move.

“There is no evidence in the figures that the RTA has lowered the road toll. They need to acknowledge that they are not a deterrent but simply a catching machine”.

“And there is obviously a related fall in the road toll in proportion to their prosecutions”.

So it is clear that here is another section of the community—the shire council movement—which supports the Police Union and the Opposition in their contention that the RTA is a duplication of the Police Force.

Mr O’Neil: Do you know what happened to that motion?

Mr T. H. JONES: It did not get far past first base. I know what happened to it.

Mr O’Neil: I did not see any report of what happened to it.

Mr T. H. JONES: I understand that it was not accepted by the conference. What I am saying is that there is concern in these areas, although the Country Shire Councils' Association itself did not completely endorse the principle. Earlier I mentioned the Donnybrook-Balingup Shire and its concern about the lack of control over a period. I will show in a moment why it is concerned. No traffic inspectors operate at certain times, including some Sundays.

The figures I will present give the reasons for the shires generally in Western Australia being concerned. I will not read it all, but in *The West Australian* of the 23rd June, appeared the following—

The WA Police Union yesterday renewed its attack on the creation of a separate Road Traffic Authority and branded it a waste of money.

These are the general comments. However, it is quite apparent, following a statement attributed to the Minister for Police and Traffic which appeared in *The West Australian* of the 24th June, that the RTA will stay. The article reads—

The State Government was not prepared to consider changing the structure of the Road Traffic Authority, the Minister for Police, Mr O'Neil, said yesterday.

There was no chance that control of the authority would revert to the Minister for Police.

So the Government is adamant. Irrespective of the calls by the Police Union and other organisations, it is quite clear that unless the Government has a change of attitude we cannot expect any change.

*The West Australian* in a leading article expressed concern about police morale. Of course whether or not any notice is taken of *The West Australian* is a matter for each member to decide. However, that newspaper made the position quite clear in an edition which appeared on the 24th June. In the editorial which was headed, "Police morale" was the following—

The State Government's decision to add 69 officers to the police force has not satisfied the Police Union, which was seeking an increase of 250, and goes only part of the way towards meeting the union's complaint of undermanning.

After 47 of the new officers have been appointed, the ratio of police to population in WA will be 1 to 509, which is fractionally better than the position last year. The other

22 will only replace officers who have been commissioned.

On 1976 figures, WA's ratio of 1 to 511 was behind South Australia, with 1 to 492, and Tasmania, with 1 to 429. However, the figures are misleading because they do not reflect the need for a police presence, the work handled or the problems of serving big areas with isolated communities. Effective police strength in WA would be further reduced if, as the union claims, there was duplication of work between the RTA and the rest of the force.

But there is little point now in criticising the conception of the RTA. It is the offspring of a compromise between the Liberal Party and the Country Party and it suffers from congenital defects.

When I opened my remarks I said that I did not expect members of the National Country Party or the Liberal Party to agree with me. However, on this occasion the Editor of *The West Australian* is on my side because he said—

Even so, it is not clear that the many problems of traffic management would be better handled by abolishing the RTA for all practical purposes—which is proposed by the union and the Opposition.

It goes on to indicate what the union has done, quotes the main figures, and then mentions the morale.

The Police Union is worried about the strength of the force, and I can understand its worry. The number of bashings is increasing, and old people are frightened to move out of their homes during the evenings. Those people operating small businesses, such as fish and chip shops, chemists' shops, and garages, are disturbed. They live in a state of fear. Taxi drivers also come within that area of risk. However, because of the restrictions placed on the numbers within the Police Force, the situation will worsen unless the Government decides to increase the size of the force in Western Australia.

On the 11th October I asked a question regarding the waiting lists for entry into the Police Force. It seems that 215 are on the male waiting list; 59 on the female waiting list; and 28 on the Road Traffic Authority list. It can be seen there is no worry with regard to the availability of personnel to meet the needs of this State. The only worry is the insufficient funding to assist in those areas complained about by the Police Union. The Police Union is more closely associated with the control of police matters generally in Western Australia than the rest of us.

In answer to another question I asked on the 11th October, the Minister stated there was provision in the Estimates for an additional 80 policemen, and an additional 40 road traffic patrolmen.

The matter of morale is also covered in the motion now before the House. How on earth does the Government of Western Australia expect the members of the Drug Squad to combat this ever-increasing problem? All members in this place must be alarmed at the increase in drug trafficking in this State.

The members of the Drug Squad have been charged with the responsibility of combating drug trafficking in Western Australia. The Drug Squad comprises one inspector, one detective first-class, four detective sergeants, and 11 detectives. That is a total of 17 people employed in the Police Force of Western Australia who are expected to cope with the drug problem in this State. What a sad state of affairs! I do not think anyone can deny that. It has also to be remembered that there are absences because of sickness, annual leave, and long service leave. I do not in any way reflect on those employed in the Drug Squad, but is it any wonder we are unable to overcome the problem?

The Police Union, supported by members on this side of the House, consider it is time the Government tackled the drug trafficking problem in Western Australia, and strengthened that very important squad. As I said, it consists of one inspector, one detective first-class, four detective sergeants, and 11 detectives. That small group of men have to try to combat the drug problem throughout the whole of Western Australia. I hope the Government will give early attention to this matter.

The Minister has always argued that we are better off than the other States with regard to the numbers in the Police Force. However, the figures are not comparable when one considers the size of our State and the vast distances which have to be covered by the Police Force in administering the law in Western Australia. This applies particularly when compared with Victoria, New South Wales, and to a lesser degree, Tasmania.

In New South Wales there is one policeman for every 590 people; in Victoria, one for every 561; in Queensland, one for every 565; in South Australia, one for every 459; in Tasmania, one for every 426; in the ACT, one for every 364; in the Northern Territory, one for every 216; and in Western Australia there is one member of the Police Force for every 652 of the population. We

are in the worst situation, *per capita*, of all the States of the Commonwealth.

This matter must receive urgent consideration. It is a very important aspect, in view of the vast area of our State which the Police Force has to control. As members are aware, our Police Force has to cover thousands of square miles.

We are concerned that while the crime rate is increasing, and while the number of bashings of policemen is increasing, the strength of the Police Force is getting less. The strength of the Police Force from 1970 to 1976, as at the 30th June of each year, was—

1970 .....	1529
1971 .....	1616
1972 .....	1686
1973 .....	1807
1974 .....	1984
1975 .....	1790
1976 .....	1782

Those figures clearly indicate there has been a decline in the numbers of the Police Force. We now have a lesser number than that employed in 1975.

Mr Davies: Do those figures include the road traffic patrolmen?

Mr T. H. JONES: That is the total number in the Police Force, excluding the Road Traffic Authority. Is it any wonder the crime rate is increasing?

My motion refers also to the duplication which has taken place. It cannot be denied that there has been duplication of police administration right throughout Western Australia with the introduction of the Road Traffic Authority.

The purchase of motor vehicles and motor cycles by the RTA has cost this State \$992 420. Additional equipment has cost \$239 999. It is obvious there has been duplication which we maintain was not necessary. The 1977-78 Estimates show an allocation of \$236 000 for Police Force equipment and an allocation of \$184 200 for road traffic equipment. We consider that the \$184 200 could have been used to much better advantage.

We are concerned with police control, generally, in small centres throughout Western Australia. I have mentioned previously that the shire councils are complaining in some areas where there is limited control of traffic. It is clearly seen that constables in those areas should operate as traffic patrolmen in addition to carrying out their general police duties.

A total of 180 road traffic patrolmen are attached to the Perth office, nine are attached to

the Armadale office, and 32 are attached to the Fremantle office. At Armadale the patrolmen operate between 0700 and 2400 hours from Monday to Thursday, and from Friday to Sunday they operate between 1800 and 0200 hours. The patrolmen operate during the same hours from the Fremantle office. The total number of hours worked by patrolmen attached to the Midland office is 19, whereas the hours worked by patrolmen from the Kalamunda office number only three. The hours worked are between 0800 and 2400.

I will now refer to country areas where there is considerable concern. Only a limited number of traffic patrolmen are available for small country stations, and the situation is worse in some areas than it is in others. At Bencubbin the patrolman works for a period of eight hours, alternating between 0800 and 2400 hours. At Beverley, the same situation exists with one patrolman. At Boddington the same situation exists, and it exists also at Boyup Brook, Bridgetown, Brookton, Broome, Bruce Rock, Carnamah, Corrigin, Cranbrook, Cunderdin, Darkan, Derby, Dongara, Donnybrook, and Dowerin. The same situation applies at Jurien Bay, Kambalda, Kellerberrin, Kojonup, Kondinin, Koorda, Kulin, Kununurra, Lake Grace, Lancelin, Leonora, Margaret River, Meekatharra, Mingenew, Moora, Mt. Barker, and Mt. Magnet. Those are all one-man stations where there is limited traffic control. Other towns with limited control are Mullewa, Narembeen, Quairading, Ravensthorpe, Roebourne, Southern Cross, Tambellup, Tammin, Three Springs, Toodyay, Waroona, Wickepin, Wickham, Williams, Wongan Hills, and York.

All those are one-man traffic patrol stations operating for limited hours. What happens when the patrolman has his day off? No traffic patrolman is available at all. What happens at weekends? In these areas there is no traffic patrol on Sundays and at busy periods. What happens at country centres when someone wants to make a serious charge on a Sunday and has to see a police sergeant? No-one is available and he has to wait until Monday. We suggest that if the two functions were combined, especially at one-man stations, it would lead to better control of law and order and would at the same time assist the control of traffic.

I have listed 54 one-man stations and 10 two-man stations, and that clearly shows the Police Force in this State could be used to much better advantage. In Donnybrook recently the traffic inspector was on long service leave and was

relieved from Bunbury. No-one was available on Saturday or Sunday for traffic control.

No-one can suggest to me it would not be in our interests, particularly in small country areas, to stiffen control generally by combining law enforcement and traffic control in a dual role. Instead of driving around in a car looking for traffic infringements, the officers would be better employed policing traffic, particularly at one-man stations. The Government must give consideration to this matter.

The annual wage bill for traffic patrolmen in Western Australia in 1976-77 was \$6 959 616—nearly \$7 million. This amount of \$7 million could be used to much better advantage if the patrolmen performed a dual role. Instead of road traffic patrolmen hiding behind trees at all hours of the night, they could be patrolling the streets preventing crime and enforcing law and order. I think there is merit in our suggestion.

The average amount paid per month for overtime to patrolmen since the Road Traffic Authority was first established is nearly \$65 000. Here again, if that amount were put into the Police Force it could save duplication. The annual bill for the administration of the Road Traffic Authority is \$69 462. That is a lot of money for administration and in our view the administration of traffic control could be carried out much more cheaply.

The morale of the Police Force is very low, although the Minister does not agree with me. One matter which has caused ill-feeling is housing. When we look at the housing that has been provided for patrolmen throughout Western Australia we will see why there is ill-feeling. On the 6th October I asked the Minister for Police the following question—

Since the Road Traffic Authority was established will he please advise the homes purchased or constructed for members of the police force (excluding Road Traffic Authority personnel) costs involved and towns also involved?

The Minister replied that since the formation of the Road Traffic Authority on the 1st January, 1975, the following institutional quarters had been provided by the Police Department—

Town	Approximate Cost
	\$
Eucla	35 000
Kalbarri	30 000
Jurien Bay	30 000.

He also advised that since the 1st June, 1975, the following accommodation had been supplied to the Police Department—

Town	Number
Albany—3 Married Quarters. 1 Single Quarters.	
Williams—1 Married Quarters.	
Wundowie—1 Married Quarters.	
Dalwallinu—1 Married Quarters.	
Manjimup—1 Married Quarters.	
Bunbury—7 Married Quarters.	
Port Hedland—2 Married Quarters 3 Single Quarters.	
Karratha—3 Married Quarters.	
Wiluna—1 Single Quarters.	
Kalgoorlie—3 Married Quarters. 4 Single Quarters.	
Laverton—3 Married Quarters.	
Derby—2 Married Quarters.	
Northam—3 Married Quarters.	
Merredin—3 Married Quarters.	
Narrogin—3 Married Quarters.	
Katanning—1 Married Quarters.	
Roebourne—2 Married Quarters.	
Wickham—1 Married Quarters.	
Exmouth—1 Married Quarters.	
Geraldton—3 Married Quarters. 1 Single Quarters.	
Fitzroy Crossing—1 Married Quarters.	
Broome—2 Married Quarters.	
Mt Barker—1 Married Quarters.	
Ravensthorpe—2 Married Quarters.	
York—1 Married Quarters.	
Leonora—1 Married Quarters.	
Esperance—1 Married Quarters.	
Pinjarra—1 Married Quarters.	
Busselton—2 Married Quarters.	
Harvey—1 Married Quarters.	
Collie—1 Married Quarters.	
Carnarvon—1 Married Quarters.	
Norseman—1 Single Quarters.	

Of course, when the Road Traffic Authority was established we had to do something about housing; but what have we spent? Since the Road Traffic Authority was first established the State has spent \$1 684 532 in providing houses for members of the Road Traffic Authority. I maintain this is another area of duplication.

Mr O'Neil: Whether the man is in the RTA or the Police Force, he still needs a house. You would put them all in one house.

Mr T. H. JONES: The policeman could perform the dual role. This is duplication.

Mr O'Neil: That means there would be fewer people in the town.

Mr T. H. JONES: I am not suggesting axing. I am suggesting that if the functions of policemen and traffic patrolmen were combined the money would be used to better advantage.

Mr O'Neil: We would then have fewer policemen.

Mr T. H. JONES: We would not. They could perform a dual role and the money could be spent much more wisely.

The reason I have moved this motion on behalf of the Opposition today is that we feel our views are supported by many sections of the public in Western Australia, by the Police Union, and by individual members of the Police Force, and strong calls have been made to the Government to do something about it. The setting up of an independent Road Traffic Authority was merely a sop to the National Country Party.

As I said when debating the Bill in 1974, a member of the Police Force who joins the Road Traffic Authority is required to take the police oath. Is there any reason why a traffic patrolman cannot come under the Police Department? It is a costly duplication, and we consider that if the duties were combined, particularly in small country centres, it would be to the benefit of those centres and would avoid wasteful and inefficient fragmentation.

Western Australia is out on a limb. New South Wales and Victoria, with larger populations, have not adopted the concept of dividing the roles of policemen and traffic patrolmen, nor have most other countries in the world.

We have been out on a limb far too often. We are out on a limb in respect of our power generation from fuel oil. I have pointed out that matter previously. Now we have to get back to the right situation, and this will certainly come because the Government will not be able to resist it. Pressure is being applied. As I said, police sergeants have been to see me asking when the Opposition would do something about the matter by raising it in the House in an endeavour to alleviate the situation. As the General Secretary of the Police Union (Mr Fraser) has said, whilst the present Government is in office we are stuck with this position.

However, police officers are not happy about the situation. The Government knows that and the Minister knows it; and the Minister also knows friction is occurring between members of the Police Force and RTA personnel.

This situation can be easily overcome. All we need to do is change the administration. It is not a process which would set the world on fire or bring any discredit to the Government; the system could

easily be changed so that the control of the Road Traffic Authority is vested in the Commissioner of Police of Western Australia.

In my opinion we have a strong case; and as I mentioned when I commenced my speech, the Opposition has not changed its ground one inch in respect of this matter. The attitude we hold today is the one we held in 1974, and since the RTA was established it has been clearly demonstrated that all is not well. That being the case, and taking into consideration the views expressed at the police seminar, the Government must ask itself what it is going to do about the morale of the Police Force. The situation is certainly causing concern to the Police Force of Western Australia.

**MR H. D. EVANS (Warren) [4.33 p.m.]:** I second the motion, and in so doing I would like to address a few remarks to it. I understand the Minister intended to speak on the motion immediately; however, I think some aspects of the remarks made by my colleague, the member for Collie—and, indeed, some aspects of the motion itself—should be highlighted. The argument that has been put forward by the Government not only on this occasion by interjection, but also previously, is that the number of road fatalities has dropped. We accept that and applaud it as far as it goes. Certainly a notable decrease in fatal accidents has occurred.

However, what the Ministers opposite did not say was that at no time has the Police Force had full control of traffic to enable an integrated effort to be made to see what it could do.

**Mr O'Connor:** It has in other States.

**Mr H. D. EVANS:** In other States, yes; but not in this State. This was the point the Minister was trying to make.

**Mr O'Connor:** How do the percentages in other States compare with ours?

**Mr H. D. EVANS:** The Minister was trying to say the figures in this State have improved purely as a result of the establishment of the Road Traffic Authority. This is good. However, I am pointing out that at no time has an integrated police effort been possible. In the annual report of the Commissioner of Police for the year 1973-74, just prior to the establishment of the RTA, it is indicated that only 34 country shire areas had shown their willingness to hand over control of traffic to the police. That is the first point.

As the member for Collie suggested, the result would have been better had the police had full control of traffic for the reasons he outlined; and not only that, but the economic situation would

have been better. We would have had a better return in value for each dollar expended on police and traffic than we have ever had; and at the same time there would not have been the increase in other crime that we have witnessed in Western Australia. These are points which were conveniently forgotten by the interjecting Ministers on the front bench opposite.

I suggest that one of the things which has been responsible for the improvement in the road toll under the RTA has been the fact that distinctive vehicles have been alertly patrolling. The physical presence of a marked vehicle is the greatest deterrent to bad drivers on the road. The greater the number of vehicles that we are able to see patrolling the road, the better will be the result. Without a shadow of doubt, that is the greatest deterrent of all. An alert appearance of traffic patrolmen is the key to reducing the number of road casualties. This is the whole crux of the matter.

Bear in mind, too, as the member for Collie pointed out, Western Australia is the only State which does not have its traffic under the control of the police. If our record is so brilliant in comparison with the other States, it is a wonder the other States have not turned to our methods. It seems once again we are the only ones in step.

Let us analyse the effectiveness of the patrolmen who are available at present. From the Budget which was presented here recently it can be shown that 489 traffic patrolmen are on the job in Western Australia. That figure excludes administrative officers and others involved in clerical duties.

Each of those patrolmen is entitled to six weeks' annual leave per annum and three months' long service leave after 10 years—or one and one-sixth weeks per year. Then each patrolman works 45 weeks a year. He works a five-day week, with five eight-hour shifts. So we have 489 patrolmen, less seven-fifty seconds—which takes into account long service and annual leave—and we are left with 423 effective patrolmen. That number is reduced by two-sevenths to allow for weekly leave, so there is a further reduction of 122 men, leaving an effective force of 301.

Let us add another five, making the number 306 to give a better average. We have 306 men each working 40 hours a week, and bear in mind 112 hours of patrolling is done each week. If we allow for two shifts a day we find we have something like 109 men per shift throughout the whole of Western Australia. So the whole of Western Australia has 109 traffic patrolmen per shift. I am not overlooking the fact that patrolmen must be deployed where they may be

most effectively utilised, and that depends on the geographical situation. For instance, we would not want 18 patrolmen at Meekatharra—although we could put them to work on repairing the railway line.

The patrolmen must be deployed where they have the greatest effect, and they must be deployed at the most crucial times in respect of traffic. On average we have 109 patrolmen per shift which the Minister can play around with. Remember these are traffic patrolmen who have nothing to do with the police, and never the twain shall meet. The police shall not be involved in traffic work unless some outstanding emergency occurs.

That is a picture of the traffic situation in Western Australia. Let us now turn to the Budget figures and consider the cost, which is considerable. This is a cost we certainly cannot do without; but are we getting the best value for it? It is the contention of the Opposition that we are not.

Considering those 109 patrolmen, let us take the matter a little further. How much of a patrolman's time is taken up in court work? It is a very considerable amount of time; it is far more than is generally realised. The preparation of a court case and the appearance of the officer in the court can take quite a few hours. There is not only the preparation of the case and documentation, which must be done thoroughly and with precision, but there is also the checking and verifying of the circumstances of any accident or infringement. All this has to be done—and it all takes time—by the same 109 patrolmen with, of course, the office staff they have as a back-up.

How long does it take to deal with one case? What is the average length of time involved for a patrolman in one ordinary case? Nobody has answered those questions. While there are 109 patrolmen for the whole of the State, the time they are available for actual patrol work is further eroded by these additional duties. These are the sorts of things which are conveniently glossed over by the Ministers opposite in their cursory interjections.

Mr O'Neil: What effect would that have if the patrolmen were general duties policemen?

Mr H. D. EVANS: We would avoid so much duplication.

Mr O'Neil: How can you duplicate the task of preparing a case?

Mr H. D. EVANS: If every patrolman is a policeman and if there is an integrated Police Force, every police vehicle is in essence a traffic patrol vehicle.

Mr O'Neil: And they all sit in the office preparing cases, according to you!

Mr H. D. EVANS: Do not distort it; stick with the logic of the thing. The Minister asked the question but he just does not want an answer. Why does he not put a piece of cement in each ear; it is like trying to get through cement. The point is that if every police vehicle were a patrol vehicle—

Mr Sibson: Isn't it now?

Mr H. D. EVANS: It is not; the Minister has told us it is not.

Mr Sibson: They are patrolling for crime of one sort or another.

Mr T. H. Jones: You can't get through wood!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I call the Member for Warren.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Mr Deputy Speaker, you are deserving of elevation. If every police vehicle were a patrol vehicle the effect on the motoring public would be very salutary. The presence of RTA vehicles deters the motorist from infringing. The Minister knows that as well as I do; it is fundamental. If there is a police car at the end of the road there is not so much crime. If there is a police vehicle which is also a patrol vehicle there are fewer traffic infringements also. It is as simple as that.

An increased number of patrol vehicles would make for easier deployment, especially in the smaller towns, there would certainly be much greater coverage, and there would also be the opportunity to avoid duplication in the documentation, preparation, and presentation of court cases. It follows very readily for those who wish to see it that if there were an overall integrated force not only would there be better control of crime as a whole but also the patrol of traffic would be better.

Nobody has yet explained how much of a patrolman's shift per week is utilised in court work. It is a substantial time. This time could be reduced considerably by a general integration.

Mr Blaikie: Tell us how.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Sometimes an officer fronts up in court and waits for some hours.

Mr Blaikie: How often does that happen? What about police prosecuting officers or RTA prosecuting officers? Haven't you ever heard about them?

Mr H. D. EVANS: Where they are in effect, yes.

Mr Blaikie: Where are they?

Mr O'Neil: How does a change of name or a change of colour make any difference to the amount of time a man has to spend in court?

Mr H. D. EVANS: Not only would there be the 487 members of the RTA but there would also be the additional 2 235 members of the Police Force.

Mr O'Neil: You want them all on the road and nobody doing anything else. You probably want them all living in the one house!

Mr H. D. EVANS: Whilst those policemen are out on normal crime detection and police work they would also be involved in traffic work, which they are not at the moment. This is the point.

Mr O'Neil: That means they spend more time in court on traffic work. Your argument is totally irrational.

Mr H. D. EVANS: I shudder to think what would happen if the administration of the Police Force were left to the Ministers of the day. The chaos would be terrible to contemplate, to say the least.

Mr O'Neil: That is rather like the member for Collie saying that if we did not have an RTA we would not need houses. That is what he said.

Mr H. D. EVANS: He did not say that.

Mr O'Neil: He said we would not need to duplicate the houses. So I said you put the RTA and the policemen in the same house.

Mr H. D. EVANS: I know the Minister is verging on senility but I did not think he had quite reached it. I refer now to the south-west where the figures are rather illuminating. In the town of Bunbury there are 11 patrolmen and seven civil servants. In Busselton there are four, in Boyup Brook one, in Donnybrook one, in Margaret River one, and in Bridgetown one, making a total of 23 patrolmen in the lower south-west covering 12 shire areas which would in extent be about the size of a fair proportion of the United Kingdom.

If we look at the effectiveness of those 23 patrolmen and we allow for six weeks' annual leave and one week per annum of long service leave—which should be 1½ weeks—we find we are losing effectively six men through annual leave and three through long service leave, reducing the number to 20 men. Weekly leave accounts for another six; so there are 14 patrolmen to cover that section of the south-west. That is the sum total of traffic control. Assuming that they will work in shifts and that in the larger centres there are likely to be at least two shifts, the figures are comparable for those which were suggested for

the State. If we take the period of 112 hours per week, which a double shift would suggest, covered by the 14 patrolmen who are available we find that six men per shift are available at any one time in that part of the south-west. This is accentuated to a greater extent in smaller towns such as Boyup Brook, Donnybrook, Margaret River, and Nannup where there is no patrolmen at all. Little places such as Balingup and Kirup also have no patrolmen.

Mr Blaikie: Did Nannup ever have a traffic patrol officer?

Mr H. D. EVANS: These areas—

Mr Blaikie: The answer happens to be that it did not.

