Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 11 September 1980

The SPEAKER (Mr Thompson) took the Chair at 11.00 a.m., and read prayers.

CHANGE OF NAMES REGULATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Hassell (Chief Secretary), and read a first time.

RURAL YOUTH MOVEMENT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Chief Secretary) [11.04 a.m.]: On behalf of the Minister for Education, I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill seeks to amend the Rural Youth Movement Act 1955-1974, in the following ways.

The first of these amendments would change the name of the council established under the Act from "The Council for the Advancement of the Rural Youth Movement" to the "Rural Youth Movement Council", the name by which it has in fact been known for several years. This title change will in no way affect the rights, powers, and corporate responsibilities of the body as described in the Act.

The second amendment will enable the council to alter its composition so as to be consistent with its role as an advisory body to an organisation of young people in a rapidly changing society.

It is proposed that the Rural Youth Movement Council shall have no fewer then 10 members and no more than 12, of whom three shall be representatives of the Rural Youth Federation and at least one shall be an adult adviser.

The remaining members of the council shall be appointed by the Minister from the community, and shall be persons having special interests and expertise in areas such as finance, development of youth, education, civic affairs, women's affairs, agriculture, local government, and the like.

The term of appointment for councillors shall be for a period of up to three years, and for retiring councillors shall be for a period of up to three years, and retiring councillors shall be eligible for reappointment.

Finally the Rural Youth Movement Council will be provided with the ability to appoint subcommittees of a regional or specific nature.

These changes will help provide a more effective service for young country people.

On behalf of the Minister for Education, I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Jamieson.

MURDOCH UNIVERSITY AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Chief Secretary) [11.08 a.m.]: On behalf of the Minister for Education, I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill to amend the Murdoch University Act is being proposed by the Government following a request from the senate of the university. The amendments fall into two categories; namely, those to section 12 of the Act dealing with membership of the Senate, and those to section 24 of the Act dealing with parking.

In general, the amendments to the membership of the senate increase the number of academic staff members, provide for representation of the non-academic staff, and specify for certain other categories of membership that the staff of the university are not eligible for consideration.

Hence in clause 3 of the Bill the following amendments are made to section 12 of the Act—

> In paragraph (d) of subsection (1) the number of academic staff to be elected to membership of the senate is increased from three to four. This brings the provision into line with that of the legislation relating to the university of Western Australia. A new paragraph (da) is added to subsection (1) to permit the election of one non-academic staff member to the senate, thus giving representation to that section of the staff.
>
> Paragraph (j) of subsection (1) is amended so that members of staff of the university and of any other tertiary institutions cannot be included among the three members co-opted by the senate.
>
> Paragraphs (a) and (b) of subsection (2) are amended so that members of the staff, both academic and other, cannot be included in those members elected to the senate by convocation and this provision is consistent with the restrictions placed on membership in certain other categories.

The amendments concerned with parking are technical in nature and are designed to clarify and validate present practice, hence clause 4 of the Bill amends section 24 of the Act as follows—

Paragraph (ab) is amended to include the word "permit" since both "permit" and "ticket" are used in the by-laws.

Paragraph (ba) of subsection (7) is amended so that the by-laws can specify the circumstances for the responsibility of the permit holder and of the owner of a vehicle.

Clause 5 of the Bill is a clause which will validate the action that has been taken under the present by-laws, until such time as the proposed amendments to section 24 take effect.

On behalf of the Minister for Education, I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Pearce.

ADOPTION OF CHILDREN AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Minister for Community Welfare) [11.10 a.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill before the House seeks amendments to the Adoption of Children Act 1896-1979. The proposals in the Bill are as follows:

The Bill gives judges of the Family Court power to reduce the period of notice which must be given to the Director of Community Welfare before an application for an adoption order is made. When the notice is received inquiries are made to ensure that the applicants are suitable people to adopt a child and a report to the Family Court is generally prepared.

If a married couple apply to adopt a child and one of them is the child's father or mother the director can decide not to prepare a report unless requested by a judge. In these cases the 30-day period of notice may be unnecessarily long and it may be appropriate for a judge to reduce it. Alternatively, it may be desirable for a court to be able to expedite an adoption when the adopting parents are leaving the State because of the husband's work commitments.

The Bill also gives judges power to reduce or dispense with the notice which must be given to a deceased parent's family, in cases where the surviving parent has remarried and wishes to adopt the child into the marriage.

In a closely-knit family a judge might wish to reduce the period of notice because the child's relatives already know and approve of the proposed adoption. In other families the applicant might have lost touch with the relative who must be served with notice and so be unable to serve the relative and a judge might consider it appropriate to dispense with notice altogether.