Mr H. D. EVANS: That is what I have said. At those smaller areas there are no stationed patrolmen and they are dependent on the patrols from the other centres. So we have the spectacle of one patrol at places such as Donnybrook, Boyup Brook, or Bridgetown having to patrol a number of outlying centres and covering a fair amount of dead ground in that operation. Therefore, the smaller outlying centres have virtually only a few hours of traffic patrolling each week.

Mr O'Neil: Compared with none previously.

Mr H. D. EVANS: That is not so. There were schemes whereby the shires shared a traffic inspector and contributed towards the cost.

Mr O'Neil: Many had no patrol previously.

Mr H. D. EVANS: There was also a policeman who was involved with traffic to some extent, but is not now. We have been told this often enough. The effectiveness of the available manpower, inadequate though it may be, could be increased very considerably if there was a move to integrate the two aspects and arms of the law enforcement body which we have in this State.

Mr Blaikie: Would you not agree that the sort of servicing they are getting now is far better than what they had under the local authority system?

Mr H. D. EVANS: It has improved in most areas, and certainly in my own area; yes. But there are some areas that are being served in a poorer manner.

Mr Blaikie: Where are they; which ones?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The interjections are too lengthy.

Mr O'Neil: The interjections are too difficult.

Mr H. D. EVANS: We should not be comparing the previous situation; but we on this side of the House did not go along with shire controlled traffic officers; our policy has been clearly enunciated and, as the member for Collie



has indicated, we have never deviated from it. Our policy is that traffic control should come under the police. This is where we say a further improvement will be made for the reasons which have been advanced.

Mr Nanovich: They are police officers.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Who are police officers?

Mr Nanovich: The local authorities.

Mr H. D. EVANS: But the Minister says they are not.

Mr Nanovich: Well, they are police officers.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Well, who should the public believe? How does the authority operate? This is what we said would happen when the measure was introduced, and we have never been proved to be more correct.

I was interested in the remark made by the member for Collie about the total number of overtime hours worked. He spoke about something like 350 000 hours. If one takes a figure of 350 000 hours, one will find that we would need approximately 195 patrolmen to work for that period of time. We should also bear in mind that those 350 000 hours would have been at penalty rates which are not the same as overtime rates.

Therefore, it can be seen that we could increase the total number of men in the Police Force by that number and it would cost the Government the same amount of money. This is the area in which the effectiveness is not being derived from the dollar which is being spent. When one analyses it one can see the whole situation is not organised and is not as effective as it could be.

We cannot decry the efforts of the RTA. Statistics show that there has been an improvement in Western Australia, but the system of traffic control we are suggesting comes under an integrated Police Force. The benefits which would accrue from that would be the avoidance of duplication, the subsequent economies which could be achieved, and the improvement which would be apparent from the decrease in the overall crime rate. As well as the salutary and deterring effect of seeing additional patrol cars in the areas, it would greatly improve the record of road traffic management in this State.

The morale of the Police Force and the morale of the Road Traffic Authority was enunciated quite clearly by the member for Collie. He referred to the statement by the President of the Police Union at the recent seminar. This shows as clearly as can be shown the situation which pertains within the Police Force. If we have a Police Force of this kind with low morale, we will

certainly not obtain the service which the public is looking for and which the public requires.

The points I wish to make are that value for money is not being obtained; a large amount of overtime is being worked; there is duplication of operations; and savings could be effected if individual members of the force were out patrolling instead of, as happens at the present time, being involved in clerical duties. These are only some of the improvements which could be made. The service to the public generally could be improved at very little additional cost and if we removed the wastage that is rife at the present time the service could be improved with no additional cost.

The matter of morale is of vital concern. If there is to be respect for a Police Force and if we wish to see it at the peak of its operation, it must have the confidence in itself that good morale instils.

There is no doubt that the member for Collie could not have moved such a motion at a more propitious time, following the seminar, as he has, expressing the views of those who are vitally concerned in the operation of the RTA and the Police Force, expressing their concern and expressing the grievances they feel at this time. The member has performed a very worth-while and valuable service and it gives me very great pleasure to second the motion he has moved in so able a manner.

MR O'NEIL (East Melville—Minister for Police and Traffic) [5.06 p.m.]: I suppose it was only to be expected that the member for Collie, being the spokesman on police matters, would have moved such a motion in this House. It would have been his bounden duty.

Mr H. D. Evans: And very properly so, and very appropriately so. You should still be blushing.

Mr O'NEIL: Apparently the member for Warren did not read the preamble to the motion, because he made certain statements about separation of responsibilities and powers, whereas the whole of the motion is based on the premise that traffic patrolmen are in fact policemen and policemen may be traffic patrolmen; their duties are interchangeable. That is an argument we have never refuted.

Mr H. D. Evans: I have quoted it as explained in this House; never the twain shall meet. We have been seeing that for three years.

Mr O'NEIL: The honourable member should check *Hansard* to see what he said.

We are always entertained by the member for Collie. He always puts his arguments very

forcefully, despite the fact that, in many cases, he was more confused than we on this side of the House in respect of some of his arguments. There is in this State a section of traffic control under the Road Traffic Authority, the personnel of which are policemen. That has always been the case.

Mr H. D. Evans: But were they not supposed to be an entirely separate entity?

Mr O'NEIL: The authority itself, which happens to be the administrative body, is separate and distinct from the authority which administers the Police Force.

Mr T. H. Jones: The former Minister did not say that.

Mr O'NEIL: The honourable member should verify that.

Mr H. D. Evans: You had better have a look at *Hansard*.

Mr O'NEIL: That is the basic situation. In fact, other than those country shire council traffic inspectors who were inducted into the Police Force to become road traffic patrolmen, all of the present inductees go through the Police Academy in the first place and are then allocated either to "general duties police work" or to the Road Traffic Authority. In fact, the senior commissioner of traffic is in charge of the force itself which operates under the deployment responsibility of the RTA.

Mr H. D. Evans: That is quite ludicrous.

Mr O'NEIL: It works exceptionally well.

Mr T. H. Jones: Not according to the union.

Mr O'NEIL: Not according to the opinion of the president of the union. I believe the president of the union, Mr Hutchings, has every right to have an opinion of his own. He has every right to express it and I would not deny him that right.

Mr T. H. Jones: Did the members of the union criticise him at the seminar? No, they did not. They went along with him and supported his opinion.

Mr O'NEIL: The honourable member gave a lot of attention to what he called a "union conference". I had to point out to him, and finally he admitted, that the meeting to which he referred was an information seminar.

Mr H. D. Evans: Get on with the arguments instead of pin-pricking.

Mr O'NEIL: It is starting to worry members opposite a little, is it?

The purpose of calling together representatives of the Police Force and branches of the union was to allow them to make inquiries and find out

information about the various aspects of the operations of their union, as well as the various bodies which were set up to assist them in their function as policemen.

Mr T. H. Jones: And record their protest.

Mr O'NEIL: I doubt whether that was in the invitation.

Mr T. H. Jones: You read it. That is what happens.

Mr O'NEIL: I said that the purpose of the seminar was to provide information.

Mr T. H. Jones: Where did you get that information?

Mr O'NEIL: I think the union did a very good job.

Mr T. H. Jones: Where did you get that information as to the purpose?

Mr O'NEIL: It was the purpose.

Mr T. H. Jones: Who told you?

Mr O'NEIL: Have a look at the invitation sent out. It was not to record a protest or pass motions—

Mr T. H. Jones: You are dodging the issue.

Mr O'NEIL: —because the union—and I think it ought to be patted on the back for this—had various people present including those involved in industrial matters, and those involved in housing, like members of the GEHA.

Mr T. H. Jones: The GEHA could not answer the queries, and you know it. You would not know what happened. Have you read the report?

Mr O'NEIL: The purpose of the meeting was to allow the people who are in remote areas to learn more about their union and its activities and responsibilities. In addition there were representatives of the various arms of government who were there to assist in the operation of the force in providing—

Mr H. D. Evans: Did you agree with the recommendations from the seminar?

Mr O'NEIL: What were the recommendations?

Mr H. D. Evans: On housing and morale.

Mr O'NEIL: What were the recommendations? Tell me what they were.

Mr H. D. Evans: Which ones?

Mr O'NEIL: All of them.

Mr H. D. Evans: Now you have got me there.

Mr O'NEIL: Tell me one recommendation. Someone lend him the book to see whether he can find one.

Mr T. H. Jones: They recorded their protest and you know it.

Mr H. D. Evans: Would you like them verbatim? They were not so much recommendations—

Mr O'NEIL: Ah, ha!

Mr H. D. Evans: —but areas in which the service could be improved.

Mr O'NEIL: The honourable member has not read it. He did not know the purpose of an information seminar.

Mr T. H. Jones: You criticised me about that, too.

Mr O'NEIL: The member for Collie did not know.

Mr T. H. Jones: At least I know more than you do.

Mr H. D. Evans: May I rephrase it?

Mr O'NEIL: Let us move off it and say—

Mr H. D. Evans: Yes, let us move off it now!

Mr O'NEIL: —I have had a deputation, if that is the right word, from the union executive. I think it was more an informal meeting and I was requested, again more or less informally, to discuss with the executive some of the problems it faced.

Mr T. H. Jones: Arising from the seminar?

Mr O'NEIL: I do not know. I simply had a phone call from Mr Fraser to ask me whether I would be prepared at my convenience—there was nothing urgent about it—to set aside a time when the union executive could talk about various problems with me.

Mr T. H. Jones: Do you know what Mr Fraser said? He said that the union would take up a number of important issues with the Government. He is in print as saying that.

Mr O'NEIL: Perhaps he will. What I am saying is that he has been in touch with my office and asked whether the Minister, at his convenience, could again extend an opportunity for the executive to have a discussion with him about various problems confronting the union. I said I would do so at my convenience.

Mr T. H. Jones: In the hope that the Government would recognise the seriousness of the position. You should know that. You read it. It came from all parts of the State.

Mr Davies: You are not doing too good, are you?

Mr O'NEIL: The honourable member talks about the views of the president of the union. He is entitled to them and I do not object. I could not. What we are more concerned about in respect of traffic control and a reduction of

fatalities on the road, is the views of the people, not the views of the president of the union.

Mr H. D. Evans: What about the effectiveness of the system?

Mr O'NEIL: They are the views he is entitled to have.

Mr H. D. Evans: The effectiveness of the system is the overall thing.

Mr O'NEIL: I am talking about the views the president expressed in his opening remarks to the information seminar.

Mr T. H. Jones: Which were spot on, and you know it.

Mr O'NEIL: The honourable member said he expressed the views of the whole of the seminar, but he made the statement before anyone else had any time to express a view: The honourable member is saying that the function of the president is to tell his members how they think.

Mr T. H. Jones: They agreed.

Mr O'NEIL: The honourable member also said he has dozens of letters from people—

Mr T. H. Jones: And I have. I will not show them to you.

Mr O'NEIL: —who were protesting. He also said he had dozens of letters from policemen.

Mr T. H. Jones: I will table them in my office.

Mr O'NEIL: He also said he would let me have them privately, but now he says he will not show them to me.

Mr T. H. Jones: I am not showing them to you.

Mr H. D. Evans: He said he will show them to you in your office.

Mr O'NEIL: In his office.

Mr T. H. Jones: On a confidential basis.

Mr O'NEIL: I do not like to distrust the member for Collie; he is a very nice gentleman. However, I doubt very much whether he has a suitcase full of letters.

Mr T. H. Jones: You can think what you like.

Mr O'NEIL: That is right.

Mr H. D. Evans: Pay him a visit and find out.

Mr O'NEIL: I was quite astounded by the mathematical gymnastics of the member for Warren, as I am sure every member was.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Mr O'NEIL: If we took his argument to its logical conclusion, road traffic patrolmen would not be doing anything at all. This method he uses to work out how many man-hours were spent doing things is the sort of argument I have often heard. It is something like the argument that if a

person works out how many days there are in a year, deducts the weekends, annual leave, and equivalent days he sleeps, he finds out he does not work at all!

Mr H. D. Evans: That is not so. It tells you the number of patrolmen you have in this State at any given time, and you know it.

Mr O'NEIL: He is also completely unaware when he is talking about the overtime bill of the RTA that it is not necessarily those patrolmen allocated to the RTA who receive the pay for overtime because there is a system. When the need is there there are general duty policemen qualified as officers who volunteer for additional duties. The disposition of the force which operates vehicles of the RTA is subject to the assistant commissioner.

Mr T. H. Jones: That supports our argument.

Mr O'NEIL: The point I am making is that the honourable member is operating on the premise that all the pursuit drivers are exhausted because of the overtime they work.

Mr T. H. Jones: You are weakening your own case.

Mr O'NEIL: There are plenty of other occasions when off-duty policemen are entitled to be employed on other duties as well.

Mr H. D. Evans: Firemen as well.

Mr O'NEIL: I do not know whether they are permitted to be employed; but policemen are.

Mr H. D. Evans: What about the dead body in the boot?

Mr O'NEIL: We have not found it yet.

Mr H. D. Evans: You probably missed a few with this system.

Mr O'NEIL: I am sure the House was completely and totally confused by the arguments raised by the honourable member regarding the amounts spent on housing. The secretary of the union has admitted that the establishment of the RTA has resulted in more men, more housing, and more equipment.

Mr T. H. Jones: Naturally.

Mr O'NEIL: He has admitted all these things. The honourable member then says if we did not have the RTA and policemen in one town we would not need as many houses. Therefore he means that they must both live in the same house or the staff must be reduced by half. I do not know what he meant, and certainly no-one else does.

Mr H. D. Evans: Thank goodness you are not the commissioner.

Mr T. H. Jones: A kid in school would know.

Mr O'NEIL: I know that perhaps it is not the best method of assessing the efficiency of a road traffic system to use the reduction in road fatalities—and that has been stated not only by me—

Mr T. H. Jones: Yet the other night you were yelling from the rooftops, "Look what we have done." It proves it.

Mr O'NEIL: I was not yelling.

Mr H. D. Evans: The Premier and the former Minister said this was conclusive.

Mr O'NEIL: I have said it is probably not the best, but it is one very simple method of measurement which can be applied. We can apply that measurement only in respect of a similar experience over a similar period of time. Regularly the newspapers record the traffic situation as they are now recording the water target situation.

Mr T. H. Jones: But you have not compared them with the other alternatives.

Mr O'NEIL: I understand the present figure is an improvement on last year's situation which, in turn, was an improvement on the previous year. Up to this point in time the number of deaths on the road is 14 less than the number in the same period last year.

Mr T. H. Jones: Would you not think that all the other States would leap at the system?

Mr O'NEIL: I do not happen to have the statistics in respect of the other States, but I am given to understand—I will be corrected if I am wrong—that the percentage *per capita* in this State is the best in Australia.

Mr O'Connor: That is correct.

Mr O'NEIL: I do not have the facts at my disposal. But if anyone can produce anything to the contrary I will be quite prepared to apologise.

Mr T. H. Jones: I do not have the figures.

Mr Davies: You are overlooking some of the other organisations which concentrate on this.

Mr O'NEIL: What other ones?

Mr Davies: The National Safety Council.

Mr O'NEIL: Yes, we have an excellent National Safety Council education system.

Mr Davies: And the teaching done in schools. You are not saying the RTA is solely responsible?

Mr O'NEIL: I am not saying it is entirely responsible.

Mr Davies: That is what you are implying.

Mr O'NEIL: However, the system of education conducted by both the Education Department and

the National Safety Council, and with the assistance of the RTA itself—

Mr Davies: Do not give the RTA all the credit.

Mr O'NEIL: The RTA does, in fact, give lectures and demonstrations, and all sorts of things.

Mr Davies: It does not get all the credit. It did not instigate things. It is done with the National Safety Council. It is an education programme.

Mr O'NEIL: There is a co-operative—

Mr Davies: You are in an awful mess tonight.

Mr O'NEIL: —effort in this State which involves the Education Department, the National Safety Council, the RTA, and many other private organisations if we like—people who train youngsters to ride motorbikes, and so on. This co-operative effort has resulted in a better performance in respect of road fatalities in this State than we ever expected, and certainly better than that which obtains in any other State.

Mr Sodeman: If we had the highest rate it would be solely the Government's fault, not anyone else's!

Mr O'NEIL: That is right. As I mentioned, it was to be expected the honourable member would be required to move such a motion. I notice it is not quite as critical as some which have been moved in this House. Yet his arguments in support of his proposals just fall because of lack of facts to back them up. We have heard assumptions, innuendos, and suppositions, but no facts to back them up.

Mr T. H. Jones: Who are you talking about? Me?

Mr O'NEIL: Yes. What facts the honourable member did have in respect of towns, numbers of things, hours, and so on, were supplied by me, anyhow.

Mr T. H. Jones: That is how we find things out.

Mr O'NEIL: And certainly they did not provide any argument which stands up in this place.

The fact of the matter is that the performance in respect of a reduction in road fatalities, by all organisations in this State, including the RTA, speaks for itself.

Mr Davies: Good heavens! Is that all you have to say?

MR WILSON (Dianella) [5.13 p.m.]: In supporting the motion, I want to confine my comments to a particular area affected by the fragmentation caused by the existence of a separate yet similar traffic authority.

I refer to the situation facing the 70 or so men who comprise the examination and technical services division of the RTA. The men joined this section as examiners and are engaged solely in supervising driving tests. They may become vehicle examiners after serving a five-year apprenticeship and becoming qualified as mechanics. They may be classified as examiners—dual purpose—when they qualify to supervise both vehicle and driver examinations.

The men in this section are now issued with uniforms to identify them and they are classed as wardens. They have certain powers which they hold in common with all patrolmen and police officers.

As I understand it, if the Minister sees fit, they can operate as traffic officers. In fact, I understand that in Kalgoorlie at present, there is an arrangement whereby such a person is operating as a patrol officer.

The problem for men in this particular division is that, like the clerical staff of the Road Traffic Authority, in terms of their rates of pay and administration they come under the Public Service Board. Three years ago an application was made to the Public Service Board for upgrading and reclassification of the men working in this division. It was refused. In June this year another application was made, and to my knowledge it has not yet been heard.

The problem for these 70-odd men is that in this particular division there is no incentive comparable with that for patrolmen and police staff. For instance, let us look at comparative rates of pay. I last checked these out in June, so the figures will be a little out of date, but for purposes of comparison they will suffice to tell the story.

The rates of pay for these examiners vary between \$9 000 and \$9 200 a year. In the Police Force a first-year constable receives \$9 917, a second-year constable \$10 135, a third-year constable \$10 353, and so on, until we come to a third-class sergeant who receives \$13 813, a second-class sergeant who receives \$14 749, and a first-class sergeant who receives \$16 077 a year.

For these men there is no possibility of movement within the division in terms of promotion. Other similar employees who come under the Public Service Board receive far superior treatment. For example, bus inspectors in the Education Department are classified G 11 3, two grades higher than the examiners in this division of the RTA. State Government Insurance Office assessors are classified G 11 4, which is three grades higher. This situation exists in spite

of the fact that vehicle and driver examiners, as I understand it, have higher qualifications and more responsibility in their jobs than the other workers I have mentioned.

Some of these men have been in the division for nearly seven years and are still on the grade on which they began. There is no possibility at all of their being able to move up in the system. This is a perfect example of men being in a situation where their morale is likely to suffer for this very reason.

I would like to quote on this point some comments made by Bruce Swanton in his article entitled "Police in Australia". He says—

With their low percentages at the bottom of the rank ordering, Queensland and Western Australia represent the worst career prospects for those ambitious young women and men hoping to reach the top.

He goes on to say—

Opportunities for advancement in one's job exert a powerful effect on employee morale. Personnel establishments need to be constructed with this point in mind in addition to the requirements of the organisation *per se*. Reasonable prospects for promotion, given the present hierarchical police organisational structures, must be built into the system.

Further on he makes these points—

In terms of promotion to supervisory rank and above, the Australian Capital Territory and Western Australian police forces offer the poorest career prospects to potential members—

Further on in his article he says—

Another, and very important consideration, is the age at which promotions to various ranks may be achieved. New South Wales and Western Australia, with their still strong commitment to seniority, are clearly the worst proposition in this regard.

If that can be said about the police personnel, and presumably about the RTA personnel—

Mr O'Connor: When was that?

Mr WILSON: In 1975.

Mr O'Connor: They were altered in 1976 to improve the ratio to one to 25, whereas they were one to 33 previously.

Mr T. H. Jones: But the police numbers are down on last year.

Mr WILSON: I am talking about police personnel and commissioned officers. These figures are contained in an article written in 1975.

Mr O'Connor: The police figures are up now.

Mr T. H. Jones: No, they are down on last year.

Mr WILSON: It does not alter the fact that the 70 or so men in the division I am talking about are placed in a position which aggravates this tendency among the police and the RTA in Western Australia, according to the facts I have quoted. We have a position where men with nearly seven years' service who have great experience of standards and the road traffic code have no promotional possibilities open to them. That is the position which will obviously undermine the morale of anybody at all in terms of work possibilities.

These men are in a section where they are associated with administrative and clerical staff who have promotional opportunities in other sections of the Public Service, but these men have no such opportunities available to them. In terms of facing the future, as these men are unable to get a hearing before the Public Service Board and have no opportunities for promotion, we should revert to one Police Force with a specialist traffic branch the personnel of which are experts in vehicle standards, regulations, and the traffic code.

MR T. H. JONES (Collie) [5.24 p.m.]: I thank my colleagues who supported the motion. The Minister gets one out of 10 today; he usually does much better than that. I think he thought for a while he was back in the classroom at Marybrook but then woke up to the fact that he was in the Parliament of Western Australia.

The Minister's reply was very brief because he could not answer the arguments put forward by me and my colleagues. He tried to attack the argument of the member for Warren in relation to clerical work. The member for Warren said too much of the time of RTA personnel and policemen in small country centres was taken up in clerical work. This is particularly so in the case of the senior constable or the sergeant. The patrolman at Donnybrook comes under the jurisdiction of the senior policeman, and that senior policeman is the agent for the State Government Insurance Office, the bailiff, the prosecuting sergeant, and the agent for the Public Trustee, as well as having other duties. Most of his duties are confined to paper work.

It is time the Government of Western Australia allowed the men to do the work for which they are employed and engaged clerical assistants to do the paper work. Many of these men are not efficient typists and too much of their time is spent in an office instead of on police work.

In our opinion, the motion is well timed. Naturally, the Minister disagreed with the move initiated by us on this side of the House, which resulted from a seminar. A seminar is always addressed by the leader of an organisation and it allows for free discussion of matters exercising the minds of members attached to the organisation.

The police seminar wholeheartedly supported the opening address given by Mr Hutchings, the president of the union. I call on the Minister to show me any page of the proceedings of the seminar where the report of Mr Hutchings came under criticism. All members of the council who spoke at the seminar fully supported the speech made by their leader, and prominent reference was made to the morale of the Police Force.

The Minister did not mention morale when replying to my speech. Surely he must be concerned if the leader of the Police Union says morale is low and if the union partly attributes the lowering of morale to the establishment of the RTA. One would have thought the Minister would devote some time to the question of morale, but he did not even mention it. So it is quite obvious that the Minister does not worry about morale and does not take any notice of what members of the Police Union and the president of the union said at the seminar. It is a matter he will look at when he has the opportunity.

Sir Charles Court: No-one has done more to try to destroy the morale of the Police Force—thank goodness, unsuccessfully—than your party.

Mr T. H. JONES: Had the Premier been present when I made my submissions this afternoon he would know what Mr Hutchings said. I repeat that Mr Hutchings said he was concerned about morale in the Police Force and he attributed it to some extent to the establishment of the RTA. When the leader of the Police Union makes a strong statement, surely the Minister for Police and Traffic should take it into consideration, but in his reply he failed to say one word about this important matter which is exercising the minds of members of the Police Union in Western Australia.

Mr Sodeman: You failed to mention the effect on morale of your policy at the 1976 election.

Mr T. H. JONES: The honourable member is making a speech sitting down. I will not devote any of my time to answering him.

Mr Sodeman: That gets you off the hook, I suppose.

Mr T. H. JONES: The member for Pilbara can waffle on but I do not intend answering him.

The Minister, in replying to my motion, said

there was confusion. There was no confusion in our minds or in the minds of members of the Police Union. The only people who are confused are the Minister and other members of the Government, because they do not know how to tackle the problem. If they were honest, they would admit they made a mistake in setting up a separate authority. It was a grave mistake, and I think the former Minister for Traffic, if he were here, might agree with me. It has led to unnecessary duplication of services in Western Australia.

The Minister took me to task on the matter of housing. The question I raised in regard to housing was the availability of houses for policemen and RTA personnel. If these were conjoint operations, the money could be spent more wisely than it is being spent at present.

I was very surprised and disappointed with the reply given by the Minister. He stood up and said virtually nothing; he did not answer the case presented by the Opposition at all.

In conclusion I want to say that if the Minister does not take note of the views of the President of the Police Union, the Opposition does. If the Minister is not concerned with morale in the Police Force, if he is not concerned with such matters as the increasing crime rate, the understaffing of the Police Force including the Drug Squad, and other sections, the Labor Opposition is. The Minister did not mention these things. He did not mention the strength of the force.

Mr H. D. Evans: Not a word.

Mr T. H. JONES: I indicated the present problems in regard to drugs, but the Minister does not seem interested about increasing the personnel on the Drug Squad.

Mr O'Neil: What has that to do with the RTA?

Mr T. H. JONES: Since last year there has been a decrease in the membership of the Police Force. Obviously such matters are of no concern to the Government because the Minister did not spend any time discussing them.

I believe this motion is timely, and the Police Union—particularly Mr Hutchings, a most competent union leader—is to be complimented on drawing to the attention of the people of Western Australia the low morale in the Police Force. It is quite obvious the Government is not concerned about it. As I said a moment ago, the Minister did not refer to it in his reply. However, I hope the Government will take some positive action in an effort to reduce the number of bashings, the crime rate, and the drug traffic. We

cannot expect very much because the Minister did not refer to these things in his reply.

Mr O'Neil: It was not in the motion.

Mr T. H. JONES: I will end my remarks on those words.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

#### Ayes 16

Mr Bertram	Mr T. H. Jones
Mr B. T. Burke	Mr Pearce
Mr T. J. Burke	Mr Skidmore
Mr Davies	Mr Taylor
Mr H. D. Evans	Mr Tonkin
Mr T. D. Evans	Dr Troy
Mr Grill	Mr Wilson
Mr Hodge	Mr Bateman

(Teller)

#### Noes 26

Mr Blaikie	Mr Mensaros.
Mr Clarko	Mr Nanovich
Sir Charles Court	Mr O'Connor
Mr Cowan	Mr Old
Mr Coyne	Mr O'Neil
Dr Dadour	Mr Ridge
Mr Grayden	Mr Rushton
Mr Grewar	Mr Sibson
Mr Hassell	Mr Spriggs
Mr Herzfeld	Mr Tubby
Mr P. V. Jones	Mr Watt
Mr Laurance	Mr Young
Mr MacKinnon	Mr Shalders

(Teller)

#### Pairs

#### Ayes

Mr Bryce  
Mr Carr  
Mr Barnett  
Mr McIver  
Mr Jamieson  
Mr Harman

#### Noes

Mr McPharlin  
Mr Crane  
Mr Stephens  
Mr Williams  
Mrs Craig  
Mr Sodeman

Question thus negatived.

Motion defeated.

### METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE, AND DRAINAGE BOARD (VALIDATION) BILL

#### Returned

Bill returned from the Council with an amendment.

### QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

### INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

#### Second Reading

MR TONKIN (Morley) [5.54 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

I wish briefly to explain the problem which exists in the agricultural and pastoral industries because

of part of a section of the Industrial Arbitration Act.

At present, shearing contractors are covered by the Federal pastoral industry award of 1965. Clause 5 of that award—"Parties Bound"—makes an award binding only on employers who are members of certain-named associations or who are roped in as direct respondents. No common rule is possible in the Federal arbitration system because of the Australian Constitution.

This being the case, if a body is not made a direct respondent, it is not bound by this award. It means that the people working in the industry in such cases are award-free and cannot take action to recover wages due to them, except by civil action, which is possible only if they have signed a contract of service with the employer.

Obviously, we should do something about award-free people. It is unjust that a person who happens to be award-free—there may be good reasons for that—should be prevented from getting the benefits of his employment, such as wages.

The fact of the matter, of course, is that most people employed in the agricultural or pastoral industries do not sign contracts of service at the beginning of their employment; therefore, when there is an agreement as to whether they should be paid their wages, they find it very difficult to take civil action. Some of these people are being done out of their just deserts.

The general technique if there is a satisfactory award under the Federal arbitration system—and this award is very satisfactory—is for the State branch of that national union to apply for a mirror award in the State's Industrial Commission. However, it is not possible to obtain a mirror award in this case because the Federal award limits the hours of work, whereas this is not possible under State law.

I should like to read to members that part of our State law which the Opposition believes in all justice should be repealed. I refer to section 61 of the Industrial Arbitration Act, which, in part, states—

(2) The Commission in the exercise of the jurisdiction conferred on it by this Act shall not by any order or award— . . .

(e) limit the working hours of workers engaged in the agricultural and pastoral industries;

So, while other workers throughout Western Australia can be treated as human beings who have a right to have their hours of work limited,



people employed in the agricultural and pastoral industries are treated as serfs were in the dark ages, when there was no limitation on hours worked. The idea there should be no limitation on the hours worked by people employed in this industry is something out of the 19th century. It is not just; they are employees, the same as anybody else, and have a right to have their hours of work limited.

As I have pointed out, Federal Parliament has been far more just than has this Parliament, because it is possible to have limitation of hours in the pastoral and agricultural industries under a Federal award. However, because of the Australian Constitution, under which no common rule can apply, everyone must be named as a direct respondent, otherwise the workers employed are award-free.

The only possible way they can get redress in that case is by civil action which, as I pointed out, is possible only if they have signed a contract with their employer. We all know that most people when they commence their employment do not think of entering into a legal contract of this kind.

The farm workers of this State also cannot get an award which limits their hours of work. As a consequence, some are working seven days a week. Those hours of work may be all right for the farmer, who sees his assets being built up; it is his business, and it is up to him as to the degree to which he wishes to work. However, an employee in this industry should have the protection of the law and the Industrial Commission, just the same as workers in any other industry.

We submit this amendment would merely be a recognition that employees in the pastoral and agricultural industry are human beings who have a right to have time off from work, who have a right to have limited hours, and who have a right to be paid for overtime work. We cannot accept that they should still be forced to wander around in the dark ages when the rest of the work force has the benefit of modern thinking and modern legislation which limits their hours of work. For those reasons, the Opposition commends the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Grayden (Minister for Labour and Industry).

## CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

### *Second Reading*

**MR PEARCE** (Gosnells) [6.02 p.m.]: I move—  
That the Bill be now read a second time.

Sir Charles Court: As the honourable member

has 15 minutes only, would he prefer to continue with this matter at a later stage?

**Mr PEARCE**: I am quite happy to speak now and seek leave to continue at an appropriate time.

Sir Charles Court: We would be prepared to co-operate with the member if he preferred not to speak to this measure at this stage.

**Mr PEARCE**: I would prefer to speak now. I thank the Premier for his offer.

This particular Bill is one which will be of great interest to members of the House. It is a matter which has caused a considerable amount of discussion within the community. Hardly a day goes by without three or four letters to the editor appearing in *The West Australian* or the *Daily News* on this particular issue. Obviously the community is very concerned about the decision we are likely to make in this House.

I have noted with a slight chuckle that in fact the only other matter which takes up space in the columns of *The West Australian* in anything like the degree it is taken up by this particular Bill, is the question of blank butts for lottery tickets. Perhaps that is an indication of the strange way in which members of the community occasionally think.

What we are seeking to do in this State is not a new thing in Australia. Although it is the case that the particular laws we are proposing—

**Mr Clarko**: Blank butts are not filled in properly either.

An Opposition member: What has that got to do with the Bill?

**Mr PEARCE**: It is the case that although most States in this country have not yet moved to adopt the law I am proposing to the House that we adopt here in Western Australia, some moves have already been made. In South Australia the law has already been amended in a substantially similar way to the amendment which is proposed today. In the ACT the same step has been taken. I know that the Victorian Liberal Government is moving towards introducing such a measure at this time.

There is an article in *The West Australian* of the 9th March, 1977, under the heading "Hamer plans law changes" which reads—

**MELBOURNE**: Legislation covering public access to credit records and homosexual acts between consenting adults is to be introduced in the new session of the Victorian Parliament, it was announced yesterday.

The Bill dealing with credit will give

people access to what is written about them in computer files.

If they find inaccurate information they will have the right to insist on changes.

The Victorian Premier, Mr Hamer, said at the start of the new session yesterday that reform of laws dealing with homosexuality had been approved in principle by the Parliamentary Liberal Party.

Legislation was being prepared by the Attorney-General, Mr Storey. It was expected to legalise homosexual acts between consenting adults.

In fact a very similar sort of law to that which I am proposing is being proposed by the Premier and the Attorney-General in Victoria.

I am informed that a Liberal shadow Minister in the New South Wales Parliament, Mr Dowd, the member for Lane Cove, has a Bill on the notice paper which would call on the Government to introduce a law similar to the one I am proposing.

It is truly a non-party policy, because it can be seen that throughout Australia similar laws are being introduced or advocated by both parties represented in this House. In those States it has been left to the conscience of members and to the prevailing community attitudes to decide the issue.

Mr Blaikie: Are your colleagues going to vote on this matter in a non-party way?

Mr Bertram: How are your members going to vote; on conscience?

Mr Blaikie: We always do.

Mr PEARCE: All I ask is that members of the House vote on this matter according to their consciences.

Sir Charles Court: Your party is Caucused on this and is committed by the party to vote for it. Let us be clear about the matter.

Mr PEARCE: The Caucus has given me no instruction to move this Bill. I spoke to my upper House colleague who introduced this.

Sir Charles Court: Why did you discipline one of your colleagues?

Mr PEARCE: I did not discipline one of my colleagues at all.

Sir Charles Court: Who did then?

Mr Sodeman: You did not speak against it.

Mr PEARCE: The member seems to be remarkably well informed on this.

Sir Charles Court: Why do you not admit that

you are Caucused on this issue? We on this side of the House vote according to conscience.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PEARCE: I think it is important to discuss the issues and not try to raise what would be seen to be—

Mr Blaikie: What you are saying is we should vote on conscience and all your members will vote in one fixed way.

Mr Skidmore: You please yourself what you do.

Mr PEARCE: All I am saying is—

A Government member: You have not got a conscience.

Mr PEARCE: All I am trying to do is put in a polite and sophisticated way what seems to me to be the arguments for changing the law.

Mr Sibson: I notice how the older and more experienced members shuffled it off onto you.

Mr PEARCE: That is simply not the case.

Mr Clarko: Very good.

Mr PEARCE: Perhaps the member for Bunbury does not realise it is the standard procedure when a private member's Bill is introduced in the upper House, that the member from the same electorate in the lower House should introduce it there. I am moving this Bill in the lower House because the Bill was introduced and carried through in the other place by the person who represents the same electorate as I do.

As I have indicated, it is not a party policy matter in the sense that the party which members opposite represent is seeking to introduce similar legislation in Victoria and New South Wales. Moves have been made in that direction by the Liberal Party in both those States. Therefore, it can be seen that it is not a matter on which the parties ought to be divided by some sort of political philosophy. It is a matter which affects the citizens in the community. I suggest to members of the House that they ought to vote on this issue taking into account how it will affect the citizens of this State.

Therefore, to that extent I ask members to look at their consciences in this matter and try to ascertain what will be best for the members of the community.

Mr Sibson: What is your advice to members on that side?

Mr PEARCE: I am asking them to follow their consciences and vote for the Bill.

Mr Sibson: That is an absolute direction. You are not giving advice; you are giving a direction.

Mr Tonkin: That is rubbish. It is not a

direction. What are you talking about? You are ga ga.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gosnells.

Mr Nanovich: What passage is the Bill going through at the moment?

Mr PEARCE: Obviously one could make a thousand jokes about this Bill, Mr Speaker.

Mr Tonkin: Great sensitivity on the Government side!

Mr PEARCE: I hope this debate will not become a semi-dirty joke session. I think that would be contrary to the dignity of the House such as it is.

Mr Tonkin: Such as it is.

Mr Sibson: I hope the *Hansard* reporter got that last little bit.

Mr Tonkin: Such as it is. Some of the comments are disgraceful.

Mr PEARCE: I think very often the House becomes rowdy and I contribute to that myself on some occasions; but I think it is rowdy as a result of a difference of opinion on an issue and it should not be a case of making snide digs at people who do not share the particular preferences of members opposite.

Throughout Australia in those States where the law has not yet been amended, there are moves to amend it and in two of the States at least the moves are coming from the party which members opposite represent. In my opinion, this is not a matter which ought to be considered on party lines.

The Bill seeks to decriminalise rather than legalise homosexuality. There has been some confusion about this in the reports I have read in the Press. When one talks of decriminalising homosexuality, and other things which people seek to decriminalise in the legal sense, it is different from legalising something. I am not using words in order to make the situation sound better. The difference is this: If the Bill were to be passed we would have a situation where it would not be legal in the sense that anything having to do with homosexuality would be perfectly acceptable in society, because the provisions of the Bill in fact make certain homosexual practices in public illegal.

There would be a number of aspects surrounding homosexuality which would not only be illegal but more illegal than the corresponding practices between heterosexuals.

Mr Blaikie: Just on that point, you are saying if the Bill were passed this would then make certain

homosexual acts perfectly normal to carry on, but not legal in a public place. Is that what you are saying?

Mr PEARCE: That is right.

Mr Blaikie: You are suggesting that—

Mr Tonkin: No, he is not saying they are normal.

Mr Blaikie: That is not right. He did say "normal"

Mr PEARCE: I do not think I used the word "normal". I said certain homosexual practices would not be illegal.

Mr Blaikie: That is right.

Mr Tonkin: There is a big difference.

Mr PEARCE: I also said certain other practices would not be legal. If we were to decriminalise homosexuality it would not be an offence or a crime if one were a homosexual.

Mr Blaikie: Do you regard a homosexual act as a normal act?

Mr PEARCE: I do not think one can use a term such as "normal" in that sense.

Mr Tonkin: I do not think you are normal but we do not pass a law against it.

#### *Point of Order*

Mr BLAIKIE: I take offence to that remark made by the member for Morley and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr Tonkin: That you are not normal?

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not believe the words to be of such an offensive nature as to require a withdrawal.

#### *Debate Resumed*

Mr Clarko: He is offensive all the time.

Mr Tonkin: You do not understand the word "normal"

Mr PEARCE: I am doing my best to approach this matter in a fairly calm and, I hope, a fairly rational way. I am not seeking to provoke members opposite or indeed members on my own side in any sense whatsoever. I hope I will be given a fair hearing.

Mr Sodeman: You had better speak to the member in front of you.

Mr PEARCE: I dissociate myself from his particular comment. The meaning of the word "normal" is the prevailing norms in the community at the time. If one were to take an average cross-section of the community one would find that homosexuality would not be normal.

Most people are heterosexual and perhaps 10 per cent of the community are homosexual. I do not think it is abnormal in the sense that it is unnatural. If one is looking at what is unnatural, one is looking at something which does not occur in nature and obviously when 10 per cent of the people in the community find they have homosexual tendencies through no fault of their own—there is something in their environment or something which they have inherited which leaves them with homosexual tendencies—in that sense it is natural, because they are the only feelings these people have in that area. Homosexuality is not something they have learnt for themselves. In that sense, it is natural for them.

There has been a great deal of psychological investigation into homosexuality and whether homosexuals can be changed into heterosexuals. The report of the Honorary Royal Commission on Homosexuality has summarised its findings in its recommendations. I will quote from that report, because I think the issue as to whether or not homosexuality is normal or natural is very important and something to which the House should direct its attention.

The Bill seeks to decriminalise homosexual acts—that is, to make the fact of being a homosexual not a crime in itself—but it would still leave some legal sanctions against certain homosexual practices in public so that they would not be legal. I think the distinction between decriminalising and legalising is very important.

I do have more to say on this subject, Mr Speaker, and I would like to turn to the recommendations contained in the Honorary Royal Commission's report. However, I see that private member's time has nearly expired.

#### *Leave to Continue Speech*

Mr Speaker, I seek leave to continue my remarks at another sitting of the House.

Leave granted.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

#### **BILLS (2): RETURNED**

1. Veterinary Surgeons Act Amendment Bill.  
Bill returned from the Council with an amendment.
2. Constitution Acts Amendment Bill.  
Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

#### **MINE WORKERS' RELIEF ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

##### *Council's Amendment*

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

##### *In Committee*

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Clarko) in the Chair; Mr Mensaros (Minister for Mines) in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment made by the Council is as follows—

Clause 6, page 3, lines 30 to 32 inclusive—Delete subparagraph (ii) of paragraph (a) and substitute a subparagraph as follows—

(ii) by adding after the word "symptoms" in line four the words "or evidence";

Mr MENSAROS: I move—

That the amendment made by the Council be agreed to.

The Committee might recall that when we debated this matter the member for Yilgarn-Dundas wanted to change the word "evidence" to the word "symptoms". In a very amicable way we debated the possible connotation and the legal implication of those words. It was pointed out that the word "symptoms" might refer to something active, whereas the word "evidence" could really include something which was inactive. The member for Yilgarn-Dundas then requested that both words be included in the Bill. I agreed, subject to a legal examination. Accordingly, that legal examination has been made and the other place has made this amendment to which I am quite happy to agree.

Mr DAVIES: The Minister has explained the reason for the amendment now before us. We thank him for the fact that the other place—no doubt through his good offices—has seen fit to amend the Bill in this way. We finish up with the best of both worlds, and the Bill will contain the words "symptoms or evidence" instead of just the word "symptoms".

We are always pleased to accept the best of both worlds and, therefore, we accept the amendment.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

##### *Report*

Resolution reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

**CLOTHES AND FABRICS  
(LABELLING) ACT AMENDMENT  
BILL**

*Council's Amendment*

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

*In Committee*

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Clarko) in the Chair; Mr Grayden (Minister for Labour and Industry) in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment made by the Council is as follows—

Clause 5, page 3, line 7—Delete the word “earlier” and substitute the word “later”.

Mr GRAYDEN: I move—

That the amendment made by the Council be agreed to.

I might mention that when the legislation was before this place we were unable to move an amendment because of a technical difficulty, and I foreshadowed it would be moved in another place.

The amendment simply ensures that action under this legislation will be taken within six months, or no later than six months, instead of preventing action being taken earlier.

Mr DAVIES: As the Minister has said, the moving of an amendment raised a technical difficulty which precluded the Minister from moving his amendment. There was no option but to have the amendment made in another place. I think the curious decision reached on that occasion will probably stand us in good stead in the future.

We have no objection to the amendment because it concerns a matter which obviously required correction. As the Bill was worded, the proclamation would have been on a day not earlier than six months, whereas obviously it was meant to be not later than six months. A period of six months is the maximum time before the proclamation should be dealt with. The Opposition supports the amendment.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

*Report*

Resolution reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

**APPROPRIATION BILL  
(CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND)**

(No. 2)

*In Committee*

Resumed from the 18th October. The Chairman of Committees (Mr Clarko) in the Chair; Mr O'Neil (Deputy Premier) in charge of the Bill.

Progress was reported after the vote “Registry and Friendly Societies” had been agreed to.

**Vote: Astronomical Services, \$306 000—**

*Item No. 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances, \$225 000—*

Mr DAVIES: Last night I was about to ask the question of the Minister why there was no inclusion under this item for a Government Astronomer. There is provision for four assistant astronomers, which seems to me as though we have four Indians but no chief.

I know the Minister has an explanation because I informed him of my question last night. I would hate to think that the Minister did not have an opportunity to present his reply.

Mr O'NEIL: Perhaps it was fortunate we reported progress. I have been aware that for some time negotiations have been proceeding with the University of Western Australia to transfer the astronomical services of the Government to that institution, it being rather more appropriate that we should have the services at the university. These negotiations have been proceeding for some time and have almost reached finality. There needs to be joint funding of the operations of the observatory between the Treasury and the university during the phasing-in of the total takeover by the university.

In the meantime, because some of the appointments were under the Public Service Act, and because of the untimely death of the then Government Astronomer, the position has not been filled. Dr I. Nikoloff, whilst not specifically appointed, has been acting Government Astronomer, and he has virtually maintained the operations of the institution.

Mr Davies: Is he paid now by the university?

Mr O'NEIL: No, he is on the Public Service scale of P 3, and he receives \$18 564.

Mr Davies: I knew the Minister would know the answer.

**Vote put and passed.**

**Votes: Electoral, \$550 000; Licensing, \$296 000; Department of Corrections, \$14 253 000—put and passed.**

**Vote: Police, \$37 873 000—****Item No. 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances, \$30 621 000—**

Mr DAVIES: We have noticed with some concern the rise in the number of staff of the Road Traffic Authority and the Police Department. I am sorry to say I had a very good speech ready to deliver this afternoon, but I was not quick enough to rise to my feet when the member for Collie replied to the debate.

As the member for Warren has pointed out, the two organisations seem to be grouped. Why separate the divisions in the Estimates?

I am reminded that if these are in the same group, why do we have to have two departments? The Minister has told me on several occasions that it does not matter how I phrase a question, it is the same Police Force. No-one appears to be able to shift the Minister in that respect. Indeed, it appears there are two separate departments—the Police Force and the RTA.

I want to draw attention to the figures appearing in the Estimates over the years for the combined group of RTA and police officers. In 1975 in round figures the vote was \$22 million; in 1976 it was \$30 million; in 1977 it was \$37 million; and in the present financial year the estimate is \$42 million. It is a fairly substantial increase over a period of four years.

Regarding staff in the combined group, in 1975 the number was 2 890; in 1976 it was 3 231; in 1977 it was 3 451; and in 1978 the number is 3 535. That is an increase of slightly over 7 per cent cumulative in the total staff of both groups for the one year. I fail to see that the Government is effecting any economies in its handling of these groups, particularly as the number of top officers in the Police Department has remained fairly constant, when we could have expected some saving. However, the number of top officers in the RTA has increased dramatically.

I am a little disadvantaged, because, we are discussing the staff in division 29, dealing with the Police vote, and I should not discuss the RTA. It is very difficult to get an assessment of the number of officers who are allegedly trying to apprehend lawbreakers, because within the ranks of sergeants and constables we find that a number are engaged on administrative duties and are not concerned with apprehending lawbreakers.

We find that the number of sergeants and constables employed in the Police Department last year was 1 743; the year before the number was 1 718; and this year the number is 1 753. So, there has been a very gradual increase.

The item that intrigues me relates to the number of clerks, typists, assistants, etc., employed. The number increased from 175 to 187, but this year it has dropped back to 145 which is a fairly dramatic decrease. That being the case, I would have thought there would be some saving.

In the staff numbers I find the curious item of temporary assistants. I do not know what the Government is getting at; I did ask the Treasurer last night a question about temporary assistants, and he gave some explanation. However, when we look at his answer closely I do not think he knew why they were not permanent appointments. Throughout the Estimates these temporary assistants appear. In the Premier's Department this year there are 12 temporary assistants, out of a total staff of 64.

While the number of clerks, typists, assistants, etc., has decreased in this year's Estimates in respect of the Police vote, I find there is provision for 34 temporary assistants. Are they to be appointed to the department permanently? Are they staff brought on for a particular purpose? How secure are their jobs? Does it mean that if the Government wants to effect some economies during the year it can quit some of these temporary assistants? Such employees do not have the same right of appeal as applies to permanent appointments, and they can be dispensed with quite easily. In the Police vote the 34 temporary assistants will cost \$223 000 in this financial year.

The proliferation of staff in the combined RTA and police group is of concern to me. If the officers were all outside engaged on apprehending lawbreakers and providing protection to the community, I would be happy. However, it does not seem they are all engaged on that work, because obviously the administrative side has been fairly heavily loaded. I shall have something more to say about that matter when we deal with the next vote.

Why do we need these 34 temporary assistants? Is there any way of showing why 1 753 sergeants and constables are employed? Is there any breakdown on whether or not they are employed on administrative duties?

I believe the uniformed policeman ought not to be sitting behind a counter. It has been said many times by members on both sides of the House—I think a former member for Claremont (Mr Crommelin) brought this up fairly regularly—that if we want a clerk we should employ a clerk, and that if we employ a policeman we should not expect him to be sitting

in front of a typewriter typing out a report with two fingers, when the work could be done much more quickly by a competent stenographer.

If the number of sergeants and constables in this year's Estimates, as compared with last year's, doing administrative work is greater, it is a matter for regret, because the number of clerks, typists, assistants, etc., has shown a decrease compared with last year.

At the same time the question mark remains over the 34 temporary assistants. Without being too unkind, I could ask this: What is the "game" the Government is playing regarding these temporary assistants?

Mr O'NEIL: I am quite sure the honourable member does not expect me to have the answers to the complicated questions he has asked. I undertake to obtain a copy of the honourable member's speech. I shall refer it to the Commissioner of Police and request that a reply be given to the honourable member in writing.