There has been uncertainty in the Family Court in cases where adopting parents have different surnames because the wife has retained her own surname after marriage. This Bill provides that an adopted child, like any other child of married parents, will take the surname of the adopting father.

The most significant clause in the Bill is also the shortest: clause 5. I am informed that a similar amendment has already been passed in New South Wales and it is intended that the same step will be taken in the other Australian States.

At present an overseas adoption is recognised in Western Australia only if, among other things, the adopting parent or parents were resident or domiciled in the country where the adoption order was made. Consequently Australian families who have gone overseas and adopted a child by obtaining a valid adoption order in the country of the child's birth have found they have had to make a further application for adoption on their return to Australia.

The Bill seeks to repeal this requirement to allow due recognition to be given to the orders of overseas courts and to remove the implication that they are not competent to make orders for children who are citizens of their country.

Clause 7 provides that the Director of Community Welfare may supervise children who have been adopted overseas for less than a year before they enter Australia if the child and both the adopters were not nationals of the country where the adoption order was granted. The clause provides safeguards for children in families where there may be problems because the adopting parents are of a different nationality and the adoption has not stood the test of time.

In cases where supervision is obviously unnecessary the director would have power to exempt the child.

The proposed period of supervision is 12 months, but this period would be reduced proportionately if a child has been resident in New Zealand or another Australian State since the adoption order was granted.

Supervision would give the director and his officers access to the child and would enable advice and assistance to be given to the family. However, this proposal would not provide any authority to remove the child from the home.

An application would need to be made to the Children's Court and the child found in need of care and protection before the child could be taken into the care of the department against the wishes of the adopting parents.

The Bill also seeks to remedy two long-standing problems.

When a child is placed with a family for adoption there is usually a period of about six months while the child settles in before an application for adoption is made to the Family Court. The Bill seeks to prevent a child being taken out of the State during this period without the director's consent.

The director is the guardian of children placed for adoption with people who are not relatives of the child and of children brought to this State for adoption. The director needs to know where the children are so that he can carry out his responsibilities towards them. The proposed new section seeks to prevent action by the director being frustrated by the adopting parents, the natural parent, or any other person removing the child from the State; that is, pending completion of the adoption process.

Further, if the director is informed of the child's departure he can make arrangements for the adoption process to continue at the child's destination.

Finally, the Bill enables the Minister to determine appropriate charges for preparing adoption applications when they are prepared by the staff of the Department for Community Welfare. Some doubt has been cast on the present practice of making a standard charge in all cases by advice which indicates that the director may be entitled to recover only the expenses involved which vary from case to case. This proposal is intended to ensure that what happens now can continue.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Carr.

BILLS (4): MESSAGES

Appropriations

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

1. Cancer Council of Western Australia Amendment Bill.
2. Rural Youth Movement Amendment Bill.
3. Murdoch University Amendment Bill.
4. Adoption of Children Amendment Bill.

THE BANK OF ADELAIDE (MERGER) BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 9 September.

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park—Leader of the Opposition) [11.19 a.m.]: This Bill was introduced to the House on 9 September, and I am pleased to say that in accordance with a request I received from the Premier dated the same day the Opposition is delighted to support the measure and to hasten its passage through the House. The transitional arrangements to merge the Bank of Adelaide and its subsidiary, the Bank of Adelaide Savings Bank Limited, with the Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited and its subsidiary, the Australia and New Zealand Savings Bank Limited, must be completed by 30 September so that the new bank in its merged form can operate as from 1 October.

It is not for us to consider why this Bill has become necessary or why the merger is to take place; we do not have to get into a discussion on financial matters at a time like this.

However, in legislation such as this there are certain factors we need to consider. Firstly, we should ensure the rights of the customers are protected; secondly, we need to make sure the State will not lose any revenue it might otherwise have gained; and, thirdly, the protection of staff needs to be considered. I do not necessarily put them in that order, but they are probably the three points we need to examine.

I must say the second reading speech of this Bill makes tedious reading, not because of its actual content but because of the need almost every second paragraph to repeat the words "the Bank of Adelaide and its subsidiary the Bank of Adelaide Savings Bank Limited with Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited and its subsidiary Australia and New Zealand Savings Bank Limited".

Mr O'Connor: I concur with your comments; it was also tedious saying it at the time.

Mr DAVIES: I imagine it was. Had it not been necessary to name those four banks each time reference was made to the merger, the second reading speech would not have been half as long as it was!