Mr DAVIES: The Police Department carried on its staff a solicitor, but it appears he is not there at present, and the work is being done by the Crown Law Department.

Mr O'NEIL: That is so.

*Item No. 7: Firearms Licensing Expenses, A.D.P. Costs, \$212 000—*

Dr TROY: It seems that there has been an amazing explosion in firearms licensing expenses, because the expenditure last year was \$17 895, and the estimate for this year is \$212 000. Can the Minister explain why there has been such a huge increase in this expenditure? Has there been a huge increase in violent crimes to justify this increased expenditure?

Mr O'NEIL: This expenditure relates to automatic data processing costs, and it is an administrative matter. It does not relate so much to the expenses involved in the licensing of firearms. The two are grouped together. Once again I undertake to obtain more detailed information on this item and I will let the honourable member have it in writing.

**Vote put and passed.**

**Vote: Road Traffic Authority, \$17 267 000—**

*Item No. 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances, \$12 942 000—*

Mr SKIDMORE: In this department 17 vacant positions are shown in the Estimates. If they are filled they would account for the \$276 300 allocated to this item. Why are they not filled, so as to relieve some of the strain on the RTA and the Police Force?

Mr O'NEIL: The position in respect of the 1976-77 period indicated there were no vacant positions. The Government has given approval for an increase in staff in both the RTA and the Police Force. This year there are 17 positions yet to be filled following the approval given, and that is the reason for the allocation.

Mr DAVIES: I indicated earlier that I would comment on the administrative staff of various departments. For the last three years we had in this department a chief executive officer. The Budget papers for the year 1976 showed there were two administrative officers under the item "Administration". In 1977 the Estimates showed there were 11 administrative officers, and this year the Estimates show there are 17 administrative officers. This is a fairly dramatic increase in a fairly short period, from two to 17.

We were trying to highlight this aspect in the motion moved by us this afternoon. There could be a considerable saving in expenditure if there was a proper amalgamation, instead of a *de facto* amalgamation of the RTA and the Police Force.

Under the heading "Licensing, Accounting and Clerical" 48 temporary assistants are shown. To me this seems to be a remarkable number. The Budget papers for 1976 showed there were 339 clerks, typists, and assistants; in 1977 the number was 374; and this year the number is 320. However, if we add to the number for this year the 48 temporary assistants, it brings the total to 368; and if we add the 10 vacant positions, it takes the total to 378—which is four more than last year.

If the Minister is able to supply an explanation in regard to temporary assistants and the way the Government is employing them, it would be appreciated. It seems that overall the staff is much the same as it was last year, but the number is considerably greater than the number for the year before.

We should bear in mind that the RTA got going in 1975, and so the first appointments started in 1976. The total escalated in 1977. I think I commented, when speaking to the Estimates, on the false savings that had been promised, and which were not apparent. This year the position is even more acute.

In 1975 the licensing and accounting in respect of motor vehicles came under a separate division and the number of staff employed totalled 344. I have pointed out that in this year's Estimates there are some 471 persons employed under this heading.

Regarding the total staff, in 1976 the number was 1 055; in 1977 it was 1 269 and this year the

number is 1 300. I want to highlight the fact that there seems to be a false sense of economy in the way the Government has handled these two organisations. It is time the Government gave serious thought to whether or not it would be far better to operate under the old system, when there were fewer top officers and more of the other ranks doing the work.

Mr O'NEIL: I will check on this in respect of the increase in the administrative staff. The increase could well be occasioned by the continual voluntary surrender of responsibility by local authorities to the RTA. As members are aware, there is no compulsion on local authorities to transfer their responsibility in respect of licensing and traffic control to the RTA; but naturally if a local authority surrenders its powers in this regard, certain administrative staff would need to be employed to carry out the duties performed by that local authority.

I am assuming that is part of the explanation. Once again, I will certainly have the queries of the honourable member submitted to the Chief Executive Officer of the RTA and arrange for him to send a full explanation to the honourable member.

*Item No. 8: Traffic Research, \$77 000—*

Mr SKIDMORE: I wonder whether the Minister could explain the fairly heavy increase in the vote for this year. Can he inform me for what research the additional funds are being provided?

Mr O'NEIL: Once again, as the Premier has mentioned, this is not a matter of additional funds being provided, but of additional funds being available if required. There was a responsible undertaking given by both parties that more research would be carried out into matters relating to road safety, and in fact there is a research officer on the staff of the RTA. He is probably one of the 17 personnel involved in administration. Certainly there have been occasions when the RTA has used outside consultants in respect of recommendations regarding action that might be taken to improve road safety.

This represents the funds available, and is not necessarily for any particular research. Personally, I am not aware of any research the RTA intends to proceed with. That is a matter for the appointed authority to decide, and in respect of which it will make recommendations to the Government.

**Vote put and passed.**

**Vote: Office of Regional Administration and the North West, \$1 175 000—**

*Item No. 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances, \$666 000—*

Mr H. D. EVANS: I am concerned there does not appear to be a great deal of assistance provided for the north-west, and particularly the Kimberley region and the beef industry. I would like the Minister to give an indication in respect of some points that have aroused some concern and no little curiosity.

An Honorary Royal Commission examined the position of the beef industry in the Kimberley, and it produced a number of very good recommendations; but to keep the beef industry in its true perspective, I would point out the Kimberley and the beef industry are synonymous. Pastoralists are approaching the stage of desperation. Their liquidity problem has been very severe for some years, and a number of measures could be taken to relieve their situation, not the least of which is in connection with transport. Obviously transport is the life blood of the entire beef industry in the Kimberley.

It appears no concessions are being made in either the Treasurer's section of the Budget or in the section of the Minister for Regional Administration and the North-West. Therefore, I am wondering whether there is any intention to do anything to alleviate the position of beef producers. The assistance to the beef industry that was recently announced by the Federal Government will not be of great practical assistance. It is true the provision which called for spaying of breeding cattle would be of use in some places, especially where there is overstocking. However, it will certainly not assist in the production of cattle for future income.

Several recommendations were made in connection with roads and diesel fuel, and some suggestions were made in respect of abattoirs. As I said, time is running out for the industry, and the Government does not appear to have included in its Budget assistance for the producers. I would like the Minister to give an indication of what is proposed, and to what extent financially.

Mr O'NEIL: I am sure the member for Warren would realise that the provision for the Office of Regional Administration and the North West, which is only \$1.175 million, is essentially for staff and management. It is purely for regional administration.

Regional administrators reside in various parts of the State and provide a communication link between the residents of the area and the Government. This vote does not contain any provisions for financial assistance in any form. The regional administrators, in co-operation with



other departmental officers and people in their areas, are able to prepare cases to submit to the State for the kind of assistance to which the honourable member referred; or, even further than that, to provide material upon which claims for assistance may be placed before the Commonwealth Government.

To give an idea of the operation of this new-born babe—the system of regional administration—it is fairly significant that the recommendations in respect of the goldfields retaining the School of Mines were made by a committee chaired by the regional administrator and were accepted almost in toto. This is the kind of assistance regional administration can offer to local communities. However, certainly there is no cash available for the type of assistance to which the honourable member referred.

Mr H. D. EVANS: I am glad the Minister has clarified the matter of regional administration; I was wondering what precisely regional administrators do. As he said, it is a matter of liaison.

Mr O'Neil: I think all members were sent a brochure outlining this.

Mr H. D. EVANS: If they provide liaison, that is fair enough, especially if they provide liaison in the preparation of cases.

I ask the Minister what cases have been prepared, especially in regard to the beef industry in the Kimberley. I refer also to the situation of the pastoralists in the Gascoyne, where a similar situation prevails. If regional administration has been proceeding on a liaison basis, what liaison has been carried out and what cases have been prepared? Also, what estimates of cash were involved for this year, and where are they shown in the Budget? In other words, have they done anything?

I appreciate that this item concerns the administration, but how has the administration gone about earning its entitlement to this money, and what value is the State getting from it?

I accept the Minister's comment about the School of Mines, but that is not one of the crucial issues in the northern areas. Let us consider the Gascoyne and the Kimberley; what particular measures of assistance are proposed for those areas? There could be other areas upon which the Minister may like to elaborate.

Mr O'NEIL: I want to point out again to the honourable member that this system is essentially a new-born babe. The appointment of administrators has occurred only since the beginning of this year. Currently they are undertaking a great deal of work in assisting local

communities to establish committees of their own to arrange liaison between themselves and the Government. In the Kimberley itself matters relating to the ordinary development of the Ord and the administrative problems of the people there, including local government, are being dealt with.

The honourable member ought to know that if there is a specific problem that relates to agriculture in the Kimberley or anywhere else, it lies entirely in the hands of the Minister for Agriculture.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Not necessarily.

Mr O'NEIL: I am trying to make the point that the member has been in this Parliament long enough to know that the Minister for Regional Administration and the North-West is not the Premier for the north-west.

Mr H. D. EVANS: What is the good of having him then?

Mr O'NEIL: If the honourable member does not know, I refuse to try to tell him.

Vote put and passed.

#### Part 4: Minister for Agriculture—

MR H. D. EVANS (Warren) [8.11 p.m.]: Mr Chairman—

Mr T. H. Jones: The Deputy Premier is getting rather upset.

Mr H. D. EVANS: He is still blushing a little, as well he should.

The overall increase indicated for the Minister for Agriculture in the year 1977-78 amounts to 16.71 per cent over the year 1976-77, according to my computations. However, that figure may be less because last year's vote, which was \$19,913 million, exceeded last year's expenditure by nearly 3 per cent. Last year's expenditure was \$19 372 310, and in 1977-78 the estimate is \$22.609 million.

It is very difficult to ascertain how funds have been spent within the various items as a result of the changes which have been made in the structure of the Department of Agriculture. Perhaps we could have a further look at this restructuring and see what it involves right down to the grass roots.

Probably the Minister would like to make several comments, as the extent of the changes are considerable. Obviously a great deal is involved in the restructuring of a department.

However, as I pointed out, it is difficult to ascertain where funds have been readjusted, where they have been spent, and where they have

not been spent. I am not suggesting there has been a pea-and-thimble trick—far from it. However, without knowledge of the amalgamation and deletion of various sections within the department it is impossible to compare figures with the expenditure for the previous year.

New items have been created under various Budget provisions which were not present in the 1976-77 Budget; thus it is impossible to tell what the expenditure was in some areas in the 1976-77 Budget.

For instance—and probably this is a fairly clear example—item 14 in the Estimates for the Minister for Agriculture in the 1976-77 Budget contained an estimate of \$926 000 for the wheat and sheep division of the Department of Agriculture. That is a considerable sum of money, and it is fairly important that we should be able to ascertain how it was dissipated. However, in the 1977-78 Budget no such item appears, and so it is impossible to know how these funds have been split up or redistributed between the new items which have been created.

This sort of confusion or lack of detailed information is causing me trouble in making a comparison of and piecing together the trends within the Budget. In the 1977-78 Budget the divisional research and services section contains 13 separate items whereas the same section in the 1976-77 Budget contained only 10 items. In the 1976-77 Budget the vote for this section was \$4.152 million and in the 1977-78 Budget it is \$4.666 million, a discrepancy of \$510 000. I am sure this amount has not been mislaid but it is important to determine to which section it has been transferred and how it is being used.

It seems to me that the overall increase in agriculture has not been in keeping with the total increase in other industries in Western Australia; and, of course, agriculture is something which must be maintained. This must mean that the funds have been transferred to another item because theoretically the 1976-77 vote, as outlined in the 1977-78 Budget, should be exactly the same as the estimate given. But because of the lack of information I am unable to pick up the restructuring of the sections within the department.

Under item No. 2 of the Agriculture Division in the 1977-78 vote there is a discrepancy which relates to administration expenses within the Department of Agriculture. Whilst it is possible to understand the difference in the Estimates and the votes for the divisional research and services section, it is difficult to understand why there should be a large difference between the vote and

the estimate in the case of administration expenses. Without looking ahead, because I do not wish to draw your criticism, Mr Chairman, that is a further point of clarification which is required because it is germane to the overall vote for the Department of Agriculture.

In the 1976-77 Budget the estimate for administration expenses is given as \$1.207 million. However, the 1977-78 vote is \$1.245 million. This is a discrepancy of \$38 000 which is rather difficult to explain. Because of the problems with the reorganisation of the department and the distribution of funds by different methods it is difficult, if not pointless, to make comparisons between the expenditures of some previous years compared with the last Budget. This is a matter of some concern as the Auditor-General's report does not adequately cover these in the items. I received some further information from the Premier tonight but even that is insufficient at this stage fully to determine and follow just what total alterations have been.

When such changes are made in the organisation of Budgets an explanatory note surrounding the changed figures should be given to the Treasurer and an explanation should be given by the relevant Minister to the Chamber. This is more than a matter of courtesy. I think the people of the State as a whole are entitled to know precisely in which directions funding for various Budget items is being channeled. It is only in that way that the emphasis of policy can be assessed and a comparison of priorities readily determined.

Another major change which has been made relates to the items under the heading of "Other Services". In the 1976-77 Budget amounts were listed for specific types of service, and these included eradication of fruit fly, banana industry compensation, the cattle industry compensation fund, and so on. But this year it is difficult to ascertain just what amounts these funds have received and how they have fared in comparison with previous years. One assumes that the items referred to under this heading are partly paid for from Commonwealth funds. The Commonwealth does make funds available for assistance in agriculture, but just what these funds have been and for which purposes again is not readily discernible; and I feel it should be. It may not even be the case that Commonwealth funds have been made available this year, and this is a matter which ought to be cleared up.

In the 1977-78 Budget only three items are mentioned: "Assistance to Agriculture", "Contribution to Agriculture Trust Fund", and "Wheat Quota Committee—Administration

Expenses". By way of contrast and comparison in the 1976-77 Budget the Wheat Quota Committee expenses came under the item of "Assistance to Agriculture", but the item "Contribution to Agriculture Trust Fund" was not mentioned; and the Agriculture Trust Fund is fairly important.

In the "Other Services" section there is quite a large increase in funds to be spent under the item of "Assistance to Agriculture". The figure has jumped from an expenditure in 1976-77 of \$331 660 to \$773 000, which is a jump in excess of 100 per cent. The expenditure in 1976-77 was considerably below the estimate, which was \$487 000. This is a discrepancy of 32 per cent of estimate against expenditure. However, the large increase by way of bringing the 1977-78 Budget up to \$773 000 ought to be seen in the context of that fairly huge drop which occurred in the item of "Assistance to Agriculture" in the 1976-77 Budget. In the Budget for the year 1975-76 the vote for "Assistance to Agriculture" was \$841 000, which declined to \$487 000 and has now been restored to \$773 000. Although the funds made available under the item of "Assistance to Agriculture" might seem to represent a large increase, in fact the figure has been restored to a little above the figure for the year before last. If we allow for actual value, taking into account inflationary tendencies and the true worth of that money, it would be doubtful whether it even equates the 1975-76 expenditure.

As I have pointed out, in 1976-77 this amount dropped back to \$487 000, but in fact the amount spent was even less. In real terms the drop is below the 1975-76 figure and when we talk of inflation we are talking in terms of 25 per cent in that two-year period. So in actuality the item "Assistance to Agriculture" may not be as good as the Budget figures tend to indicate. In fact the 1977-78 figure is about 25 per cent down on what it was in 1975-76.

The position then is that because of the major changes and the overall restructuring of the Department of Agriculture, the difficulty in finding out just where the allocated moneys have been spent this year makes it incumbent upon the Minister to itemise the changes that have been made, to explain the allocations which the department has been accorded, and to indicate how these allocations were disbursed in the previous year, at the same time indicating whether there has been an increase or a decrease in the particular service to agriculture, not as it has actually been shown under the existing headings this year. I make these comments by way of an introduction so that the Minister has a

chance of clarifying those points. Perhaps we can now have a look at some of the more specific points.

**MR OLD** (Katanning—Minister for Agriculture) [8.27 p.m.]: I do not blame the member for Warren for being a little confused, I must admit that I am also confused because we have gone from item No. 1 to item No. 20 in one call; and I feel it is a little hard to cover such a wide range. Under the same rule, I agree it is very confusing.

**Mr H. D. Evans**: You need to put it in its perspective. We will go through it item by item if you like.

**Mr OLD**: Oh, no we will not. The member has dealt with items No. 1 to No. 20 as far as I am concerned.

**The CHAIRMAN**: We are dealing with the part.

**Mr OLD**: Fair enough; we have done the lot. I shall endeavour to cover it. The member for Warren mentioned the wheat and sheep division which last year had an estimate of \$926 000 and this year does not appear. This is just an example. I cannot give the member a complete rundown of the restructuring of the department because frankly I have not got it with me, but I would be quite happy to furnish him with the complete details. If we look at the item "Plant Production" we will find that is a new item which was reallocated last year and this year has a vote of \$1.376 million. This takes in the grain part of the wheat and sheep division.

Let us consider the items of "Animal Production" and "Dairying and Food Technology". The dairying section has been cut up and the dairying and food technology section is virtually a quality control section, and the animal part of the dairying industry has gone into the item "Animal Production". So it is very hard off the cuff actually to break up the amounts, but I certainly appreciate that it is difficult to equate the two Budgets because there has been a complete reshuffle of the department. Although that was given a fair amount of publicity, I admit that the technicalities of the change were not clearly spelt out at that time. I am quite happy to furnish the member for Warren with the graph showing the new structure compared with the old structure, and I think from that the member would be able to sort the matter out for himself. For instance, we have a new section known as the marketing and economics branch in the Kununurra area. We have taken out the pilot farm, etc., so as to bring it in as a separate entity. I reiterate I do not blame the member for being a

little in the dark. Regional services are something new; the various district offices are fully autonomous. The district officers are now responsible to the department but they are actually fully autonomous as far as their operations are concerned. They form a separate body that receives money and draws up its own budget.

On the contingency side there are some significant increases. One item that is covered is \$237 000 for running the experimental station for sugar cane growing. It includes \$76 000 for assistance to the dairy industry; \$60 000 for work on the model farm at Avondale; and \$60 000 for enlargement of the campaign to overcome brucellosis and TB.

I find it very difficult to explain the total situation and I would be pleased to furnish the member with a complete breakdown of the restructuring. The member has said he does not believe there has been a fiddling of the books or a misappropriation of funds.

I was very pleased with the rise in the budgeted amount for this year and whilst the member for Warren is a little sceptical I think the \$3.2 million increase on last year's actual expenditure is reasonable. It should be remembered we have also been successful in getting 14 new items this year. This is something we have been working towards because of the necessity to increase research into agriculture, which was part of the Government's election platform. I believe this year's Budget is a very good start.

**Vote: Agriculture, \$22 609 000—put and passed.**

**Part 5: Minister for Fisheries and Wildlife, Tourism and Conservation and the Environment—**

**Vote: Fisheries and Wildlife, \$3 762 000—put and passed.**

**Vote: Department of Tourism, \$3 063 000—**

**Item No. 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances, \$1 288 000—**

Mr H. D. EVANS: The provision of camping facilities in the country areas of this State are inadequate. There is no doubt about this and since the sealing of the Eyre Highway one has only to talk to any of the service station proprietors in the south-west to hear that the increase in Eastern States vehicles has been quite dramatic, even in the winter. So now with the wildflower season starting and the approach of summer the increase of tourists from the Eastern States and the metropolitan area is obviously going to be even greater.

At present the number of caravan parks is very limited and without being specific I know many were filled to over-capacity last Christmas. Had the inspector of caravan parks passed through at that time and followed the regulations to the letter there would have been hundreds of caravans turned out. They would have had to park along the road.

Mr Blaikie: We have about 28 parks in our area that would have been able to accommodate them.

Mr H. D. EVANS: I would like to ask the member whether the park facilities in his area are adequate for the holiday season, because I can name five in my area that are hopelessly inadequate. One has a maximum of just over 100 and there have been almost 200 caravans there in the past.

Mr Blaikie: There are a further three being built in my area.

Mr H. D. EVANS: In the forthcoming summer months there will be virtual chaos along the south coast because insufficient accommodation has been made available. The only alternative is for the people to park their caravans along the side of the road.

There is one problem with regard to the present availability of funding under the Department of Industrial Development; that is, the department does not cater for direct assistance to the tourist industry. This is a shortcoming as the tourist industry has as much potential as other industries. To establish any industry in a country area one is dependent upon the resource available. If the resource is not there one cannot develop the industry. There is no point in trying to develop a goldmine if there is no auriferous ore. Similarly, if one is intending to grow avocado pears one is not going to decentralise. One has to be dependent on what is available.

There has to be an arrest of the trend of declining population figures in the south-west. One way is to make funds available for the establishment of tourist facilities, not the least of which is caravan parks. The question then arises as to whether the Minister is in a position to take up the problem that is facing developers in this area. There are several potential developers in the south-west, but it would appear that funding is difficult. Unless something is done by way of Government bank assurance a lot of these developments will not get off the ground. There is a great need for caravan parks of up to 300 bays in the south-west and some development in this area is necessary for this forthcoming holiday period. I would like to hear from the appropriate

Minister just what is proposed in this regard and whether or not this problem that is coming headlong into conflict with the local governments in the area, with the Public Health Department, and a number of other people is to be attended to. Something needs to be done in a hurry.

Mr BLAIKIE: I appreciate the comments of the member for Warren and I agree that funding for the tourist industry is of real importance and is an area to which the Government should give real attention. Private entrepreneurs have difficulty in obtaining funds to establish caravan parks.

Although my area has a number of caravan parks I can say for a large part of the year they are certainly not filled and the owners are faced with tremendous problems in balancing their budgets. While there is a traditional summer period when the number of users is high the types of investments required are becoming prohibitive.

I believe we must take a realistic look at the entire question of caravan parks and camping areas. We need to adopt different policies and the concept of regulations that we have needs to be reviewed and modified so as to include a far greater degree of flexibility. This is necessary for the people investing in these ventures to get started and also to provide a different type and range of accommodation for the people who are going to use them.

One of the things Parliaments get carried away with is ensuring the community has the best facilities. God help us if we decide that caravan parks and camping areas are going to be Parmelia-type facilities. How can a private entrepreneur meet that standard, let alone the customer pay? The regulations that exist at present need to be modified and brought up to date. This has been a hobby horse of mine and when the member for Victoria Park was Minister he helped me with the problems I had with a certain over-zealous officer of his department whose job was to inspect caravan parks. It is probably a good thing he was a reasonable Minister.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member should confine his remarks to the item of "Salaries, Wages and Allowances".

Mr BLAIKIE: Yes. It is an area about which I have real concern. We have rangers who are funded, and we have beach inspectors who are funded, as well as departmental officers who are funded. The problem in my area is not a lack of caravan parks, but a lack of facilities for the scores of young people who congregate every weekend to surf.

I come back to the regulations. No facilities are provided to accommodate these young people. They can go to a motel, a hotel, or a caravan park, but all any young person with a surf board on top of his car desires is some place off the road where he can stay. So the regulations definitely need amending. With the opening of the Eyre Highway we will have many thousands of people coming from the Eastern States. I agree with the comments of the member for Warren; that is, that there is need for a more realistic approach by the Government to funding by the private entrepreneur.

Mr SKIDMORE: I realise that some members have taken a certain amount of liberty, but I will stick to the item. I direct the Minister's attention to research for which one manager and two research officers are provided. This provision is totally inadequate. Recently I towed a caravan from the north of New South Wales, through Victoria and South Australia, and I stayed in some 17 or 18 caravan parks. As a consequence I am not too wrapped in the standard of caravan parks in Western Australia. Some are out of this world when it comes to facilities. The one at Margaret River is an example. When that is completely full, if a person is in a hurry to go to the toilet he may as well take to the bush otherwise he will end up in a two-day queue.

The point I am making is that the research officers available are not sufficient to do the research work in the Eastern States which is necessary to improve our own caravan parks. If we modernise our own parks, maybe we will attract some people to stay longer in Western Australia. Of the seven caravan parks I stayed in on my return from the Eastern States, only one was fit for a lengthy stay and that was the one at Windy Harbour where there were no facilities, which was a better situation than the caravan parks which had inadequate facilities. The caravan parks are an absolute disaster.

My "bitch" is on the research side because the provision for research is totally inadequate. We are missing out on tourism so I appeal to the Minister to treble the money provided for research. He could cut down in some other area and in doing so he would be benefiting the tourist industry. I will speak later on another item of funding.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Item No. 6, Mr Chairman.

Mr P. V. JONES: I would like to know when I can speak.

The CHAIRMAN: If the Minister wishes to speak prior to item 6, let him please speak.

Mr P. V. JONES: I will refrain from referring

to caravan parks until we are on item No. 6. The remarks of the member for Swan refer largely to item No. 4. The fact that we are requiring an increase in facilities reflects great credit on the Department of Tourism. Indeed, when the member for Swan referred to the need for increased promotion and education—

Mr Skidmore: No. I referred to the necessity for research into what is required.

Mr P. V. JONES: Fair enough. A considerable increase is made under item No. 4 and of that amount some will go to research.

Mr Skidmore: I am not talking about the glossy brochures. I can get them at any place.

Mr P. V. JONES: I accept the point made. I still say that the fact that more research and facilities are necessary reflects considerable credit on the department. I accept that the honourable member is referring to research into quality more than quantity.

Mr Skidmore: Yes.

Mr P. V. JONES: We need to be aware of what happens in the Eastern States and I will certainly draw the Minister's attention to the remarks of the member for Swan.

*Item No. 6: Grants and Advances for Tourist Facilities, \$392 000—*

Mr H. D. EVANS: Firstly, it may be proper to express appreciation of what the department has done. Its achievement is fairly considerable. However, when we consider the Budget and the fact that the item has been reduced by something like \$83 000, this is not a good reflection on the Government. This will not provide the facilities which the member for Vasse, the member for Swan, and I agree are inadequate. Yet the Government is cutting back on expenditure. This is hardly to the credit of the Government.

We must bear in mind that a tremendous amount of voluntary work is done in the various tourist bureaus throughout the State. There have been some major achievements in the establishment of museums and so on, all on a voluntary basis.

The tourist industry in New Zealand, Tasmania, various parts of America, and Switzerland is a highly developed science and we have not got even close to it. Certainly we do not have the numbers or the potential from which to draw tourists. However, with the proper procedural and managerial levels we can achieve a more effective and businesslike approach than the one we have at present.

I read somewhere that in New Zealand one tourist equals 50 sheep in the economy, and this is

not a bad standard to adopt. I know that in local areas tourists are frequently viewed as individuals passing through from whom—to use the colloquial phrase—a quick buck can be made; but that is not good enough. Adequate and sound facilities must be a prerequisite.

In some towns those who are closely involved in the tourist industry—the chemist, the garage proprietor, and so on—take a day off during the week, but remain on duty at the weekend to cater for tourists. This is the attitude which must be developed in the community.

Facilities of all kinds are required, not just accommodation in caravan parks. As the member for Vasse rightly said, we should not concentrate on expensive accommodation outside the range of the ordinary family holidaymaker. Certainly there will be need for the *Parmelia* standard, but that type of accommodation is required by the minority. The full span of accommodation must be available. In areas which have a relatively short peak period, some form of Government assistance should be available.

I censure the Government on its reduction to \$392 000 for assistance to tourism by way of grants and advances. Last year the grant was \$475 000 of which only \$468 889 was spent. I do not know how there was a surplus because I know of a number of tourist bodies which would have been very happy to have access to some of that money. Some of them need it urgently. I would like to hear the response of the Minister on this item and hear his reason for the reduction in the amount provided.

Mr SKIDMORE: I will take the opportunity to reply to the comments of the Minister. When I was referring to promotion I was not dealing with glossy brochures and so on. When I was in Adelaide I did not indicate that I was from Western Australia and so I was inundated with advertising material concerning the best caravan parks and so on. Unfortunately the information in the glossy brochures did not prove to be correct.

One of the areas of concern is the Eyre Highway, which is used by several hundreds of caravans a week, especially during the holiday period. Places like Eucla, Cocklebidy, and so on with their motels are not interested in caravan travellers. There may as well not be a caravan park at Cocklebidy, for all the facilities it provides. Very few caravan parks provide power or even toilet facilities. More importantly, those motels are not interested in providing caravan park facilities. They are interested only in filling their motels. As a consequence the caravanner has to find somewhere to stay and in increasing

numbers caravaners are using rest areas on the Eyre Highway. They are a great success, but they will become fouled, dirty, and littered with rubbish because no facilities other than a few small bins for the disposal of rubbish are available. There are no toilet facilities. I do not know what the concept of rest areas was when they were established by the MRD. Perhaps they were just to enable people to have a rest for three or four hours. However, they are being used by thousands of people for overnight stays, and nothing is done to clean the areas in the daytime. They will become littered, as were the old water tank areas which used to be covered by a shed and under which many people parked overnight. They became the repository for bottles, cans, and all kinds of rubbish. Just name it, and it would be there.

I believe the rest areas should be upgraded. Some form of toilet should be provided, although it will have to be almost indestructible. Perhaps a facility made of two-inch thick concrete would be suitable.

A type of earth closet had been installed, which could be easily moved around. It would need a bulldozer to get rid of the rubbish littering the area at the present time. I know these areas are cleaned up from time to time by the department, but it cannot expect two men going around emptying bins into a three or four-ton truck to do the job efficiently. There is no reason why an earth closet cannot be installed for disposal of rubbish. If no facility is provided, we will never get rid of it. It is time something was done about the matter.

Past Madura, getting out onto the plain, if one wants to go to the toilet one has a long walk because the salt bushes are only two feet high, so one has to go over the horizon.

There is a great need for further development of the rest areas if we are to encourage tourists to come here. The item has been cut down to \$392 000. Had it been increased by that amount it would be just about approaching the amount necessary for this industry. The Government should grab hold of the matter, instead of messing around with such a poor allocation for tourist facilities. Tourism is new to this State, but we should give funds to the people who want to develop the industry.

Mr P. V. JONES: The provision of litter bins and rest places along Eyre Highway does not come under this item because the administration of the Eyre Highway does not rest with the Department of Tourism. I will certainly pass on the comments of the member for Swan to the

Main Roads Department and the Minister for Tourism. The responsibility of the Minister for Tourism as far as Eyre Highway is concerned is not necessarily funding; it is to extend a welcome to the State. In the opinion of the member for Swan it is an unsatisfactory welcome to the State when people who travel on that highway find the conditions he mentioned.

The comments in relation to caravan parks have been along the line that the Government is the only body or instrumentality associated with caravan parks. We are providing funding to assist other people to establish caravan parks.

Mr H. D. Evans: You are not. Under the DID, tourism is not eligible.

Mr P. V. JONES: Local government has a role in providing caravan parks, which has not been mentioned. There is also the private caravan park operator. The member for Vasse mentioned that we have regulations which in many instances militate against the establishment by private operators of caravan parks which are not akin to five-star hotels. We do not want that kind of facility in every case. Some members may have had experience of caravan parks in the United States, as I have, and be aware that there is a whole range of different types of caravan parks.

The regulations are the responsibility of the Minister for Health and they are reviewed from time to time. A review of the caravan park regulations is in progress at the present time, and one or two local authorities which are well visited by tourists have been asked to comment on them in order to try to find a more practical application and a more sensible approach to the regulations. To some extent we have been over-concerned about what might result if a caravan is parked the wrong way or if there are inadequate facilities. In many instances this has led to the provision of facilities which are more extensive than is necessary and to unreasonable rental for an overnight stay.

The amount in item 6 is the figure considered by the Government to be adequate in this particular area, when equated with the funding provided in other parts of the Budget to assist the capital side of tourist development. We are talking only about facilities.

Additional tourist facilities will be provided by the National Parks Authority from its funding. Other instrumentalities will also provide facilities. This is considered by the Government in relationship to the total tourist budget and to the work being done by other instrumentalities in this financial year. Tourism is a total package and the increase has been provided in the item to which

reference was made earlier, rather than in this particular item.

**Mr SKIDMORE:** I note that the Public Works Department is concerned with rest areas. I was making the point that either the Public Works Department or the tourist industry must accept responsibility to develop the rest areas which are becoming caravan parks without any facilities.

**Mr P. V. Jones:** It is the tourist industry that suffers.

**Mr SKIDMORE:** At some places there is a water tank, but I understand all the water tanks on the plain are empty at the moment.

There seems to be a narrow view that if we provide a developer with money the money should be well spent. I am critical of some of the developments taking place in caravan parks with money provided by the Government when it has no idea what facilities are being provided. The old concept of backing a caravan into a parking lot, unhitching it, and putting the car alongside it, is gone. That old method is totally inadequate, it is wasteful of space, and it does not lead to convenience to the facilities provided. In the modern caravan park there is a drive-on pad. One drives straight into the caravan park, and when one is ready to leave one drives straight out. The caravan is parked over a sludge trap which is in the concrete slab. It is almost impossible to do that when backing a caravan in. If one adopts the policy of having one's wife giving the directions, one might as well stay home.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The honourable member will confine himself to item No. 6, Grants and Advances.

**Mr SKIDMORE:** I am speaking about the grants needed to provide facilities in caravan parks. To my mind, money that has been granted in the past has not been spent in the right direction. I want to make it clear that we have a responsibility out on the Eyre Highway. Either the Public Works Department or the tourist industry should provide the facilities and turn these areas into caravan parks.

**Mr H. D. EVANS:** The explanation provided by the Minister was hopelessly inadequate and completely misleading. The item under discussion relates to grants and advances for tourist facilities, not only to caravan parks. A wide range of facilities is required in the tourist industry and the amount has been pruned back by \$83 000. In an endeavour to justify the Government's hopelessly inadequate policy in this regard, the Minister referred to other forms of funding and cited the National Parks Authority as a source through which tourist facilities would be provided.

The National Parks Authority will be hard-pressed to maintain its previous spending, let alone maintain tourist facilities on its budget.

**Mr P. V. Jones:** What kind of facilities are you talking about now?

**Mr H. D. EVANS:** All kinds of facilities. How many tourist bureaus in this State are endeavouring to develop the tourist industry within their own area? Many of them do a fine job with funds raised locally. Funding is provided by the Government but it is not sufficient. The Government cuts back on this item at a time when the tourist industry should be developed, particularly following the sealing of the Eyre Highway. This is the time when the industry needs all the assistance it can get. Why cut back on this particular item? It is a rotten policy on the part of the Government to cut back at this particular time. The suggestion that there is funding in other areas is not borne out by reference to the National Parks Authority. The Minister cannot direct attention to any other area of funding in the Budget. The policy of the Government is a failure in this item.

**Mr P. V. Jones:** Are you suggesting no-one else provides caravan parks? I was referring to caravan parks, of course.

**Mr H. D. EVANS:** That is all the Minister can talk about. What about the other facilities which will be affected by the lack of funds?

**Mr P. V. Jones:** In the main, the National Parks Authority provides facilities other than caravan parks.

**Mr H. D. EVANS:** The National Parks Authority will be confronted with development and it will not have additional funds to enable it to meet its obligations. In a monetary sense it will have funds of the order that it has received previously, so the Government is not living up to the requirements in this regard. Tourism is an important industry which is developing, and it will be vital to many areas of this State. It is being neglected by the Government. The Budget items cannot be explained away by the excuses the Minister has given up to this stage.

**Vote put and passed.**

**The CHAIRMAN:** Before we proceed to division 35, I must say very forcefully that the debate on the last item dealing with tourism strayed far from the item. I will not allow that to happen. When I call the part, that is the time for general debate to take place. If we have debate on the separate items we will get nowhere.

**Vote: Conservation and Environment, \$1 676 000—**



*Item No. 4: Field Projects, \$790 000—*

Mr H. D. EVANS: It is pleasing to note the allocation has been increased from \$665 000 to \$790 000. As the vote deals with conservation and the environment, there are several matters I will take the opportunity to raise now.

The first matter to which I refer is in connection with System 6, which is the overall examination of the coastal plain extending along the west coast. This is a highly important area and deserves special consideration. The response I received to a question I asked today was most enlightening from only one point of view; namely, the evasiveness on the part of the Minister. My question was directed to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment and was as follows—

- (1) Has a report been received on System 6, which embraces the west coast of this State?
- (2) (a) If "Yes", will the Minister table a copy of the recommendations;  
(b) if "No" to (1), when is the report expected to be completed?

The answer is a classic of evasion. It states—

- (1) No.

Therefore, the report has not been received. The answer continues—

- (2) Answered by (1).
- (3) As soon as possible.

What sort of answer is that? Does the Minister not know what is going on in his department? Does he not know exactly what stage one of the most important reports relating to conservation in this State has reached? I do not suppose there could have been a greater affront to this Parliament than an answer of that type, and I take the Minister to task for it.

Does the Minister know how far the examination with regard to System 6 has proceeded? Does he know whether the sum total of submissions have been received? If so, how many submissions have been received? Has there been a start on the evaluation of these submissions? Does the Minister intend to recommend further public discussion of the matter and if so, will he accept recommendations from any public body which seeks to have a say in the compilation of the overall policy? The affront to this Chamber cannot be underrated; the Minister's answer was a classic of evasion.

Mr P. V. JONES: I am sure the twinkle in the honourable member's eye reflects the fact that it is he who does not know what is going on. He asked me whether I knew what was going on in

my department. Is the member for Warren not aware it is not my department and has not been since the 10th March this year? The answer I gave was on behalf of the Minister in another place. Certainly, I will be happy to approach the Minister with the list of questions asked by the member for Warren. However, I would certainly not presume to pursue that matter further, and speak on behalf of a Minister and a department for which I am no longer responsible.

Mr H. D. EVANS: The point is taken that the Minister is representing the Minister in another place, but if he has accepted that responsibility, he should know what he is talking about. He should at least have a working knowledge of what is going on in the Government. Who is running the place?

Mr Bertram: It is a one-man-band Cabinet.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Nobody seems to know what is going on. I do not know whether there is any point in proceeding with my final query; namely, what is involved under the term "field projects"? What is the increased allocation to be used for? There is some reference in the Budget papers to this matter but it is not clear precisely to what use the funding will be put.

Mr P. V. Jones: What was the date of the System 6 question?

Mr H. D. EVANS: It was today, the 19th October. A number of important issues could arise from the field of conservation and the environment in the near future, and I should like my final question answered. Will this allocation be used to provide environmental impact statements? Is it proposed, for example, that System 6 will be the subject of such a statement? Perhaps the Minister can answer this question, or is he going to fall back on the fact that he is representing his colleague in another place?

Mr P. V. Jones: Probably.

Mr H. D. EVANS: If that is the case, the Minister at least should have briefed himself sufficiently to enable him to answer queries in respect of items in the Budget with which he has been entrusted.

Mr Laurance: Rubbish!

Mr H. D. EVANS: I should like to know what projects will be funded under item No. 4.

Mr GRILL: Since 1973 under the auspices of the then Minister for Health (Mr Davies) the Department of Conservation and the Environment has been financing the Goldfields Dust Abatement Committee on a dollar-for-dollar basis, in conjunction with the Shire of Boulder, the Town of Kalgoorlie, and Western Mining

Corporation for the control of dust in the goldfields area. Much of the dust comes from the slime dumps on the outskirts of Boulder. The committee has had singular success in developing a new and complete method of controlling dust from the slime dumps.

To give members some idea of the relevance of that success, I indicate that some years ago, the cost of controlling dust at Broken Hill was something like \$2 000 an acre. Recently in Johannesburg it was announced they were going to control their dust problem by picking up the slime dumps and carting them away at a cost of \$50 million.

With the help of the CSIRO, a method has been devised in the goldfields for controlling this dust menace at a very cheap rate—something like \$500 an acre at current costs, and even that amount could be reduced. With the contribution being made by the department at the moment, it would appear that even with the particularly cheap method which has been devised, the actual time which would be taken to get rid of the dust menace would be something like 30 years. The amount of money being provided by the department is in the vicinity of only some \$13 500.

Because of the relevance of the problem, and partly because of the good work done by the committee, an extra \$5 000 has been allocated in the last two financial years. Notwithstanding that fact, to stabilise the dumps in the area at the present rate would take something like 20 to 30 years. To my thinking, this seems rather an unacceptable period of time.

Now this new process has been found, the Government should be prepared in conjunction with Western Mining Corporation—I do not think we can call on the shires to contribute much more money—to greatly upgrade the amount of money allocated to the committee for this purpose. As the initial amounts to be contributed to this work were set out by the Government, and as the contributions by the shire, the town, and WMC were governed by the amount the Government was prepared to contribute, I now ask the Minister whether the department is prepared, firstly, to increase the amount of money it allocates to the committee, and, secondly, to negotiate with WMC to upgrade substantially its contribution. Western Mining Corporation controls nearly all the dumps from which the dust hazards emanates.

Mr P. V. JONES: I will ascertain from the Minister the precise situation in regard to System 6. The question referred to the report. As the

honourable member would be aware, we have been in the process of receiving submissions, which currently are being considered, following which there will be published the recommendations by the System 6 committee. This will follow the normal pattern which has been established with the other systems of this State. We have still not yet reached that stage. If in fact the report to which the question referred means the final report—the report of the EPA to the Government—as has already been indicated it will not be ready until 1978, or some time later.

However, if in fact the honourable member refers to the report of the System 6 committee—the recommendations it makes to the EPA, as distinct from the EPA recommendations to the Government—my understanding is that the original timetable laid down still obtains; namely, it will be available at the end of 1977, or early 1978. However, I will ascertain the exact status of that report, and inform the honourable member.

I will also ensure the honourable member receives a full list of projects covered by item No. 4. Very few new field projects have been added, but there are some. As the honourable member would recall, last year I produced a complete list, with the funding for each particular field project, for the member for Morley. Some new initiatives were taken and new projects started last year, the most commendable being the Cockburn Sound project. Probably the largest single item from the amount of \$790 000 would be for the Cockburn Sound project.

However, there are other ongoing studies such as the bauxite study, the Darling Range study, the woodchip study, and the salinity study, all of which would receive a major part of the allocation provided for under item No. 4. I will ask the Minister to prepare a full list for the honourable member so that the individual amounts are amplified. The point I am making on the Minister's behalf is that the major ongoing projects will receive the greatest part of the \$790 000.

In regard to the goldfields dust abatement project, I am sure the member for Yilgarn-Dundas will agree it has been one of the most successful projects undertaken. I certainly was not aware we had reached a stage where the funding was of such a critical nature. Indeed, I believed we had started to wind down the work of the committee and there was a gradual withdrawal, leaving the company and, probably, the local authority, to finish this work.

However, the honourable member has made it quite clear there is a need for the maintenance or

an increase of funding, particularly as it is tied on a matching grant basis to the local authority and WMC, and I will bring this to the Minister's attention to see if the funding cannot be reviewed; I will have the Minister advise the honourable member directly.

**Vote put and passed.**

**Part 6: Minister for Works and Housing—**

**MR T. H. JONES (Collie)** [9.30 p.m.]: Earlier in the year I drew the Minister's attention to the condition of the Public Works Department building in Collie and I was assured some action would be taken. However, I notice no provision has been made in the Estimates for this work.

The Minister would know from his visit to the town that the building is in a deplorable state of repair; it is an old weatherboard building entirely different from the Miners' Institute building next door to it. The officers are working in a very cramped space and I would have thought some provision would be made to improve this situation.

The other matter I wish to raise is in respect of housing. As I mentioned in my speech to the Address-in-Reply, I am hoping for an upgrading of State Housing Commission homes in Western Australia. The Minister was in Collie recently and he would know that initially it was one of the biggest State Housing Commission areas in the State. Little maintenance is being done on the houses; roofs are rusting; fences are falling down and many houses are in need of a coat of paint. If something is not done soon the State Housing Commission homes will become slums.

The problem of upgrading these homes is really applicable to the entire State and the Minister must start to tackle the problem. Rents are increasing but in the main all these houses remain in a deplorable condition and I would like to know when money will be allocated to this area.

**MR SODEMAN (Pilbara)** [9.33 p.m.]: I want to comment on the aspect of housing which throughout the State increasingly is becoming a problem, particularly with the economic situation in which the nation is at present. This problem is manifested far more in the northern area of the State.

A rule of thumb cost differential in building houses is something like 150 per cent on metropolitan costs in Carnarvon; 200 per cent in the Pilbara; and something like 250 per cent in Kununurra. Until now the method of allocating funds has been on a ratio basis of applicants throughout the State. Needless to say this creates a degree of hardship.

It is an unfair method of allocation in respect of

areas such as the north where there is such a high cost loading. In other words, for every dollar allocated to the north we get something like 50c in return in an actual housing unit. There are a number of recommendations I would like to put forward for consideration.

I would like to see an overall assessment made of genuine applicants in my electorate. There is a lot of conjecture about the tenants in caravan parks and I would be the first to admit the caravan parks in the Pilbara have reached saturation point, which is not a good thing.

I will never be seen to be fostering permanency in caravan parks but unfortunately it is an alternative we must resort to when there is a shortage of housing. In making this assessment I would request that the tenants of the caravan parks be called on individually by members of the commission and all the applicants for State housing reassessed in order to ascertain how many represent a genuine percentage of those requiring housing in the Pilbara. We should then relate that information to the number of houses we have been allocated in the 1977-78 year to see just how realistic the shortfall is.

What we are after is a parity in residences constructed, not the number of dollars allocated. I would go one step further and say we should have a biased allocation in country areas. I realise some members in the Chamber will disagree with me.

**Mr Pearce:** You should not have biased votes in country areas.

**Mr SODEMAN:** We are not talking about that now and I will be prepared to debate that matter with the honourable member at another time. People in the remote areas of the State do not have the normal family structure to fall back on; they do not have grandparents, parents or relatives available to help them. Consequently, people who do not have the opportunity to get into a State house are unable to find suitable alternatives such as are available in the metropolitan area. Those waiting for a house in the metropolitan area can obtain other accommodation at a higher rental as an interim measure and until such time as their application is filled. In the north we do not have that alternative. So there are many good reasons for the allocation in the residential situation being biased towards the country.

Another point I put forward for consideration is that when applicants from the metropolitan area travel north, they put in approximately a six-month qualifying period before they become eligible for the allocation of a home. This is a matter of tremendous frustration and friction

because most people in the north do not understand there is a flow-on set of circumstances where an applicant's time is cumulative. A person can stay in the metropolitan area for a couple of years, travel to the north and go to the top of the waiting list when people in the north have been waiting 18 months or more. They have been waiting under conditions which are more adverse than those suffered by people who are living in the metropolitan area.

Many people travel to the north without first assessing where they are going. Within three or six months they decide an area is not their piece of cake and they leave. This happens to a lot of State Housing Commission tenants who receive homes on arrival. Often they go back to where they came from. If this situation were corrected it would help stabilise the administration of the commission, alleviating the problem of misinterpretation that people waiting under adverse conditions suffer with the allocation of a home to a person soon after his arrival in the north.

All of these recommendations cannot come to pass unless there is a greater infusion of funds. The State Housing Commission has a number of avenues available to it to obtain funds. There are no such avenues in the State that could produce the tremendous influx of funds needed to meet the State's requirements. We have to fall back on the Federal Government and its allocations through its various channels from time to time.

It is disappointing to see our allocation from the Australian Loan Council has not been increased. In 1976-77 it was nil and in 1977-78 there is a projection of nil funds coming from the General Loan Fund allocation.

There is no need for me to stress to the Minister and his officers that we have to continue to push the Federal Government for additional funds. On looking at the trust fund figures put forward in the Budget, there was a tremendous infusion of funds in 1974-75 to the extent of \$28 million; in 1975-76 and in 1976-77 there has been a back flow of funds to the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement fund. We obtained money through that avenue at low interest rates and it has to be paid back over a period of 53 years. There has been a flow back of funds to meet that commitment.

Other than the State Housing Commission residential supply of funding there are a number of other avenues which I want to mention quickly. One such source is the special building supply funds which are channelled through State building societies from the Federal Government.

This is low interest rate funding for individuals wanting to build domestic residences. It is a great idea but unfortunately once again there is a shortfall and this does not allow that scheme to meet the demand in the area.

Another avenue is the Industrial and Commercial Employees' Housing Authority. This is another great idea but unfortunately the allocation in 1976-77 was only \$400 000 and there is no increase for 1977-78; the figure again is listed as \$400 000. This is a tremendous innovation in respect of assisting people to decentralise and go into developing regions such as the north of the State.

Once again I want to emphasise the importance of making available more funds through this channel. The individual most affected and who is left out of these categories is the one who operates by himself or with perhaps just one other; that is, a single proprietor or partnership operation where he is the proprietor and employee. He does not qualify for housing funding. The Industrial and Commercial Employees' Housing Authority specifically is for employees while the man I speak of is classed as an employer.

So, if a person goes to the north to start a business in the legal profession, as a doctor, in a service trade or whatever, he could be slightly outside the criteria for State Housing Commission allocation. He does not fall into the category of special building society funds or the Industrial and Commercial Employees' Housing Authority moneys. Consequently he is left on a limb; he is in a situation where he has invested a lot of capital in establishing himself and he cannot afford to buy a house at the same time.

These are some of the specific problem areas of housing in the Pilbara. All of these have been emphasised at a housing industry conference recently conducted in Karratha and co-ordinated by our regional administrator. I am sure a lot will flow from the conference.