I have had a close look at the Bill, and the three points I mentioned seem to be well protected. The Deputy Premier informed us that the Bill is in line with action being taken in all the other States; it seems that Australia-wide, the three matters with which we should be concerned are being fully protected. The State is not to lose

anything financially because of the transfers of deeds, financial agreements, and the like and the staff are to be protected as far as it is possible to protect them in legislation of this kind; and, of course, the legislation legitimises the transfer as far as the banks' customers are concerned.

I agree with the Deputy Premier that it would be almost impossible and would take literally months and months to arrange for each transfer or agreement to be handed over and dealt with separately. I have no idea just how many agreements are in existence within the banks; no doubt there are hundreds of them.

Mr O'Connor: I believe there are some 46 000 agreements.

Mr DAVIES: It would be almost impossible to deal with each agreement separately and the sensible course is being adopted by way of legislation. I have not heard of any opposition being advanced to similar legislation being enacted in other States and I believe it becomes a requirement and a responsibility of Government to legislate in matters such as this.

With those few words, I support the Bill.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Deputy Premier) [11.23 a.m.]: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his comments and for the co-operation he has given us in connection with this Bill.

I also take this opportunity to thank the Opposition Whip and all members for their co-operation this session; it probably has resulted in all of us getting a little more sleep, and has been to the general advantage of the workings of this place.

The Leader of the Opposition was given details of this Bill only two days ago, and I appreciate his action in expediting its passage through the House. It is necessary for us to act quickly in this matter to protect the interests of the 200 000 people who are customers of the banks and to facilitate the transfer of the 46 000-odd agreements which are involved.

I concur with his remarks that the rights of the customers and the staff, and the protection of the State's financial interests are the three essential issues involved. When one considers what unfortunately happened to the Bank of Adelaide, we can see the need to protect the individuals involved.

Once again, I thank the Opposition for its support of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Third Reading

Leave granted to proceed forthwith to the third reading.

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr O'Connor (Deputy Premier), and transmitted to the Council.

STOCK (BRANDS AND MOVEMENT) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 6 August.

MR H. D. EVANS (Warren—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [11.28 a.m.]: This amending Bill is rather refreshing in that, as I have been told in reply to my inquiries, it has come forward at the instigation of melanian sheep breeders.

Mr Davies: Who?

Mr H. D. EVANS: I realise I may have to explain to some of the city members exactly what a sheep is; however, that is beside the point at the moment.

The melanian sheep owners have adopted a very responsible attitude in that the purpose of this amendment is to protect the purity of whiteness of the Australian merino flock. The fact that Australian merino wool is of a high degree of whiteness has made it very popular with overseas manufacturers. It is essential that this quality be retained in the interests of competition on the world market.

With this in mind, the melanian sheep breeders displayed a very responsible approach and attitude. The problem has arisen to some extent because of the demand for natural-coloured wool fibre, especially for the cottage and hobby industries that have grown enormously in the last decade or so. Home spinning and weaving demonstrations are seen at most shows nowadays. Virtually every town has a craft group; and their activities include the spinning and weaving of wool. The problem arises because of the resurgence of the ancient crafts, and the fact that many adherents of the crafts seek to use the natural colours of wool in blend to achieve the designs they want.

Speciality garment manufacturers also have an interest in this type of wool fibre—that is, the wool fibre with a natural colouring. As a sheep man from way back, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr

Crane), you are fully aware of the shades of colouration that can be found in sheep. There are not only the black sheep of traditional fame or infamy as the case may be, but the spectrum of colour runs through shades including black, grey, blue, and brown. This enables the natural shading to be used in unique patterns of design which are highly prized by the specialist manufacturers, and also the operators in the hobby and cottage industries.

It is the resurgence of interest in these crafts which has led to a demand for coloured wool; and there has been more interest in the melanian sheep breeders—that is the breeders of coloured wool. The major problem which has arisen is that those sheep which are bred for the production of coloured wool can produce progeny which are white—that is with reference to the laws of Mendel, and all the rest of it.

The white progeny of coloured parents have the propensity for producing sheep which throw back to the coloured strain. The genes for the production of coloured wool, although they are recessive, under certain circumstances of breeding can produce in a white flock the colours that are not desirable. They are not desirable in the commercial flocks, but the coloured sheep are prized by those to whom I have already made reference..

Therefore, it is desirable that there be some designation of melanian sheep which, although they may be white, have the capacity to produce coloured progeny. A flock owner purchasing sheep in a market for breeding purposes would have to know whether, although they appeared to be normal sheep, they had the recessive genes that would result in coloured fleeces being produced by the progeny; otherwise, there would be a deleterious effect on the quality of the wool sold to manufacturers overseas.

The melanian sheep breeders are seeking to establish an acceptable identification on a national basis. This has given rise to a problem in arriving at a basis for uniform identification. It is futile to produce a system of identification that will not operate in all the States. This is a universal problem as far as Australian merino flocks are concerned, because there is the necessity to ensure that the whiteness of the flocks is retained.

In his second reading speech, the Minister for Agriculture indicated that the intention of the breeders in Western Australia is to have an earmark consisting of three holes. This may be accepted on a national basis as the most simple and most effective method. Although there is no assurance that this will be so, there are indications that that may eventuate. The Minister indicated there was a very good chance of that happening; and my inquiries have revealed that the Minister is probably correct.

The Minister mentioned the operation of the Stock (Brands and Movement) Act, and the difficulty that emerges in meeting the present problem which has evolved through the need to indicate the animals which could "throw" coloured fleeces. The present Act provides for the registration and use of brands and earmarks; and it is a very important Act as far as stock owners are concerned. Every sheep owner is required to use a registered earmark which is unique to that owner. Not only is the owner able to obtain an earmark that is unique, but also he is compelled by law to do so.

The proposed brand is not to replace the existing ownership brand. It is essential that that point is made clear now. Under section 16 of the Act there is provision for brands for private cull purposes; so there are two types of earmarks existing at the moment. However, there is no provision for a brand or earmark for a particular purpose; and that brings us to the amendment before the House.

The amendment makes it possible for regulations to be drawn up to deal with this problem. Regulations will allow for the use of an identification brand for other purposes should some comparable situation arise. I cannot think of one offhand; but the provision of brands for special purposes will enable all manner of identifications for special purposes to occur.

The nearest comparison at the moment would be the compulsory branding of spayed cattle. That might require explanation for some of our city colleagues, Mr Acting Speaker; but I think they might know what cattle are, and at least that is a step in the right direction.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Crane): They are quadrupeds.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Quite. Spayed cattle are required to carry identification brands to ensure that a person purchasing them will not find he has paid a premium price for a female animal from which he cannot breed.

There was a reference in the Minister's speech to the way the marketing of white progeny of coloured sheep was to be compulsory. I assume that although the Minister actually did not say so, and I understand from inquiries, that this would not be desired and I was hoping he might be able to confirm this supposition when he replied. It is a

minor matter, but it is one that does require some clarification. The opportunity may arise to query this matter on some future occasion.

With the purpose of the Bill before the House fairly clear, I believe it is one from which nothing but good will come. The initiative taken by the melanian sheep breeders is to be applauded. I understand it has the approval of the Australian Wool Corporation and of the Department of Agriculture. It certainly should be received well by all the breed societies which stand to benefit in the long term from such an action.

The further amendment to increase the maximum of the general penalty under the Act is realistic. The setting of the penalty for infringement under the original Act goes back, I think, to 1973. In any event, the need to update the maximum penalty to $500 is realistic in terms of modern-day values. I do not think anyone in any section of the stock industry or elsewhere would object to this figure.

For those reasons, the Opposition supports this Bill.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Deputy Premier) [11.42 a.m.]: I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for his support of this Bill and for his explanation of the necessity to have the Bill in the interests of the wool industry of this State. This industry is one of the most important in Western Australia and it is tremendously important that we keep our wool pure and in line with what is required overseas. While the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was speaking about the need to prevent the recurrence of the black wool in farmers' stocks, I wondered whether the co-operation we were receiving would last. I thought perhaps someone might mention we were trying to introduce a colour bar because we were working to prevent the black wool mixing with the white!

However, I thank the Opposition for its support.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES (PROMOTIONS APPEAL BOARD) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 7 August.

MR B. T. BURKE (Balcatta) [11.45 a.m.]: No doubt members of the House have been vaguely pleased by the amiable good faith with which we have appeared to proceed this morning. Far be it from me to desire to throw a spanner into the works, yet the Opposition wishes to express its opposition to the Bill now before the House. I shall make one or two points which are relevant to the Bill and to the farce that was carried on by this Government in the name of industrial reform when it presented to the Parliament last year a package of measures that have proved to be nothing more than hot air.

We will recall that in the second reading speech on this Bill the Minister referred to the industrial legislation that it complemented. The first comment the Opposition would make is that, when in Government, we were under frequent and constant attack for sloppy legislation and, of course, this Bill is the proof of the sloppiness of this Government's legislative action, because it is a Bill that should not be before us now. It is a Bill that rightly should have been before the Parliament when it was made necessary by the steps which were taken by the Government when it attempted to "reform" the industrial laws of this State.