In conclusion I would acknowledge that this is not a criticism of the State Housing Commission or the Government. I point out that I am aware of the willingness of the Minister and the general manager of the commission to identify, reassess, and come to grips with the problems. I look forward to a number of policy changes within the next 12 months that would keep pace with the needs of a developing region that has higher costs than the metropolitan area.

In initiating such changes benefits will ensue not only to the waiting applicants, as a result of their being satisfactorily housed, but also to the State Housing Commission regional officers who

work under tremendous pressures. They become frustrated daily when unable to meet the requirements of the people. On that note I put forward the suggestion that consideration be given to upgrading the status of the regional officers so that they are paid a slightly higher salary in excess of their present standing to encourage them to stay a little longer than is normal and become better informed on the problems of the area. With the upgrading of status they would take more interest in the community, and provide a better service.

**MR DAVIES** (Victoria Park) [9.46 p.m.]: The recent increases in rents sent a shockwave throughout the community, and it is still being felt in my office in Victoria Park. At that time I asked the Minister whether State Housing Commission tenants had been advised in writing of the increases in weekly rents, and how many had yet to be contacted, and what was the cause of the delay. The Minister replied that all tenants, with the exception of single unit pensioners, had been advised. He said that as all single unit pensioners have a common income, and are on a rebated rent of \$7.60 per week, the need for advice did not arise. However, that was not the case. I was receiving complaints from pensioners—some of whom were on rebates—who had not been advised of the new rent. In one block, the tenants had been advised by the rent man that their rents were going up.

One man who rang me was most agitated. He was not on a rebate, but perhaps he will now be eligible for a rebate. I thought it was unusual that he should be told of his increase by the rent man, but on the very next day another man rang me to say that his rent had gone up to \$32 per week, which I thought was excessive for the type of accommodation he had. Apparently there was a breakdown in communications which caused distress to some people, particularly those in the low income category.

In the Carlisle area of my electorate there are some homes which were previously McNess houses, but they were taken over by the State Housing Commission and they no longer exist in the category for which they were previously provided. Some of those homes must be 50 years old. They are very pokey, and when they were first built the concept may have been good. However, with the passing of time it has become apparent that the concept has now more or less become substandard. I think it is intended to pull down some of the older buildings and replace them.

The rents for those former McNess homes are

apparently in line with the single bedroom kitchen-lounge type of accommodation, but I believe the rent is quite excessive. I am sorry I do not have the actual figures with me, but I believe the rents have increased by 150 per cent since August, 1975. The increase was quite dramatic.

I would like the Minister to ask his officers to look into this matter to see whether they are overpriced. I know that one-bedroomed flats are bringing \$25 per week on the private market.

**Mr O'Connor**: I will be happy to ask an officer to look into it. One of the problems is that prior to 1974 that type of accommodation had not had a rent increase for a period of 26 years.

**Mr DAVIES**: Where the flat increase has been applied there must be some unfair rentals. As the Minister has said, in some cases the rents had not been increased for some years, but some unfair rates could be applying.

I have seen these places from the outside, and I have been invited inside. I have told the tenants that I was sure the Minister would look into their cases to see whether or not the assessments were fair.

This brings me to the problem faced by those people who feel they are being overcharged. I am aware that the State Housing Commission is always prepared to listen to any complaint, but I find that the follow-up action is lacking considerably. I recall the case of a widow who could not afford to pay the bookkeeping fee, and in her case she was told that she would have to pay only 50c per week, instead of \$1, and the balance would be added to her bill which she would have to pay eventually. That is not a sympathetic approach.

For some reason or other some houses have not been properly maintained. They might have had poor tenants in them who have allowed the houses to become run down. There should be some avenue whereby people who feel they are charged unfairly should be able to appeal.

The district office of the State Housing Commission could not have been placed in a better suburb than Victoria Park, but I do believe it should have been placed in a more decentralised situation. It has been placed almost within semaphore distance of its headquarters. I realise the district office was placed in Victoria Park before the present Minister took over, but I do not know that it would have been a ministerial decision. I believe it would have been better placed in the Gosnells-Armadale area. It was not really a good exercise in decentralisation.

I ask the Minister to look into those three matters I have raised. I have not had any further

information with regard to the rent increase notices. I ask the Minister to look into the rents charged for the former McNess cottages, and to state whether there is an avenue available for appeal by a person who feels his rent assessment is unfair.

**MR O'CONNOR** (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Housing) [9.55 p.m.]: I will reply briefly to the questions which have been raised. The member for Collie referred to the Public Works Department building homes in Collie. However, we have only a certain sum of money available, and members are aware that funds have been on the light side. I cannot give an undertaking that we will be able to complete the buildings he requires in the Collie area.

He also mentioned the need to upgrade some of the State Housing Commission homes in Western Australia, and he referred to the fact that little maintenance had been done on many houses. During last year, and this year, we have entered into a fairly heavy programme of maintenance on State Housing Commission homes. We have realised that a tremendous amount of work is required to bring them up to standard. Some houses have not had proper stoves or hot water systems.

Last year we provided something like \$7 million, and this year we will provide \$9 million for maintenance. The State Housing Commission has in the vicinity of 23 000 homes in Western Australia, which means that a sum of \$1 500 will be available for maintenance on each home. I am sure members will soon observe the benefits from the spending of this money; it is something I will want to see.

The member for Pilbara referred to the waiting time for houses in the Pilbara. We realise that members in the northern areas are at a disadvantage because of the higher costs of goods and commodities. Housing is one of those commodities. We have a problem in trying to keep up with the requirements throughout Western Australia.

It is difficult to select a particular area and give it priority. The waiting lists in the metropolitan area are longer than the waiting lists for the country areas. However, I appreciate the point made by the member for Pilbara and I will endeavour to do whatever I can to assist. The member will be interested to know that under the terms of the last State Housing Commission agreement with the Federal Government we have been allowed much more flexibility than has been available in the past, and that could allow housing funds to be extended to areas such as the Pilbara.

I understand the difficulties associated with northern areas and we will do what we can in connection with that matter.

The member for Victoria Park commented on the advice in writing of rent increases. I saw a copy of one of the letters which had been sent out to the State Housing Commission tenants, which included details of what the tenants should do to apply for rebates. If some of those letters did not reach their destinations, I regret that. It may have taken some time to get all the notices out, but I was assured they were sent out.

With regard to the former McNess homes, I will take up the point with the Housing Commission, and I will reply to the honourable member regarding the rents charged. I thank members for their comments.

**Vote: Public Works and Buildings, \$43 087 990—put and passed.**

**Vote: State Housing Commission, \$10—**

*Item No. 1: Salaries, Wages, and Allowances, \$7 037 000—*

**Mr SODEMAN:** In view of the higher costs in the Pilbara, and in view of the additional salaries, wages, and allowances the commission must therefore incur in administering an area such as that, I would like to acknowledge the fact that in the recent rent increases parity of charges was maintained for rentals in the Pilbara. For the first time in the history of the State, this was achieved during the last three years of this Government, and it has been continued. It is very noteworthy and the Government should be congratulated on it.

The Minister mentioned there were longer waiting periods for State housing in the metropolitan area. I acknowledge that. I have the schedule of allocation, dates reached and waiting time. The point I make is that in places such as Bunbury, Merredin, and Geraldton, the waiting time is much shorter for the various categories of housing than it is in Port Hedland, Karratha, and so on. Areas such as Bunbury, Merredin, and Geraldton have all the alternative avenues of accommodation available to them. They have the family situation where relatives can obtain interim accommodation, which does not apply in the Pilbara. Although I note the Minister's comments and agree it is a State-wide problem, I still feel there is a considerable case for reassessment and a change of policy, perhaps along the lines I mentioned earlier.

**Vote put and passed.**

**Part 7: Minister for Labour and Industry, Consumer Affairs and Immigration—**

**MR TONKIN (Morley)** [10.03 p.m.]: I am pleased to see the Minister is in his seat. Some time ago, on behalf of the Opposition, I made a comment with respect to a 7-point clean-up plan for swimming pool constructors. The Minister was reported in the newspaper at that time as saying it was similar to a plan the Government was considering. I pose some questions to the Minister. Was he correctly reported? Is the plan similar to a plan the Government was considering? And will we see some action on this matter shortly?

This is not a matter we can put off over and over again because every summer we find people losing their savings as a result of the bankruptcy of swimming pool constructors. The Government came up with a plan for licensing swimming pool constructors and investigating their financial capacity and technical competence.

I see no reason why a trust fund or insurance scheme cannot be instituted so that if any rectification had to be made and a company went bankrupt, there would be funds to cover it. This has been done elsewhere and I am dismayed at the lack of action by the Government in a simple area.

It is not beyond the wit of Governments to do something about the matter. The Government cannot escape responsibility because it has a majority in both Houses and it should be possible for it to change the law to protect people.

Some months ago the Opposition made a statement with respect to industrial relations, and we want to reiterate that we do not believe confrontation is the way to manage industrial relations.

There is bound to be friction between employers and employees. In some senses they are opposed to one another, but in other senses they are complementary to one another. If a firm does not make money the employee cannot be paid his wages. If the employer does not look after the employee he cannot expect loyalty from him.

We know that companies exist to maximise profits. I was shocked some years ago when Mr McNeill—who I think is the managing director of BHP, but at any rate he is certainly a bigwig in that company—said companies did not have a social responsibility but were there only to maximise profits. I cannot accept that. But if in fact that is what companies are for, we must expect employees to copy them. In other words, if companies exist to make as much money as they can, we cannot blame employees if they are apt pupils and copy the same tactics, saying, "We will screw as much as we can out of the employer."

**Mr Bertram:** Is that not part of the competitive society?

**Mr TONKIN:** Yes it is, and I believe one of the greatest features of man is his ability to co-operate with other people. There have been built up in the world great co-operative groups of people, and even in this State, with its competitive nature, we still have a great deal of co-operation. Ninety-nine per cent of the people obey the law and are prepared to co-operate for the good of the majority as they see it. This is a result of the educational system and a consequence of being part of society.

It is possible for people to learn selfishness and greed but it is also possible for them to learn co-operation. I remember, as the headmaster of a country school where a quarter of the children were Aborigines, that in grade 1 the six-year-old Aboriginal children played with the white children and there was no colour bar at all. As they progressed through school they took on more and more the racial prejudices of their elders, until in grades 6 and 7 they would not play with one another so much, and in high school there would be a definite demarcation. That was an instance of people learning racial prejudice and bigotry. So it is nonsense to say human nature is such and such, as though it is fixed.

I suspect even the least mature of us in this Chamber are acting differently tonight from the way we would have acted 30 or 40 years ago when we were very much younger. People are capable of modifying their behaviour and learning from one another, and I believe it is possible for us to learn to co-operate with one another and to get rid of confrontation. But we will not do that if one side says, "We are here to maximise profits and do not care what happens to society." Those people cannot expect employees to be any different. We should be attempting to co-operate with one another.

On behalf of the Opposition, I have made the statement that we are opposed to the life appointment of officials of trade unions. I asked a question of the Minister in relation to this matter and he did not answer it. He merely quoted the Act to me. I do not know whether he was in a hurry or whether one of his officers misread the question. I did not ask him what the Act said; I asked what was the Government's policy, and all I got was a quotation of provisions inserted in the Industrial Arbitration Act last year. I am well aware of them and have read them several times.

I want to know what is the Government's policy. Does it believe union officials should be elected for life? It is all very well to say the Act

says there should be elections at least every four years, and then to say the committee of management of a union can apply to the Industrial Commission to have that rule changed. We had a situation recently where a member of a union was told by the Industrial Commission when he objected to a rule that he had no standing. If a member of a trade union does not have standing and has no vital interest in a union rule, who has? No-one. It was an extraordinary decision by the Industrial Commission to say a member of a union has no standing when he is applying for the setting aside of a rule providing for the appointment for life of an official.

I do not think anybody should be elected for life. The history of government—no matter which kind of government—is that Governments very often do things which are in the interests of their own self-aggrandisement and not necessarily in the interests of the body they are supposed to be governing. We think the Government should come out with a statement on this matter. What would be the situation if we were elected for life? Would we be willing to pass through this Parliament a law providing that members of Parliament were elected for life? I hope not; I think that would be a shocking thing to do. We should be prepared to say we believe in democracy and we believe a person in a job of such importance should be prepared to face his electors. I regret that the Minister did not answer the question. I asked for Government policy and it was not given.

With respect to workers' compensation, we see more delay. The Minister said he was concerned at the long delays and indicated he has asked the chairman of the board to use his powers under the Workers' Compensation Act to delegate some cases to the local court. The chairman has that power but has apparently refused to use it. To my knowledge, the Minister has not done anything since.

What is needed is legislative change. It is all very well to say an inquiry into the Workers' Compensation Act is in progress, but the world does not stop just because an inquiry into the Workers' Compensation Act is in progress. It is quite valid for a Government to say, "It is true we are undertaking an inquiry into the Workers' Compensation Act and will investigate the whole matter, but in the meantime we will alter this section because it is unconscionable, unjust, and unacceptable that people should have to wait for nine months before they can get to the Workers' Compensation Board."

How are those people supposed to exist in those nine months? Many of them have open and shut cases and their employers know they will get the

entitlement when they appear before the board. Some insurance companies are quite unjustly taking advantage of the nine months' delay to refuse to pay claims to people who will obviously get them eventually. We want action now.

The Parliament is in session; the Government has a majority in both Houses. There is no reason why legislation could not be introduced next week and be passed in the next couple of weeks to provide relief. I do not think any reasonable man would accept the excuse, "We are looking at the Act, therefore we will not do anything while we wait." That is ridiculous. If the Government were looking at an Act relating to fire brigades and the city were burning down, it would not say, "We will do nothing about it."

We are not seeking a big change to the Act; we are merely asking for something temporary to get rid of the backlog. It is fatuous for the Minister to say the list is shorter than in other States. What has that to do with it? I thought we are supposed to be part of a Federation. Why do we always have to say, "Victoria is just as bad we are, so we will continue to be as bad"? That is untenable to us.

We are not here to legislate for the workers in other States. I believe it is hypocritical to say other States are as bad as Western Australia and, therefore, we will not improve our situation, and then argue in favour of a Federal system. The whole idea of a Federal system is that a particular State can go its own way if it so wishes within the confines of the Constitution. To say other States have long waiting lists has nothing to do with the matter. If other States are dilatory in their responsibility towards workers and are allowing employees to suffer unnecessarily, does that mean to say it is all right for us to be the same?

I can remember that when I was a boy I used to say to my mother, "But he did it", and she used to say, "What has that to do with it? Because he did it, that does not mean that you also have a right to do it". That is undeniably sound logic.

I will not say that I do not care if every other State has a long list, because I do care; but I do say that has nothing to do with this Parliament. We have not been given a mandate to legislate for the employees in other States. However, we do have a mandate to legislate in respect of this State, and if members have a conscience they will ensure the Workers' Compensation Act is changed.

This could be done by a small technical amendment which could be produced in only a week or so, and it would assist the position. In the meantime the Act could continue as it is and be



altered in a major way next year. If necessary a temporary amendment to clear the backlog could be drawn up in line with the decision of the inquiry.

These are matters in respect of which I believe it is vital that the Government should take action. I am not suggesting these are the only matters of concern; I suppose I could mention many other things in this area, which is one of the most vital, delicate, and important areas of government. However, the ones I have raised are matters upon which we believe the Government should act quickly, with diligence, and with a sense of urgency.

**MR SKIDMORE (Swan)** [10.18 p.m.]: I wish to support the member for Morley in respect of the issues he has covered quite adequately, and to expand upon the matter of workers' compensation and the effect it has on the lives of working people in Western Australia. I can recall that on many occasions I have risen in this place and said it is time the Government took a long look at the whole question of workers' compensation.

I believe the problem associated with workers' compensation is that it seems to be the lot of the worker to carry the burden because it is required of him to prove that he has been injured at work, after which the Act says he will receive certain payments and perhaps certain fixed sums in settlement of his claim. That is what the Act does at the moment, and that is all the Government seems to think it should do. The Government does not seem to be concerned with the rehabilitation of the worker.

I know many specialists in the field of workers' compensation have expressed to the Government the opinion I have expressed on many occasions: that there is a desperate need for rehabilitation of injured workers to enable them to return to the work force. At present workers who are in need of rehabilitation in the main receive a notice from the insurance companies telling them that at the end of 21 days their payments will cease because they are fit for light duties.

To me that is a tragedy because here we have a worker who, through no fault of his own, has been injured at his place of employment. It might be unpalatable to the Minister, but it could be that the worker was injured as a result of the negligence of the employer, and under common law he would be able to claim unspecified damages. However, if he is confined to the Workers' Compensation Act he receives absolutely nothing with which to rehabilitate himself.

He is thrown into an impossible situation in

which he must join the other 28 000 or 29 000 unemployed workers in Western Australia; and because he has an injury he is immediately placed at a disadvantage. Therefore, this whole matter requires a great deal of thought and I am very disappointed to find it appears the Government of this State has made no effort to do so.

The matters that have been raised are valid ones, and the Government should consider the rehabilitation of workers under the Act. It would not require any amendment to the Act for the board to move into this area. All that is required is that the Government take the initiative to provide facilities for the rehabilitation of workers.

When I speak of the rehabilitation of workers I am not reflecting upon the medical attention they receive. However, the medical profession can cure a worker's body as best it can, provide him with a surgical corset for his bad back, or provide him with artificial limbs. But after that there is a need to find employment for that worker. He must be retrained, and this is an area which has been sadly neglected by Governments over many years.

When we consider the vital question of workers receiving justice from the Workers' Compensation Board, certainly there is a desperate need to have additional sittings of the board, or to enable cases to be heard in another court. I would like the Minister to bear with me while I outline to him some problems involved in his suggestion that the board should farm out some of its work to the District Court.

It is not possible for the judiciary to consider in a cold, analytical way the matter of an injury and to decide what compensation a worker shall receive, because in all compensation cases there is a degree of the human element. We cannot just ignore the human being who is standing there and who has had his whole life destroyed and allow a magistrate to say to him in a District Court atmosphere, "Sorry, Charlie Brown, you can have only so much." This is just not on. The board has established an expertise in workers' compensation cases over many years. Workers' compensation should not be calculated in an analytical way, establishing just what the worker is entitled to receive under common law. He has a right to receive compensation for work-caused injuries.

My understanding is that the board is funded from outside sources, so I cannot understand why the Government does not give the nod to the chairman who I understand desperately wants to establish another board. In other words, he is seeking to appoint another magistrate, workers' representative and employers' representative to form another board. It is this formula which has

produced some very good decisions from the Workers' Compensation Board, decisions which have stood the test of time and have never been challenged over many decades.

It is very difficult for an inexperienced person to evaluate exactly what proportion of, say, \$37 000 a worker should receive as a lump sum for an injured back. The worker might be prepared to take a punt and accept a lesser amount than that to which he is entitled. However, in fairness to the worker, the employer, and the insurance company such a decision needs the expertise of an experienced group of people accustomed to assessing such entitlements.

We desperately need a second board to clear up the backlog of cases. As it will not cost very much more money, I cannot understand the Government's hesitancy. The board is some six months behind, but that is only a drop in the bucket—

Mr Tonkin: It is eight to nine months behind.

Mr SKIDMORE: In one respect, I cannot agree with the member for Morley. He says we should set up the new board on a temporary basis to pick up the backlog. I believe there will be a continuing need, and it should not be done on a temporary basis.

Mr Tonkin: I agree, but what I was saying was that it could be established on a temporary basis to pick up the backlog until a more permanent arrangement was reached.

Mr SKIDMORE: I do not want to see these matters being farmed out to the District Court; I believe the expertise of another board, on a continuing basis, is what is required.

Additionally, we urgently need the entry of the board into the field of rehabilitation, and the Act empowers it to enter this field. Why does the Government not say to the Workers' Compensation Board, "You have the power under the Act. We will need to fund you more because of your entry into rehabilitation and we will do so. Now accept the responsibility"? It seems a very simple proposition, but not a darn thing is done for the worker. The Government is happy to give him \$x and send him out the door. I appeal in all sincerity to the Minister to examine this question.

I turn now to the matter of industrial confrontation, conciliation and arbitration, union bashing, or whatever handle one likes to put on it. The whole industrial scene in Australia is causing me great concern. The dispute in the power industry in Victoria is only one example where glaring anomalies have crept into wage rates. Window cleaners in Victoria receive only 10c a week less than qualified fitters who have spent

five years learning their trade. I do not decry window cleaners, but this is a laughable situation. How has it been possible for window cleaners to creep up the salary scale until they are receiving nearly the same amount as qualified fitters? It is beyond me.

Yet when the Latrobe Valley workers went before the full bench of the Federal Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, and requested more money they were told that their application was outside wage indexation guidelines. How in the name of fortune have window cleaners managed to receive increases outside the guidelines over a few, short seven years?

The same problem exists in our State Industrial Commission, where workers are being disadvantaged because their relativity with other industries is going out the window. The Government must realise that if the workers are not paid a reasonable and equitable wage, based upon their capacity to earn throughout industry, industrial unrest will be the result. How can the Government expect a satisfied work force when it denies the workers the fruits of their labour?

Members opposite talk about the decline in productivity, yet if they went into the field they would find that nine times out of 10 the workers were dissatisfied with the return they were receiving for their labours. Why should a worker produce the maximum effort his skills and training enable him to produce when he is not receiving a fair and just wage?

It seems that we are hooked on wage indexation. Whether or not the Government likes it, that is the problem; it will not be cured by the attitude adopted by this Government and other Governments, and it will not be cured by the introduction of penal clauses. If a worker does not receive wage justice, he will go out and fight. The worker will not be brow-beaten by the Government.

It is time the Government sat down and talked with the workers. I know the Minister for Labour and Industry has said on many occasions that such discussion does take place. However, in the next breath the Government promptly undoes what good work it has done. The case involving the Fire Brigades' Board was a classic example. The board determined the work-value assessment of the workers under the award, and said the workers were entitled to an increase; the Industrial Commission approved the increase. Then, the Government went in and said, "No, that is not a fair crack of the whip." Of course, the Government quite rightly lost the appeal; it had no right to win it.

Mr O'Neil: They had a right to appeal.

Mr SKIDMORE: Of course they had. I do not deny that. They quite rightly lost the appeal because it was based on the value of the employees of the Fire Brigades' Board.

I do not wish to carry on much further. I have covered the main features with which I am concerned. I shall certainly be looking at the Bureau of Consumer Affairs and Division 38 in some detail when we come to them.

I know I have made this plea probably three times already in my speech, but I again ask the Minister to set up the new board and thus give the workers an opportunity to get some justice. All that is required is to give the chairman the permission to proceed with the necessary appointments. It seems to me to be a simple thing to achieve and it would give some relief to the people who have been injured and who have lost their work for no other reason than having suffered an accident at work which must have been caused by the employer or the accident would not have taken place.

MR GRAYDEN (South Perth—Minister for Labour and Industry) [10.32 p.m.]: I shall briefly cover the points which have been made. Firstly, the member for Morley raised the question of the so-called seven-point plan which he put forward in respect of swimming pools. I can assure him that the officers of the department have been looking into this question for quite some time before the member for Morley made his statement. The plan they have come up with is almost identical with the one put forward by the member for Morley.

I have also had talks with the Builders' Registration Board and recently I raised the subject at a national conference of builders' licensing and registration authorities with a view to the Builders' Registration Board in this State possibly taking over this question and administering it.

The member for Morley talked about co-operation with the unions rather than confrontation. I assure him that this Government will leave absolutely no stone unturned to achieve the sort of relationships of which he has spoken. We are doing everything possible to achieve this goal and any assistance we can get we will welcome.

The provision for life appointments to union executive positions was put into the Industrial Arbitration Act at the request of unions. Many small unions in the State—some with only 16 members—experience the greatest difficulty in filling the positions of union office bearers. It has been pointed out that it would be infinitely

preferable in these circumstances if the moderate unions could make an application to the Industrial Commission and, if it deems fit, the commission can waive the requirement for an election every four years.

The member for Morley spoke about a decision which a union member attempted to appeal against but which was rejected by the Industrial Commission. The case is currently before the Industrial Appeals Court and we must await its outcome to see whether the legislation will do precisely what is intended. I assure the member for Morley that this provision was put into the Act at the request of unions. It is something in which we certainly believe. We think that if a union is a moderate one and it has difficulty in getting these officers, it should in certain circumstances have a right to apply to the Industrial Commission for the commission to waive the requirement for an election at least every four years.

Mr Skidmore: You would not apply the same thinking to a militant union?