The Minister did refer to those changes in industrial law and I am sure, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Crane), you will not mind my doing so. We remember how at that time the Minister and some of the loud mouths on the other side of the House went to considerable lengths to tell us of reforms and of the beneficial effects they would have. Who can forget the Minister for Police and Traffic, then just the member for Cottesloe, and the Acting Premier today, the Minister for Labour and Industry, talking about the need for secret ballots? Who can forget what the Minister for Labour and Industry said when he carted out that political work horse on that occasion about the solution of problems brought about by the introduction of secret ballots in so far as industrial disputes were concerned?

Mr Acting Speaker, I seek your indulgence in asking the Minister how many secret ballots have been held in the past year under the legislation he sponsored. How many secret ballots have resulted in the early end to industrial disputes, as we were promised and as the public were told when the Minister moved the legislation? Of course, the

answer is, "None". There has not been one secret ballot held as a result of that legislation in the first year of its operation.

That legislation was nothing but a farce. There was never an intention on the part of the Government to impose upon this State a system of secret ballots for the settlement of industrial disputes. It was simply a political tool which the Government carted out on the eve of an election in the hope of gaining some mileage. The proof of the pudding is in a demonstration of what has happened.

Not one secret ballot has been held since the measure was introduced, and we were told by member after member on the Government side that when secret ballots were made the order of the day, industrial disputes would be largely curtailed.

In the first year of operation of the new Act there have been 140 industrial disputes compared with 117 during the last year of operation of the previous Act. In these 140 disputes which have occurred since the legislation was passed there has not been one secret ballot held. The Parliament is entitled to ask the Minister just why there has not been a secret ballot held and just why we have not been open to the remedy he said would be so effective. That is one of the major parts of the legislation which was introduced in the name of reform, shabby and shameful though it was.

The Bill before us refers specifically to the preference clause which was taken out of the legislation considered last year and is now to be taken out of this particular Act. We can all remember what we were told about the preference clause and how it would result in individual fairness and harmony and how people who wanted to opt out of unions in good faith would be able to do so. Perhaps the Minister can tell us how many people, under the new section which was added last year, opted out of membership of the union to which they belonged previously. I doubt that the Minister knows; but it is my impression one could count the number on the fingers of one hand.

Mr Pearce: Even if you were the Minister for Education and could not count to 10.

Mr B. T. BURKE: We have seen this new Act in operation for 12 months and what has been the effect? The promises have been hollow and, as far as industrial disputes are concerned, while the total number of man days lost may not be comparable with those lost during the last years of operation of the previous legislation, the number has increased dramatically. What has happened in respect of the preference for unionists clause which was never part of the legislation, but was simply one of the weapons of the armory of the commission in its attempts to solve industrial disputes? The Opposition can tell members what has happened. Those people who conscientiously objected to union membership under section 61B of the old Act, have that avenue denied to them, and those who conscientiously objected to belonging to unions are now forced to belong to unions, not by the unions themselves, but by employers.

Employers have made it quite clear, as they made it quite clear during the early stages of discussion of the previous legislation, that they want no part of a system which has inbuilt hostility, which uses aggression as one of its trademarks, and which this Government carted out purely for political purposes.

I do not know how Government members can sit behind the Premier and behind Ministers who constantly put forward changes as being designed to solve industrial disputes, whilst they can see that not only have the disputes remained unsolved, but also that the changes proposed have not even been acted upon.

We can remember some of the statements made by the Minister for Labour and Industry when he spoke about the changes which were being made and also by the present Minister for Police and Traffic when he joined the fray. At that time, the Minister for Labour and Industry said, "I am astounded that the Opposition is opposing secret ballots, thus denying the right of individual members to have a greater say in what is going on in their unions." And yet during the past year under this Government and its reforms, there has not been one secret ballot. If there has not been a secret ballot, how can we give any sort of credence to the credibility of the Government in promising that this major reform would overcome some of the difficulties being faced and how can we even start to say that the Government is sincere or dinkum about the changes sought? Of course, the Government was not dinkum. It was a political tool which was being used in an effort to gain votes in view of the fact that an election was pending.

Members will recall the flight of fancy of the Deputy Premier when he told us that secret ballots could be carried out by people going to their local TABs and registering a ballot by putting a card into the computer. The TABs are still there, but the secret ballots have not yet come about.

Mr Davies: A quinella, wasn't it? He also told us about that.

Mr Pearce: You could have a bet on the outcome of the secret ballots; if there were two, you would have a quinella.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The only trouble with this Government is there would not be a dividend.

Mr Bertram: Honesty in government!

Mr B. T. BURKE: It is interesting to look back on what happened during the debate on that legislation and to see how this Government time and time again said unionists and the public wanted secret ballots. The Government said, "Unionists and the public are crying out for secret ballots." The Minister said, "The public generally, and individual members of unions, want secret ballots." Government members said, "Everywhere we go we find that people are saying they ought to have secret ballots." Where have the secret ballots been?

In particular, in respect of preference to unionists—not compulsory unionism; but the power held by the commission to insert within awards certain clauses and conditions—what has been the result of the legislation, apart from denying to conscientious objectors the ability to opt out of unions and apart from the application by employers, as much as by unions, of pressure on people wanting to opt out of union membership?

The whole matter has been a complete farce. The Government has built up many black marks against its reputation and performance, but this black mark will rank amongst the foremost, because, as far as the Opposition is concerned, this Bill gives us the opportunity to throw back into the teeth of the Government the lie put forward in its name when it introduced the changes it deigned to call "reforms".

Specifically with reference to the Bill before the House, the attempt to eliminate preference in the terms of the Act it is amending will have no effect whatsoever and will not result in any way in an increase in fairness within the situation it is seeking to change. It is significant to say this Bill is not being accompanied by the hoo-hah the Government put up at the time it changed the industrial legislation, simply because it is no longer politically fashionable to do so. Of course, an election is not pending and it is not politically fashionable, in terms of obtaining votes, to talk about the elimination of the preference clause.

As far as the Opposition is concerned, this Bill is just so much more hot air to add to that which was wafting through from the Government benches at the time of the changes to the industrial laws of this State that were carried out last year.

If the Minister wants any further proof about the preference in situations which this Bill will affect, he knows, as well as we do, that one cannot belong to the credit union of the Civil Service Association without belonging to the association; so, as far as preference is concerned, the preference aspects mean nothing when we have a situation in which people seeking to belong to a credit union must fulfil the obligatory requirement of membership of the association.

Perhaps you, Sir, will understand that this Government's past performance has justified the comments we have made on this occasion. This amending Bill falls into the category of those other statements, Bills, and changes which have been attributed to the Government from time to time and one of which was witnessed by members of this House even last night when the member for Karrinyup talked about strike mania and that sort of thing. If there is anything less dinkum than a Government which proposes secret ballots as a means of solving disputes and then in the year of operation of the proposal it rammed through this House, allows the State to see not one secret ballot, I am not aware of it.

Mr H. D. Evans: Is not the member for Karrinyup remarkably silent?

Mr B. T. BURKE: The member for Karrinyup is remarkably silent today.

Mr Pearce: Don't encourage him.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I do not see that the member for Karriynup can, in all conscience, be satisfied with a situation in which there has not been a secret ballot.

Mr Clarko: The only thing with which I am not satisfied is the fact that I failed to mention the member for Kimberley when I praised the new members of the House. That is the only thing I am not satisfied about.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I cannot understand the member for Karrinyup not being satisfied—

Mr Clarko: I am not surprised you cannot understand me.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I cannot understand how the member for Karrinyup and other Government members whose silence is deafening can be happy with the situation in which secret ballots were promised—

Mr MacKinnon: It is time you changed your line.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I suppose the Honorary Minister knows the answers?

Mr MacKinnon: Did I say that?

Mr B. T. BURKE: Of course the Honorary Minister did not say that. He certainly does not know the answer.

Mr Shalders: The men themselves organised a secret ballot down at Alcoa.

Mr B. T. BURKE: I am not talking about secret ballots proposed in the legislation—

Mr Shalders: The men organised it themselves at Alcoa and the bully boys went down and overturned it.

Mr B. T. BURKE: The member has given the lie to the situation because this legislation was intended to solve that. There was to be a secret ballot, held by the Industrial Commission through the TAB.

Mr Shalders: The men organised that themselves, without any pressure.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Crane): Order!

Mr B. T. BURKE: I think the truth is that members on the Government side are not too pleased with the performance of the Government in respect of that matter and in regard to the preference clause which was the subject of so much attention.

As far as the Opposition is concerned, it opposes this Bill and will oppose it whether it is passed or not. In effect, the legislation will do exactly as it did when the Government brought it in—that is, nothing.

MR PARKER (Fremantle) [12.01 p.m.]: I also oppose this Bill, and in so doing oppose the Public Service Amendment Bill also, as I may not have an opportunity to speak on that matter.

This Bill seeks to do something which obviously did not occur to the Government during the passage of the Industrial Arbitration Act last year. One would have thought that if it had been the Government's intention to legislate clearly on the subject of preference it would have brought in a number of items of legislation to deal with the various Acts at that time—in October—when the Industrial Arbitration Bill was introduced. Of course it did not do that and now the Government has brought this matter forward although the Industrial Arbitration Act has been a complete and total failure in this respect.