Mr GRAYDEN: Definitely not, but it is up to the commission, not us. The commission will grant an application only if the union is performing according to its rules. If it goes beyond those rules or outside its award it is up to the commission to decide and it will take all these things into consideration.

The member for Morley said that the backlog of workers' compensation cases is eight months and in some cases nine months. I think it is only eight months but the time varies. In some States it is two years, but I agree with the member for Morley that eight months is not good enough. The member for Swan has suggested duplicating the Workers' Compensation Board but I wish to assure him that other methods are being considered at the moment by Mr Clarkson of the Faculty of Law.

As the member for Morley would know, we asked the Trades and Labor Council to put forward a submission in respect of amendments it thought ought to be made to the Workers' Compensation Act. I asked for that submission urgently so that we might do something this session, but it was some months before it was made available to me. Similarly, I asked the Confederation of Western Australian Industry for a submission and it was equally tardy.

Mr Tonkin: You cannot expect them to be too quick if they are going to examine the whole Act. We are not talking about an examination of the whole Act but about a temporary measure to catch up with the backlog.

Mr GRAYDEN: I appreciate that point. We also asked the SGIO and Judge Mews, who is an authority on the subject, to provide submissions. Because they varied to such an extent we have appointed Mr Clarkson to have a look at them, to see whether he can come up with some common points, and finally to make a recommendation. In the meantime we have asked him to look at them with a view to giving us an interim report so that we might introduce legislation this session. I am rather disappointed that we did not receive it two weeks ago, but it was stressed to him that because there are quite a number of obvious amendments which would have the approval of all parties we could introduce legislation this session. At the moment we are trying to get an interim report from Mr Clarkson so that we might do that.

The member for Swan touched on the question of the rehabilitation of injured workers. We regard this as a most important issue. I think it is a couple of years since I instructed the Under-Secretary of the Department of Labour and Industry to obtain all possible information from other sources, particularly from South Australia, in respect of this matter because it is one thing that we are most anxious to push. I can assure the member that is being done at the moment.

The member for Swan also talked about farming out workers' compensation cases to magistrates. We asked the Workers' Compensation Board to do this in an attempt to reduce the backlog because there is provision in the Workers' Compensation Act for this to be done. Recently the member for Morley asked a question to find out how many cases have been farmed out. We were most anxious that the Workers' Compensation Board should sort out the sort of cut-and-dried cases which could be heard by magistrates, and there are many in that category.

Mr Skidmore: Not many at all.

Mr GRAYDEN: It would help to reduce the backlog because if they are in that category they can be farmed out. Quite often an individual who is injured may be in a remote area such as Derby, Wyndham, or Kalgoorlie. Does it not make much more sense for the case to be heard on the spot rather than bringing all the witnesses and everyone else to Perth? This is the type of thing to which I am referring.

Mr Skidmore: They are not the cases which come before the board for assessment. They are cut-and-dried cases.

Mr GRAYDEN: The final matter the member for Swan raised concerned wages and relativities. These are matters for the Industrial Commission

and therefore there is not much point in my going into them. He talked in rather disparaging terms about wage indexation, but I emphasise that currently the Commonwealth industrial commission is carrying out a most exhaustive study of the whole basis of wage indexation and it could well be that the Commonwealth commission will come up with a form of indexation based, for instance, on productivity, which would be acceptable to all. If indexation were granted under those circumstances the benefits would immediately flow on to everyone with the support of all sections of the community.

I think I have covered the main points raised by the member for Morley and the member for Swan.

**Vote: Labour and Industry, \$3 487 000—**

*Item No. 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances, \$2 734 000—*

Mr SKIDMORE: Earlier I said I would be dealing fairly extensively with this item because, as on every other occasion, I am unable to agree with the Minister. The department is not taking its responsibilities seriously in respect of industrial safety.

I would point out to the Minister that in 1977 there were five industrial inspectors and safety liaison officers, and today there are four. According to the member for Melville it is now down to three, so that is a loss of two in a very important field. Under industrial training there were 13 apprenticeship officers while this year there are 12.

To the Minister's credit there were 13 inspectors for construction safety in 1977 and there are 13 in 1978. However, we must remember what the Minister has told us about the many projects which will get off the ground and of the thousands of employees who will be required in the very near future for those projects as well as for the projects which will be expanded, so the Government tells us and the people. Therefore we should be increasing the number of construction safety inspectors, but it has remained at 13 for something like four or five years while the work force is increasing.

The other feature about the factories and shops estimates is that there has been a decrease in the number of clerks, typists and assistants from eight to six.

There has been a reduction of one inspector for the inspection of machinery from 35 in 1977 to 34 in 1978.

Other strange things have occurred. In 1977 there were seven vacant positions under

administration; three under construction safety; three under inspection of machinery; and one under weights and measures. That is a total of 14 vacancies which were never filled and do not appear in the 1978 Estimates. As under administration there were six vacant positions not required, it means that there has been a total loss of eight positions. It does not say whether they were inspectors or clerical assistants, but I have to assume they were inspectors.

There has certainly been a loss in other sections, but my biggest concern lies in the fact that although we are progressing, the number of officers appointed has not been increased. Are we to have more phones installed so that the workers can do what the Minister suggests all good workers should do? In other words, after a worker has fallen 20 feet down a lift well because it was not covered according to regulations, he then gets up with a broken leg and hobbles to a phone to inform the department that he has broken his leg. This was suggested to me as the means available to the worker. Or will the shop steward find the worker with a broken leg and tell the inspector?

What good is it when the worker is already injured? That is a case for workers' compensation and that is another subject on which I could dwell.

No concern is expressed. An occasional visit is made to a site by a safety construction inspector. I am not criticising inspectors; I want members to understand that clearly. It is physically impossible for 13 inspectors to do the work of 30 inspectors. The inspectors are capable men and want to get on with the job, but the Minister has 13 phones with someone waiting for one to ring and an accident to be reported.

I would have thought that prevention of accidents was the key to the question of high compensation premiums, but it appears the department is not interested, and certainly the Minister and the Government are not interested in that aspect. They are waiting for an accident to occur before making sure that the safety regulations are obeyed. This is the abysmal attitude the Government has to construction safety and safety in general, and I find it intolerable that every year on these Estimates I must raise this issue.

The Minister does not give any assurance that a conscious attempt will be made to improve the situation. Why the wastage of inspectors? It seems to me that it is time to increase the number of construction safety inspectors. Surely it is the job of a junior clerk to take a message over the telephone. The most junior person could record an

accident in that way. All it requires is a piece of paper and a biro.

When the inspectors do go out on the jobs they find there is far too much work for them to do their job properly.

I simply leave the subject at that. Sheer frustration makes me raise the subject time and time again in the hope that the Minister will get the message and make some conscious effort to overcome the problem.

Mr GRAYDEN: I will tell the member for Swan briefly that he has absolutely no worries with regard to the question of safety in industry. We have approximately 75 safety officers, and they do not sit around waiting for telephone calls. As far as I am concerned, in the interests of efficiency, I would not mind if they were all taking complaints over the phone but only on the basis that I have asked the trade unions on the jobs in question to report any situation if they are not satisfied with the safety measures. That has been put to the Trades and Labor Council and has been widely publicised. I would want to hear about any unsafe situation. In that event, an inspector would go to the site immediately and prosecution would follow. That is the most effective way to utilise the safety officers. A total of 75 officers are associated with this question of safety.

Mr SKIDMORE: The Minister has not answered my question. I have been receiving that type of platitude and facetious remark for some time. The Minister has said all a worker has to do is observe an unsafe working condition, get on the telephone, and action would be taken. I put it to the Minister that if a man went to his foreman and asked permission to ring the Department of Labour and Industry in order to report an unsafe working condition he would very soon be on skid row. He would be termed a trouble maker. A man in that situation, might not be sacked immediately, but reason would soon be found to sack him. A person in that situation would have access only to the phone in the construction office, otherwise he would have to book off the job and lose wages while he went to a public telephone in order to ring the department and request it to do its job. He would suffer financial loss as a consequence, and he would be a damned fool if he attempted to report the matter internally.

That sort of action is not protecting the worker; that is protecting the role of the Government which is supposed to be doing its job. The worker is asked to stop work, and place his job in jeopardy. The Minister has mentioned 75 inspectors, but I am talking about the 13 safety

construction inspectors. There is a total of 13 weights and measures inspectors and if they are deducted from the list of 75 that will leave a balance of 62 inspectors. I will not be told a person inspecting weights and measures, who would have the classification of a fitter, could be termed a safety officer. Those inspectors look at boilers and stationary engines.

Mr Sibson: That is industrial safety.

Mr SKIDMORE: I am talking about construction safety. It is possible that a factories and shops inspector, when inspecting building additions, could notice an unsafe condition and report it. I feel such an inspector would take that action, but that would be a rare occasion. Only about 17 out of the 75 inspectors are really available for construction safety.

Mr Grayden: The member is completely wrong. What about the Mines Department; it has inspectors.

Mr SKIDMORE: The Minister fails to understand I am talking about construction safety, not mining safety. I know there are mining safety officers because I worked in the mines for some time.

The member for Bunbury draws the same red herrings across the track, and refers to inspectors of machinery as safety inspectors. I am referring to construction safety. The large percentage of injuries suffered by workers in this State occur on construction sites.

Mr Sibson: How many inspectors would be necessary, in your opinion, for construction safety?

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): I suggest the member for Swan address his remarks to the Chair.

Mr SKIDMORE: In reply to the interjection, I do not know, but I suggest the department should put on another three and get them on the job. However, I cannot guarantee an additional three inspectors will be sufficient.

Mr Grayden: Those we already have are sufficient.

Mr SKIDMORE: Then why do so many accidents occur at industrial sites?

Mr Sibson: How do we compare with countries in other parts of the world?

Mr SKIDMORE: I will not use another country or another State as a qualifying factor. I base my point of view on local conditions. The member implies that if there are six deaths in Victoria, and only five deaths in Western Australia, we are doing a good job. I do not agree

that value should be placed on comparisons with other places.

Mr Sibson: The member for Swan uses similar figures all the time in this place.

Mr SKIDMORE: The *Hansard* record will show that I have not made a comparison of safety measures with any other country or State. Why does the member for Bunbury not be sensible and face up to the argument? He might know something about second-hand cars, but he knows nothing about construction safety.

I am sincere in my remarks and I believe the Government should accept its responsibility with regard to construction safety so that we can reduce the number of workers who are injured and who receive workers' compensation. The employers engaged in construction work will then be relieved of the high premiums they have to pay. I know of one person in the rigging industry who employs seven or eight workers and he is paying between \$6 500 and \$7 000 in compensation premiums each year. It is a high risk industry. However, that person has not seen an inspector on a certain site in a period of four days while his men were working on the site.

Mr Grayden: Have they a safety committee?

Mr SKIDMORE: That is probably run by the workers themselves.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Blaikie): I advise the member he has one minute remaining.

Mr SKIDMORE: I believe it is improper for the Government to present such an estimate on the basis that the Government is conscious of its responsibilities for safety. It is not good enough and the Government must show a greater consciousness of responsibility before I will be prepared to accept the Estimates in this form.

Vote put and passed.

Votes: Industrial Commission, \$503 000; Public Service Arbitration, \$90 000; State Insurance Office, \$10—put and passed.

Vote: Consumer Affairs Bureau, \$424 990—

Item No. 1: Salaries, Wages and Allowances, \$346 000—

Mr SKIDMORE: I indicated in my general preamble that I would raise a matter concerning a problem I found that exists in the Consumer Affairs Bureau. It concerns the lack of personnel to do a job demanded of the bureau.

I had occasion to take up the cudgels on behalf of a young man whose car was hit by another vehicle. The problem was that the vehicle that hit his was not insured. This young man's vehicle was

taken away for repair and it was after it had been repaired that the trouble started.

The vehicle that hit his belonged to a dealer and under the dealer's insurance, which covered the dealer and any vehicle that went on the road for testing, it was found that cover was provided only if the employee of the dealer accompanied the driver in the test car.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! You will recall that earlier in the evening I made it most explicit that in regard to item No. 1 members must direct their remarks only to that item. It is my judgement you are not doing that.

Mr SKIDMORE: I am referring to the technical officers and the need for them to look at cars which are panel-beaten, with high prices being charged.

The CHAIRMAN: If you are going to speak about technical officers you must relate your remarks to the allocation being made to these people.

Mr SKIDMORE: That is what I am doing. I am saying there were funds for three technical officers in 1976-77, with an amount of \$21 895. In 1977-78 the figure is \$29 700. It should be noted these are not full-time officers. The point I was making was that after I became involved on behalf of this young man I had to get a technical officer to assess the damages to the car.

At that stage I found myself in a difficult position because the person from the Consumer Affairs Bureau was not in fact a technical officer. He was most helpful as is the bureau. As it happened I found myself in the position of having to help this officer assess the damages. I needed to know whether the cross-beam had been replaced. With my limited knowledge I said it appeared to me that it had not been touched. However, the repairers had charged about \$150 for a new cross-beam. To his credit the officer said it did not appear to him as if it had been touched. The point I am making is that we should have at least one full-time technical officer.

Mr Grayden: We could not have technical officers to deal with everything.

Mr SKIDMORE: I disagree. If the bureau employed a technical officer he would probably be an automotive engineer with a salary of around \$17 000 or \$18 000 a year. There is no reason why he could not do some of the investigative work as well as assess damages.

I spent four hours trying to determine what work had been carried out and if we had had a fully-qualified technical officer he could have negotiated for us. The trouble with the Minister is

that he is always taking a simplistic way out rather than facing up to the argument.

Mr Grayden: Used-car yards make a good deal of use of the Consumer Affairs Bureau.

Mr SKIDMORE: In this instance the department was not the arbitrator, nor was the technical officer. I would be happy to discuss this matter with the Minister at the Consumer Affairs Bureau with the officers concerned to show that the bureau needs a full time technical officer.

Mr Sibson: Why haven't you spoken to the Minister about this before?

Mr SKIDMORE: The Minister has indicated that he is not prepared to listen to my lucid explanation. The Minister has suggested that it could not be done as he considers a technical officer could not fill a function in the Consumer Affairs Bureau. If it is considered that we would need several hundred technical officers to cover all the work necessary surely it is about time we had at least one permanent officer. It is of no use trying to find some reason for refusing to appoint a technical officer.

Mr Grayden: They draw from outside sources.

Mr SKIDMORE: When I wanted a technical officer one was not available. The father of the young man whose vehicle car was hit was on leave from his Sydney base. I should point out he was a member of the Air Force. I had to ring his Commanding Officer to obtain an extension of his recreation leave so that he could negotiate a settlement because he owned the vehicle. It was necessary for him to have his car repaired and take his family back to Sydney. He had been on five days' leave, four of which were involved in having the car repaired and organising what was to be paid. I managed to obtain an extra four days for him and finally arrived at a satisfactory solution by agreeing to an inspection by Lynas Motors.

I understand that was done the next day but at great inconvenience to the people concerned. I am sure the Minister also believes there is a need for a technical officer. He might not be occupied full time but he could certainly fill in his time on administrative duties. These officers are working themselves to the bone in looking after people. They should be given some relief so that they have technical advice available to them when it is needed.

**Vote put and passed.**

**Vote: Immigration, \$862 000—put and passed.**

**Part 8: Attorney-General—**

**Votes: Crown Law, \$9 965 000; Corporate Affairs Office, \$1 060 000; Office of Titles,**

**\$2 841 000; Public Trust Office, \$1 473 000—put and passed.**

**Part 9: Minister for Education—**

**MR DAVIES (Victoria Park) [11.12 p.m.]:** It is probably not a world-shattering matter I want to bring to the Minister's notice but it is an urgent matter. I refer to the infestation of jo-jo or onehunga in most of the sports ovals at schools in the metropolitan area. Like all members, I have recently attended several sports days at schools, and I find the ovals are becoming almost useless because the children cannot play on them either in bare feet or with shoes or football boots on, because if they fall over they experience an unpleasant sensation because of this prickly weed. I wrote to the Minister about it today.

**Mr P. V. Jones:** I received your letter today.

**Mr O'Neil:** If you manage to fix the ovals, come and have a look at my lawn.

**Mr DAVIES:** It has become rather serious because school ovals are becoming completely useless for the purpose for which they were put down. The Millen Primary School has had an infestation for several years. It had the oval sprayed several years ago by a private contractor at a cost of \$180. The school was unable to get any help from the department. However, the infestation is as bad as ever this year. It had the students bring mowers from home to cut paths through the oval which it was hoped would be free of jo-jo. The oval finished up looking like the stars and stripes with all the tracks where the events were taking place. The headmaster said the position had been looked into and it was found it would cost over \$200 to have the oval sprayed. The department had said it was not its responsibility. The headmaster had words with the Department of Agriculture, which said it could not use its equipment unless so directed by the Education Department.

**Mr Old:** We asked the Education Department to co-operate with us in a concerted effort to get rid of jo-jo in the ovals, and to the best of my knowledge some money was allocated for it by the Education Department. I will certainly look into it.

**Mr P. V. Jones:** It was the Agriculture Protection Board.

**Mr DAVIES:** It is a great nuisance in the metropolitan area and, like most members, I have spent some hours taking it out of my lawns.

**Mr O'Neil:** I have had my lawns sprayed every year for the past three years. It has to be done every year. The problem is that lawn mowing contractors move the seed.

**Mr DAVIES:** I am pleased that some thought has been given to it, because it is quite ridiculous for one school to pay to have the oval sprayed and find the departmental mowing contractors bringing in the seed from another school oval. It will require a concerted effort on behalf of the Education Department and the Department of Agriculture, and it also throws a responsibility on home owners.

**Mr Laurance:** Footwear carries it more often than the mowing contractors.

**Mr DAVIES:** That seems logical.

**Mr Old:** We wrote to every local authority this year asking them to co-operate in handling the chemical in small lots. The response has been very good. Most local authorities have undertaken to do it and we are trying to get control of it.

**Mr DAVIES:** The chemical was made available to ratepayers?

**Mr Old:** Yes.

**Mr DAVIES:** I missed out on that.

**Mr Old:** Most of the local authorities have indicated their willingness to assist.

**Mr DAVIES:** It could be an agricultural item, as it turns out, but the fact remains it is a serious matter for schools. The one I mentioned is a lovely oval. The parents spent a lot of money putting it down initially. After many years we got an adequate water supply and although it is very green it is unusable. The need to spray has become quite urgent because, according to a pamphlet I picked up at one of the nurseries, the middle of October is about the deadline for it—I have noticed the weed in my lawn is still green—so if the department wants to experiment let it experiment at Millen Primary School.

**MR PEARCE (Gosnells) [11.19 p.m.]:** I have seen in the Press during the last couple of days statements by the President of the Teachers' Union and what purported to be a reply by the Premier to a question I raised in the House a week or two ago about the underspending of \$7.5 million in recurrent education funding last year. This question was taken up by the President of the Teachers' Union and he made much the same points as I made.

At the same time as the union was pressing for the unemployed teacher pool to be taken up and used to make class sizes smaller and for other purposes, it was met with the response that no funds were available. The figures presented to Parliament demonstrate quite clearly that the funds were available. I thought the Premier made an unworthy response, if he was reported accurately in *The West Australian*, in maligning



the Teachers' Union by suggesting all it was concerned about was more money for itself. The Teachers' Union was one of the earliest unions to agree to indexation and not to seek wage rises outside indexation.

As far as I know, and I believe I am informed accurately, the union has sought no wage rises whatsoever. At one stage the union protested about a cut-back in the salary of temporary teachers when the department decided to cut their wages by some 20 per cent. The department fought very hard against giving the teachers affected by that decision the right of appeal to the tribunal. So certainly some of that money was obtained at the expense of relief teachers who go to schools when a teacher is sick or is participating in an in-service course or something of that nature.

In Tuesday's edition of *The West Australian* under the heading, "Court chides teachers", we find the following comments—

The Premier, Sir Charles Court, accused the Teachers' Union last night of campaigning for wage increases regardless of economic conditions or the need to get value for taxpayers' money.

The Teachers' Union has not campaigned for wage increases at all. What it was campaigning for was an effective utilisation of unspent education funds by employing more teachers. If the Treasurer believes that is an attempt to seek a wage rise, then I suggest he should keep out of debates on education. The article went on to say—

The union seemed to be obsessed with the idea that money could solve everything, he said.

Nobody is suggesting that money is the solution to every problem, but certainly solutions do not reside in having insufficient money. Money may not be the answer to everything, but lack of money certainly raises a whole series of questions. It ill-behoves the Treasurer to make foolish and ill-informed comments of that type.

The point I am discussing in regard to the education lobby—I suppose we might call it that—is not that more funds should be voted for education, but that the funds which were voted for education should be spent. In the circumstances the \$7.5 million is a very large sum of money.

The Treasurer said that there was an over-provision for wage increases. I suppose he means an over-provision for wages generally. So one of the reasons he felt that the department could not take up the unemployed teachers from last year

was that the Government had not spent some \$7 million made available for capital funds in the year it was made available.

I have argued before in this Chamber, and I will argue again, that the \$7 million carryover resulted in the end in a net loss of that \$7 million in capital funding.

Mr P. V. Jones: Can you prove that? How can you prove that is true?

Mr PEARCE: If the Minister had been in the Chamber when I raised this matter in the debate on the Loan Estimates, he would understand. I simply took the comments of the Treasurer in the second reading debate. I hope that the Chairman will forgive me for referring to something which is not before the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN: I am sure you will come back to the Bill very quickly.

Mr PEARCE: I will endeavour to return to it as soon as possible.

The CHAIRMAN: You should do more than endeavour.

Mr PEARCE: I am giving this information off the top of my head as I do not have the papers in front of me. I took the Treasurer's estimate of \$41.6 million in his speech on the Loan Estimates. That money is available for capital funding in education. I then subtracted from that amount the sum of money made available by the State as set out in the document attached to the Treasurer's speech, and the difference was the amount allocated in this year's Federal Budget. When we take those things together we see there was not a carryover of \$7 million from the previous year, if we take what was said in reply to me the last time I took this up. In that case the \$7 million not spent would have been added onto the \$14 million in this year's Budget. The Minister and the Treasurer have been very reluctant to add these figures together. I am sorry if it is a little confusing.

Mr P. V. Jones: You have certainly confused me. Why not keep to the Estimates?

Mr PEARCE: I am sorry, I was simply attempting to answer the Minister.

Several members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Gosnells.

Mr PEARCE: If the Minister would care to go through my speech in *Hansard* he will know what I said in this Chamber during the period he was not with us, and perhaps the whole matter will be made clearer.

The point I am making is that even if it were true that the \$7 million is not lost to the State

totally, it is still partially lost. Had the \$7 million been used in the year it was made available, a significantly greater number of classrooms would have been available in the State, and that would have made it possible to employ more teachers.

I have pointed out already that the Government has underspent in four or five different education areas of funding and this has meant a cut-back in employment for teachers. Money was allocated last year for extra classrooms, and that money has not been made available to be used. In this Chamber we have heard something about educational waste, but it seems to me that the worst example of this is when money which has been voted in this area is not spent. That is mismanagement.

Mr Sibson: You talk a lot of tripe about these things.

Mr PEARCE: I am pleased that the member for Bunbury can recognise my tripe. Perhaps we will hear a speech from him later rather than just these bald assertions. Perhaps he will spell out to us from the figures made available by the Treasurer just exactly what is wrong.

Mr Sibson: You have heard it explained three times.

Mr PEARCE: I have not had it explained to me. I have received sneering comments that the member for Gosnells does not understand these things and the Treasurer says that he will supply answers if the member for Gosnells will put his questions on the notice paper. The Treasurer is ignoring completely the fact that he and the Minister have not answered the last six questions we have asked them. I have done these additions, and they just do not give the answer that the Government claims.

The member for Murray took me to task in his campaign speech. During this Budget debate we have heard many such speeches from Government members who are seeking positions in the Cabinet. I congratulate all the members on their speeches.

I admitted to the member for Murray by way of interjection that one of my statements was incorrect and that there are some classes in the State where the teacher-pupil ratio is below the 1 : 23.3 level. I admitted I was incorrect, but of course, I was thinking in terms of class 1A and class 2 schools.

Mr Sibson: We have accepted your explanation. Let us move on to the next point.

Mr PEARCE: I have not quite finished. I have a few other points on this question.

Mr McIver: The Minister for Education should

watch his step; there is a budding apprentice in the Chamber.

Mr PEARCE: Class 3 schools in country areas are frequently very small, and very often they have mixed grade classes. We appreciate that education facilities must be available even in small country towns. I am well aware of the situation because I have asked questions in this Chamber about schools that have a total population of fewer than 10 pupils. However, this emphasises the point I was endeavouring to make about teacher pupil ratios. If there are very small class 3 and 4 schools scattered throughout country areas, it means that the ratio must be higher for schools in the metropolitan area.