In his second reading speech, or perhaps it was in answer to a question, the Minister for Labour and Industry made reference to the fact that the Government was seeking to have the Commonwealth legislate also to exclude the possibility of preference clauses within its Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act, 1904. However, despite these requests made to the Commonwealth Government—and I recall reading in the newspaper that they have been made on a number of occasions over a number of years—they have come to naught. I would be prepared to make a wager with the Minister for Labour and Industry that the requests will continue to come to naught. There certainly will not be a removal of the preference to unionists clause in the Conciliation and Arbitration Act before the Federal election and if—as it is most likely—the Labor Party wins the Federal election it will not happen after the election either.

If, in the unlikely event that the people of Australia are so short-sighted as to re-elect the Fraser Government then I would still be prepared to wager with the Minister for Labour and Industry that the Conciliation and Arbitration Act of the Commonwealth will not be amended in that way.

Mr Hassell: This is how you support freedom.

Mr PARKER: I support the section of the Commonwealth Act and it has been supported more ably and coherently by various judges of the High Court, including many judges of the High Court appointed by the political friends in Canberra of the Chief Secretary.

Mr Hassell: Its validity has been upheld.

Mr PARKER: Not only has its validity been upheld but also Her Honour Justice Gaudron made the comment that there was a very good case for the presence of that section in the Act; that is, the preference to unionists clause in the awards made by judges of the High Court.

In the Uniroyal case Justice Gaudron inserted the preference to unionists clause in that award in very similar terms to the standard clause which was the case in so many awards in Western Australia for many years. Judges praised, in glowing terms, the scheme which Her Honour put forward for a clause to be inserted in the award. The only criticism was that the clause, like the previous Western Australian clause, had provided an opportunity for non-unionists to become unionists and to obtain jobs in the meantime. That was the only criticism of the clause which Her Honour Justice Gaudron put into the Federal rubber workers' award. It was very similar to the clause which was in all Western Australian awards in the past.

The Government's attempts to abolish preference have, of course, failed. There has been no decrease in the number of people who have joined or who have remained members of industrial unions registered under the Industrial Arbitration Act of Western Australia. There has

been no decrease whatsoever. In a number of unions there has been a substantial increase.

One union, the Electrical Trades Union of Workers of Australia (Western Australian Branch) has had an increase—of course, taking into account resignations, deaths etc.—of 80 members over and above the membership last year. That union—with the exception of the Alcoa award—is well within the purview of the Western Australian Industrial Commission.

Mr O'Connor: Should you not be praising us, if that is the case?

Mr PARKER: I would rather praise the unions and the union movement which has been able to show that the Government's legislation in this respect is a complete sham.

This Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Amendment Bill provides for people who do not have permanency of employment; including people who work for the Fire Brigade, Westrail and the State Energy Commission. I challenge the Minister for Labour and Industry to go to the employees of Westrail, the Fire Brigade and the State Energy Commission and find one person of those bodies whose promotional prospects may be covered by this legislation who is not a member of the union. I would be astonished if he were able to find one person who is not a member of a union.

Mr Hassell: Should they not have the right to opt out if they want to?

Mr PARKER: The point is they have not opted out.

Mr Hassell: Should they not have the right?

Mr PARKER: Despite the fact that these three instrumentalities function under the purview and control of this Government, none of the persons responsible for recruitment in these instrumentalities would hire someone who is not a member of a union. I believe that is the reason these instrumentalities are able to continue to operate. The people employed by these instrumentalities have, for many years through their unions, obtained very good wages and conditions. They now enjoy those good conditions which are renegotiated constantly at great expense to the union movement and its members. For that reason, those people would not wish to opt out of their unions and the instrumentalities could not work without them.

Quite sensibly, the people who run these instrumentalities will not hire non-unionists, despite the Government's Industrial Arbitration Act of 1979. I challenge the Minister to give an example of one person who comes under the jurisdiction of this Bill who is not a member of the union. So, the Government's intention with this legislation is absurd.

Various Government members have stated, by way of interjection, that as far as they were concerned, preference equalled compulsion. They believe the preference clause which existed within Western Australian awards equalled compulsion. The clauses which are in the Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Amendment Bill and the Public Service Amendment Bill do not equal compulsion. There is nothing in those Bills which indicates that it is compulsory to become a member of a union.