The member for Murray could also have asked questions about class 4 schools and I would think that many of these schools would have a lower ratio than 1 : 23. This means that schools in the metropolitan area have a much higher teacher-pupil ratio and sometimes considerably above the acceptable ratio of 1 : 34. I know of some schools where there are 39, 40, and even more pupils in a class. I am sure the Minister knows about this also.

Some of the larger schools must have a higher teacher-student ratio to make the figures come out right in the end. I am not convinced that the allocation made for additional staffing for either primary or secondary schools has in fact done anything to alleviate the class size situation. My guess—and it can be a guess only—is that class sizes will be marginally larger next year than in the current year.

Mr MacKinnon: How many times have class sizes increased in the last five years?

Mr PEARCE: To my knowledge I believe this would have happened only during the current year. I imagine there will be a marginal increase this year and another increase next year.

Mr MacKinnon: You imagine!

Mr PEARCE: Obviously I cannot produce the figures for next year.

Mr Sibson: Of course you can.

Mr PEARCE: Can the member for Bunbury produce the figures for next year? The member for Bunbury is well known for his imaginative interjections in these debates, but expecting me to do a job which is probably beyond the capacity of the Education Department itself is a bit much.

Mr Sibson: The figures are available.

Mr PEARCE: They are not available to me.

Mr Sibson: Of course they are available—don't talk such rot!

Mr PEARCE: I wanted to make a point to the Minister about the staffing formula. The Minister will be aware that there is some dispute within the Education Department about the way in which staffing formulae are applied. One case in point is the situation in regard to teacher-librarians. Three or four years ago when teacher-librarians were appointed to primary schools to take charge of resources centres, they were not included in the staffing formula for primary schools. That is, a school was entitled to a certain number of teachers for classes and it could have one additional teacher to look after the library.

At a time when the staffing formula was made a little more generous an extra teacher was given to each school for supernumerary purposes. Those schools which had a resource centre for teacher-librarians had the teacher-librarian taken into the staffing formula, so the school was no better off overall. Those schools which have a resource centre for teacher-librarians ought to be able to count the teacher-librarian outside of the staffing formula.

It has been a matter of departmental policy for some years that secondary school teachers in the first year of teaching, that is those who come directly from a training institution, should only carry four-fifths of the teaching load. This is part of a series of recommendations which were made about the problems of effectively transferring teachers from a training situation into a teaching situation.

Schools were asked to give first-year teachers four-fifths of the normal teaching load. However, the staffing formula for schools which were given a large number of teachers who were directly out of college, received no benefit for the fact that some of the teachers were only four-fifths load teachers. I would ask the Minister to make a more generous allocation in the staffing formula to enable schools to implement the department's policy of having four-fifths of the teaching load given to teachers in their first year of teaching.

Those are the two points I would like to make in regard to staffing formula. I make one final point about unemployment. I would not like members to feel that teachers are the only section of the unemployed with which I am concerned. Obviously the unemployment situation is something which is of concern to all members. However, I believe next year there could be 300 to 400 unemployed teachers. This is a particular problem in the community. The taxpayer has paid a considerable sum of money to train teachers. People do not attend a tertiary institution for nothing. The community has paid a considerable sum to enable a person to become a teacher. A

similar situation is occurring in the legal profession and in some other fields. If jobs are not available for those teachers, not only are they unemployed at the time, which is bad for them, but the money which the community has contributed has been wasted in educating these people to such a level.

I want to canvass the unfortunate circumstances whereby larger numbers of people are admitted to teacher training institutions than the actual number which is required at the end of the training period. There is another side of the coin. The projection for future teacher training that I have seen reflects the over-reaction which has taken place. The cut-backs which have been made in the number of students admitted to training institutions will give a net result that by 1980 there will no longer be sufficient teachers. Instead of having an over-supply situation, we will be back to an under-supply situation which is not good for education in this State.

A degree of forward planning is necessary. The Government is responsible for forward planning and in consultation with the training institutions we should avoid the problem of an over-supply or under-supply of teachers.

Mr Sibson: That is a fact of life in almost every industry in the world.

Mr PEARCE: The member for Bunbury is great on facts of life. He wants to go to unemployed people and say, "It is a fact of life that you are unemployed." It is the job of the Government to make the facts of life more acceptable to the people. The Government must change the facts of life in order to ameliorate the situation. That is the sort of reactionary comment one has come to expect from the member for Bunbury. He says it is a fact of life and that is the answer to everything.

Mr Sibson: Perhaps you can spend the next few minutes telling us how you would solve the problem.

Mr PEARCE: Since the department already makes predictions about the population growth over a period of time, and hence the number of teachers that would be required in any particular situation, it ought to be possible at the same time to work out how many teachers are required and to ensure the necessary number of teachers are taken into the training institutions. If the member for Bunbury had been listening to that simple explanation, he may have been capable of understanding it. Since he was not listening to it maybe he will subsequently be informed by reading *Hansard*.

In conclusion I would like to make one final

remark. A couple of members made a comment on my previous speech on the Budget concerning education matters. They said the only thing I could do was praise the Government for its performance. I did say I was pleased the Government had not made the cuts that I had expected it would make. However, I did follow that up with some heavy and detailed criticism. I think those members who maintained I praised the Government, should have pointed out also the areas in which I was not prepared to give the Government any credit.

#### *Progress*

Progress reported and leave given to sit again, on motion by Mr P. V. Jones (Minister for Education).

### **ACTS AMENDMENT (CONSTITUTION) BILL**

#### *Council's Message*

**THE SPEAKER** (Mr Thompson): The Legislative Council acquaints the Legislative Assembly in reply to Message No. 33, that the "Acts Amendment (Constitution) Bill" has been laid aside due to the second reading not having been passed with the concurrence of an absolute majority of the whole number of members for the time being of the Council.

### **RURAL RECONSTRUCTION SCHEME ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

#### *Returned*

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

*House adjourned at 11.37 p.m.*

### **QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

#### **IMMIGRATION**

##### *Skilled Tradesmen*

1021. Mr TONKIN, to the Minister for Immigration:

What numbers in the various categories of skilled tradesmen have immigrated to the State from various overseas sources during each of the past five years hitherto during 1977?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

#### **Western Australia—Tradesmen Settler Arrivals 1972 to 30th June, 1977.**

	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1st January 1977 to 30th June 1977
<b>Building Trades—</b>						
Bicklayers.....	72	83	140	29	96	70
Carpenter/joiners.....	110	123	218	26	142	56
Plasterers.....	35	36	57	6	27	16
Tilers (wall and floor).....	"	"	"	7	16	15
Plumbers.....	51	55	87	17	70	30
Painters.....	95	79	149	1	37	20
Stonemasons.....	"	"	"	"	"	2
Flat glass tradesmen.....	"	"	"	"	1	1
<b>Furniture Trades—</b>						
Upholsterers.....	"	"	"	20	5	4
Cabinet makers.....	14	13	35	39	8	7
Polishers.....	"	"	"	7	"	"
Wood machinists.....	"	"	"	"	12	7
Chair maker.....	"	"	"	"	"	1

Western Australia—Tradesmen Settler Arrivals 1972 to 30th June, 1977. — *continued*

	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1st January 1977 to 30th June 1977
<b>Electrical Trades—</b>						
Electrical fitters/Armature winders.....	17	15	19	6	41	14
Electrical Mechanics .....	152	106	154	30	86	11
Tradesmen radio .....	..	..	..	..	3	3
Refrigeration mechanics.....	..	..	..	..	4	3
<b>Metal Engineering Trades—</b>						
Blacksmiths.....	6	3	3	1	1	..
Boilermakers.....	14	13	20	6	18	3
Moulders.....	3	3	2	2	6	1
Toolmakers/die makers.....	31	19	29	27	18	18
Machine tool setters.....	19	26	49	..	3	1
Fitters and turners .....	271	148	227	71	200	75
1st Class machinists.....	..	..	..	4	16	9
Coppersmiths .....	..	..	..	..	1	1
Sheet metal workers.....	..	..	..	6	21	16
Pattern makers.....	5	5	4	..	6	1
Welders (1st Class).....	70	52	95	8	28	12
Annealer and case hardener .....	..	1	..	..	..	..
Electroplater .....	..	..	..	..	1	..
<b>Automotive Trades—</b>						
Motor mechanics .....	96	70	118	36	119	44
Auto electricians.....	..	..	..	3	9	5
Panel beaters.....	..	..	..	5	13	2
Motor body builders .....	..	..	..	..	3	8
<b>Other Trades—</b>						
Sewing machine mechanics .....	..	..	..	..	1	..
Jewellery makers/repairers .....	..	..	..	..	..	..
Watch/Clock makers .....	..	..	..	..	1	..
Hairdressers.....	..	..	86	..	..	..
Miscellaneous.....	314	255	405	250	287	177
<b>Clothing—</b>						
Tailors .....	29	16	40	..	..	..
<b>Food—</b>						
Butchers/bakers .....	60	51	57	..	..	1
Pastry cooks .....	..	..	..	..	1	4
<b>Printing</b>						
Compositor/Printing workers.....	58	38	84	..	..	..

Source: Extract from "W.A. Occupations of Settler Arrivals by State of Intended Residence".

Compiled by the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.

It should be noted that the method of compilation of these statistics has changed twice during the period under review. In the majority of cases a 'nil' return reflects a change in statistical compilation, i.e. sheet metal workers arrivals during 1972-4 are included under 'Others—Miscellaneous'.

## ALCOHOL AND DRUG AUTHORITY

### *Medical Director*

1035. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Health:

Regarding question 981 of 1977 dealing with the medical director, Alcohol and Drug Authority, who will be making the personal approach from the authority to the director of addiction research unit, London?

Mr RIDGE replied:

The Agent-General in London.

## RAILWAYS

### *Freight*

1036. Mr COWAN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Are figures for profitability of bulk freight cartage by Westrail available separately from other freight carried by Westrail?
- (2) If "Yes", will the Minister quantify the profit/loss result on each type of freight?
- (2) Does an analysis of these figures reveal an imbalance of profitability in relation to the bulk freight of grain and/or fertilizer?
- (4) If the answer to (3) is "Yes", will the Minister explain why producers of grain whose product is carried by Westrail are required to pay a disproportionate percentage of Westrail costs?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) No. Only to a degree suitable for Westrail's internal usage in decision making.
- (2) to (4) Answered by (1).

1037 and 1038. *These questions were postponed.*

## OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

### *Legislation*

1039. Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

In view of the fact legislation was drawn up and ready to be introduced into Parliament prior to the last State elections for the purpose of controlling the use of off-road vehicles, will he now advise—

- (1) Does the Government intend to continue with this legislation?

- (2) If "Yes" when can it be expected to be introduced?
- (3) If not, why not?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

This question is almost identical with one previously asked by the member and which I answered on the 7th September, 1977.

The answers now are—

- (1) and (2) It is not intended to continue with the Bill which was introduced in 1975.
- (3) The drafting of new legislation is in progress and a Bill will be introduced as soon as is practicable.

1040 to 1043. *These questions were postponed.*

## PRE-PRIMARY CENTRES

### *Handicapped Children*

1044. Mr WILSON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What is the number of handicapped children at present enrolled at pre-primary centres?
- (2) What types of handicap do they represent?
- (3) When a handicapped child is admitted to a pre-primary centre will the child automatically go on to attend the school to which the pre-primary is attached?
- (4) What sort of support services are available to those pre-primary centres which accept a handicapped child and to what extent are such services made available?
- (5) What is the procedure involved when a parent wishes to enrol a handicapped child at a pre-primary centre?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) 56 in special schools, pre-primary centres, 51 in regular pre-primary centres. In addition there are many borderline cases identified during the pre-primary year.
- (2) Severe mental handicaps, mild mental retardation, partial sightedness and hearing impairment are the most common handicaps.
- (3) Yes, provided the child lives in the intake area of that school.
- (4) Referrals are made to Irrabena which makes special support services for the mentally handicapped freely available to parents and pre-primary teachers.

The Education Department guidance service assists in the placement of handicapped children in Year One Classes.

- (5) A parent who wishes to enrol a handicapped child at a pre-primary centre should discuss the placement with the principal of the local school and the pre-primary adviser for the area.

## POLICE ACT

### *Section 66(3)*

1045. Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

In the last ten years will he advise the number of persons fined in Western Australia under section 66 sub-clause (3) of the Police Act?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

Records of convictions under this category have only been kept since 1974 and since that time one person has been fined for this type of offence.

## CONSERVATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

### *System 6*

1046. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) Has a report been received on System 6, which embraces the west coast of this State?
- (2) (a) If "Yes", will the Minister table a copy of the recommendations;  
(b) if "No" to (1), when is the report expected to be completed?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) (a) Answered by (1).  
(b) As soon as possible.

## MEAT MARKETING

### *Government's Policy on Changes*

1047. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

In the light of the results of the recent referendum on meat marketing in this State in which the majority of growers indicated some change in the existing system, what action does the

Government propose to take, and what changes does it propose to effect?

Mr OLD replied:

I have arranged a meeting with representatives of producer organisations and the industry to discuss how better results may be obtained from the local and export markets and whether existing legislation may be used for this purpose.

## WATER SUPPLIES

### *Ord River Irrigation Scheme*

1048. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) (a) Has a survey been carried out to determine the price per tonne which would have been received for sugar grown on the Ord irrigation area to make sugar growing a viable industry; and  
(b) if so, what is the price required to break even?
- (2) What is the price per tonne which is currently being paid on world markets?
- (3) Has any approach been made to obtain a quota of Ord grown sugar to be sold on the Australian market, and if so, with what result?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) (a) and (b) A feasibility study was undertaken by consultants in 1976, based upon a mill output of 220 000 tonnes per annum, cane yields averaging 85 tonnes per hectare per annum for one plant crop and three ratoon crops. The total cost fob would be about \$229 per tonne, of which cash costs would constitute about \$145.

This figure is sensitive to cane yields and sugar content levels which are in the process of being evaluated on the Ord.

- (2) The present London spot price for raw sugar is \$A153 per tonne cif London. However, most sugar is sold on longterm contracts established in periods of high prices. Free market fluctuation in sugar has varied from £S12.25 to £S650 over the 10-year period ending 1974.

- (3) No direct approach has been made to obtain a quota of sugar from the Ord to be sold on the Australian market because it would be premature to do so until the pilot farm has demonstrated that a viable industry could be established. Close liaison is being maintained with those involved in the Queensland industry.

## MEAT MARKETING REFERENDUM

### *Voting by Sheep Producers*

1049. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) (a) What was the total number of votes cast by sheep producers in the recent meat marketing referendum;  
(b) of this total how many votes were declared invalid;  
(c) how many individual sheep producers voted?
- (2) (a) What was the total number of votes cast by beef producers in the recent meat marketing referendum;  
(b) of this total how many votes were declared invalid;  
(c) how many individual beef producers voted?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) (a) 9 621;  
(b) 133;  
(c) 7 591;
- (2) (a) 7 286;  
(b) 124;  
(c) 5 302.

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### *Administration Expenses*

1050. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Treasurer:

- (1) Adverting to the answer to my question 1011 of 1977, as the administration expenditure of the Agriculture Department for 1976-77, under Item No. 2 in Division 32 of the Consolidated Revenue Fund Estimates for 1977-78 appears to contain no new expenses which are not listed in the Consolidated Revenue Fund Estimates of 1976-77, under Item 2 of Division 36, will he now explain how the discrepancy occurs between the estimate in the 1976-77 Budget and the vote in the 1977-78 Budget on this item?

- (2) Will he also provide me with a detailed explanation of how Agriculture Department funds contained in some items of the 1976-77 Budget were redistributed in other items, including newly created items in the Consolidated Revenue Expenditures in the 1977-78 Budget?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

- (1) and (2) The management structure of the Department of Agriculture was changed by the establishment of a regional services division and an animal production division.

The regional services division was created to co-ordinate all advisory services in district offices and to provide a more efficient service to farms.

The animal production division was created to deal with all matters relating to animal husbandry.

The Estimates for 1977-78 were revised to conform with the new management structure and the following changes were made—

- (i) The vote for district offices was abolished and re-allocated as follows—

Fremantle, Midland and Kalgoorlie office expenses transferred to administration expenses.

Kununurra office expenses transferred to Kununurra region.

All other district office expenses transferred to regional services.

- (ii) The vote for dairying division was distributed between the following items—

Dairying and food technology, Plant production for expenses of Wokalup, Denmark, and Bramley Research Stations,

Animal production for expenses of dairy herd improvement scheme (grade herd testing).

- (iii) The vote for soils division was retitled resource management and expenses of Kununurra Experimental Station and Sugar Cane Experimental Farm transferred to Kununurra region.



- (iv) The vote for wheat and sheep division was re-allocated to plant production and animal production. The latter item covering expenses on sheep and wool.
- (v) The items for contributions under fruit-fly eradication, banana industry compensation, cattle industry compensation, Pilbara vermin control, vermin and weed control—Crown Lands were amalgamated into the new item contributions to agriculture trust fund.

The apparent increase in expenditure under item 2—administration—reflects the transfer to this item of the administrative expenses of the Fremantle, Midland, and Kalgoorlie offices previously included under the item, district offices.

### ROAD FUNDS

#### *Quota and Expenditure*

1051. Mr COWAN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What was the total of vehicle licence fees collected in Western Australia in 1975-76?
- (2) What was this State's quota of road expenditure from its own resources set by the Federal Government in 1975-76?
- (3) What was the total road expenditure, including matching requirements of Western Australian local authorities from their own resources in 1975-76?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) \$28 179 438.
- (2) \$33 500 000.
- (3) \$118 688 587.

### EDUCATION

#### *Slow Learning Children*

1052. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Has there recently been a change in policy, or is any change contemplated, regarding transferring of "slow learning" children from day activity schools to the Education Department's special schools?
- (2) If so, what is the nature of the change?
- (3) What criterion is used to assess the standard of children transferred?

- (4) (a) Was the Slow Learning Children's Group consulted in this regard; and
- (b) if so, through what channels?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) to (4) Not applicable.

### WATER SUPPLIES

#### *Jandakot Water Reserve Area*

1053. Mr TAYLOR, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) With respect to the Jandakot water reserve, has his department any knowledge of, or any association with, an aluminium tower approximately 80 feet tall recently constructed on a hillock on private property in Bowdemara Road, Jandakot?
- (2) If "Yes", was the owner of the property consulted?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) and (2) No.

### ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE

#### *Resale of Tickets by Scalpers*

1054. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

- (1) Is he or his department aware of the practice of "scalping" that is being perpetrated on Western Australians for Entertainment Centre tickets, specifically tickets for the John Denver Show, which were sold by the centre two weeks ago for \$9.50, being advertised in this week's *Sunday Times* for \$250?
- (2) What action does he propose to take to ensure this practise is discontinued?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) Yes. The advertisement has been noted by the Bureau of Counsumer Affairs on page 60 of the 16th October issue of *The Sunday Times*, classified section.
- (2) The offer of tickets, even at a grossly inflated price, is not illegal. Furthermore, a check this morning with the Entertainment Centre reveals that on Monday, the 17th October, there were still 1 600 left for sale for the John Denver Show. This morning, the 19th October, there are still 150 tickets for sale

## HEALTH

### *Kwinana Centre*

1055. Mr TAYLOR, to the Minister for Health:

With respect to his answer to question 1018 of 1977 regarding a community health and para-medical services centre at Kwinana:

- (1) Will capital provided by private medical practitioners be included in construction costs?
- (2) Will any portion of the proposed centre be leased or rented to private medical practitioners?
- (3) If "Yes"—
  - (a) will applications be invited from interested groups;
  - (b) what particular forms of medical and para-medical practices are expected to be included in the proposed centre?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) and (2) No.
- (3) Not applicable.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### RAILWAYS FREEZER FREIGHT

#### *Transfer to Road Transport*

1. Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Will he advise whether it is still intended to hand over Westrail freezer traffic to private road transport on the 31st October despite deputations and objections by small business proprietors throughout the State?
- (2) If "Yes" to (1), would he please state his reasons?
- (3) Does he not agree with the information supplied to him that this move will be a retrograde step to country business houses and country people?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question, the answer to which is as follows—

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Before any decision was made, the matter was thoroughly investigated and the response from the majority of users indicated they favoured the changeover.
- (3) No.

## MINES DEPARTMENT

### *Mr Crichton-Browne*

2. Mr MENSAROS (Minister for Mines): Yesterday, the member for Morley asked me question No. 1020, which reads as follows—

- (1) Was Mr Noel Crichton-Browne ever employed as a mining registrar at Marble Bar?
- (2) If not, in which capacity was he employed by the Mines Department?
- (3) If the answer to (1) is in the affirmative, what was the period of such employment?

My answer was as follows—

- (1) and (2) Yes.
- (3) From 5th May, 1968 to 4th November, 1970 inclusive.

In fact, part (3) should have read—

From 10th May, 1968 to 22nd January, 1970, inclusive.

## DRUG INQUIRY

### *Federal and State Agreement*

3. Mr DAVIES, to the Premier:

I am glad questions are late today because I was asked a question I could not answer and it gives me the opportunity to put it to the Premier.

Has the State Government reached any agreement with the Federal Government on the proposed drug inquiry?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

I know of no points which are outstanding between the Commonwealth and the State on this issue. We have indicated in all correspondence and in verbal discussions at the ministerial level that we are anxious to co-operate in this matter. My understanding is that any minor problems which might have arisen about interpretation, or terms of reference and the like, have been resolved. However, I will make doubly sure there is no technical hold-up, because it was our desire and intention and our publicly expressed commitment to co-operate.

## CHIROPRACTORS REGISTRATION BOARD

### *Registrar*

4. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

Is it a fact that the Registrar of the Chiropractors Registration Board has

resigned from his position? If so, what is the reason for his resignation, and when will a replacement be appointed?

Mr RIDGE replied:

I am not able to answer the question asked by the honourable member, and I request that it be placed on notice.

## MINING

### *Sackings and Closures*

#### 5. Dr TROY, to the Premier:

I apologise to the Premier for no-notice of the question, but I believe his general interest in the area will enable him to give an adequate reply.

Mr Tanabe who currently is leading a Japanese Government and business mission to Australia was reported in *The Australian Financial Review* of the 19th October, 1977 as saying—

Downward revisions in our production forecasts raise the spectre of major supply gluts.

Depending on production levels it may even prove impossible to maintain contracts with these mines if their economies turn conspicuously worse than that which prevails elsewhere in the world.

My question is as follows—

- (1) What does he see the statement as implying?
- (2) In view of the Western Australian economy being dominated by the mining industry, what economic measures will he take to prevent wholesale sackings and mine closures if the prediction of Mr Tanabe proves accurate?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

The member for Fremantle seems to be determined to cast gloom, despair, and despondency over the whole of our economy. I think he rather revelled in asking a question of this kind by trying to give it the worst possible angle. My answer is as follows—

- (1) and (2) I have not seen what Mr Tanabe is reported to have said in *The Australian Financial Review*. From what the honourable member read out to the House, Mr Tanabe said "if" certain things happened; I

am speaking now without any notice of the question, but that is my understanding of what the member for Fremantle said. Therefore, Mr Tanabe was only expressing something which has been said a dozen times throughout the world in respect of the steel industry, and something I have said myself, following the studies we have made in Japan.

It is a fact that the world steel industry is going through a period of recession and that when the steel industry is in recession it needs less ore and coal.

However, our liaison both with the companies and the steel industry of Japan is such that once the pattern is clear for the next year and the year after, we will be in a position to make an assessment of just what can and will be the position.

I also remind the honourable member, in case he is not aware of it, that if he goes to the Pilbara he will find there is a very clear understanding amongst the work force and the companies of the situation which exists; also, there is a very optimistic understanding of the tremendous number of construction projects which are in train.

For example, I instance the project to develop the concentrator at Tom Price which, it is anticipated, will require expenditure of some \$350 million. If the honourable member cared to visit Cape Lambert and Dampier he would find there are other projects in train involving the expenditure of further millions of dollars, although not as much as the concentrator project.

So, even if there are to be cut-backs in the world iron ore requirements, a substantial amount of work has been generated because of the negotiations carried out some time ago by this Government, and because of the programmes which have been put into train by the various mining companies. I can assure the honourable member that, not only is the Minister for

Industrial Development very closely in touch with the companies but also we are particularly sensitive about the importance of having a continuity of employment in these areas.

I take the optimistic view that we want the world steel industry to wind up, and therefore we will get the best of both worlds; not only

will we have some large construction projects under way but also we will have the prospect of supplying additional ore to the world market.

I believe I have covered the question asked by the member for Fremantle; certainly, I have answered that part of the question which related to Mr Tanabe's statements.