During discussion of the legislation last year the member for Cottesloe referred to certain aspects of the standard clause which was in Western Australian awards and said that people would be compelled to join a union. There is nothing in this Act or in the Public Service Act which the Chief Secretary can point to in the same way, even taking into account his tautologous arguments of last year. There is nothing in this Act which indicates that people have to be members of unions.

In promotional matters, where a unionist and a non-unionist apply for the same position and wish to appeal against another being appointed to that position, the only person who may appeal is the one who is a member of a union; that is, if a union is represented in that area.

Let me say also that in respect of many of the employees of these instrumentalities they are not covered by awards of the commision at all. For example, the Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Act refers to section 144A of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act. That is a section which will not be changed by the Commonwealth Government, whether it be Liberal or Labor. I would be quite prepared to stake quite a deal on that. The major reason is that the National Employers Industrial Council does not want it changed. Not one single substantial employer in Australia can be found who would want to do away with that preference to unionists clause, or do away with the closed shop system of operation. I challenge any Government member to name a single substantial employer who wants to change the system.

Mr O'Connor: You would apply a black ban through the unions. I know your score.

Mr PARKER: That is not the question. Most employers prefer to deal with union organisations. They get to know the officers and they know how to deal with them. They form a relationship and the officers come to know the nature of the

problems of the industry. The employers want to continue to deal with those officers. The last thing the employers want to do is to deal with hundreds and thousands of individual employees all coming forward with industrial grievances. The employers want the unions and they do not support the attitude of the Government in respect of preference to unionists or in respect of closed shops. I would be astounded if the public instrumentalities concerned in this Bill supported the Government's view.

None of those instumentalities which will be most affected by this Bill employ anybody who is not a unionist. They all employ unionists through the system of closed shops. The SEC, Westrail and the Fire Brigade have closed shops. Nothing the Government has done has altered that situation, and I submit that nothing the Government is likely to do will change the situation.

Let me refer to some of the areas which will be covered by one or other of the Acts referred to. In the SEC all the salaried officers are members of the Municipal Officers Association, and are covered by an award of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. As the Minister has said on a number of occasions, the State Government can do nothing to stop the Commonwealth commission inserting preference clauses into awards. The only thing the State Government can do is to make a futile plea to the Commonwealth commission not to have the provisions inserted in awards.

It is quite certain the Government's effort has failed. When Senior Commissioner Kelly brought down his report last year, at the request of the previous Minister for Labour and Industry—who is now the Minister for Education—he recognised that preference to unionists could not and should not be done away with. Senior Commissioner Kelly is recognised probably as the most experienced man in Western Australia with regard to industrial relations. He came out quite strongly in his recommendation that preference to unionists should not be taken away. Even the Queensland Government, under Bjelke-Petersen, has not done away with preference to unionists. The only State Government in Australia to take that action has been the Western Australian Government.

Mr Hassell: Leaders, as usual!

Mr PARKER: I suggest it will be a very long time before any other State follows the Western Australian lead.

Mr Mensaros: The people who voted at the election did not agree with you, they agreed with us.

Mr PARKER: My constituents do not agree with the Government view. For the first time in over a decade the Liberal Party in Fremantle could not even get 30 per cent of the vote.

I say the employers of this State do not agree with the Government either, because they want to be able to employ people whom they know will become unionists. They want to know they can be assured that all employees are unionists.

All the large companies which have been singled out by the Government, or by its supporters, have continued to operate closed shops. All the large mining companies in our north-west have told the unions that they will do everything in their power to continue to operate closed shops, no matter what the Government does. Even the Government's own instrumentalities in Westrail, the Fire Brigade, and the SEC continue to operate closed shops.

The amendment is worthless. Even if it is passed it will have no effect. I believe legislation ought not to be paved which makes a fool of the legislative authority. This legislation will make a fool of the Government.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Labour and Industry) [12.16 p.m.]: I am not surprised by the comments of Opposition members in connection with this matter. Members of this House, and the public generally, are aware of their opposition to freedom of choice of whether to be or not to be members of unions. While listening to the debate it was hard to realise that the Bill deals with preference with regard to appeal rights when appeals are made to the Government Employees Promotions Appeal Board.

I will reply to some of the comments made by the two members who have spoken, and in doing so I indicate that we believe the people of this State ought to have the freedom of choice either to be or not to be members of unions. As far as we are concerned, we want to break down the bullying stand-over tactics which have been adopted by some militant unions.

The member who has just spoken said that anyone could opt out of a union, and that there was not a closed shop situation. He said that anyone who did not want to be a member of a union did not have to be, and yet he is involved in the union which exercises power over people irrespective of exemption provisions.

Mr Parker: That is not true.

Mr O'CONNOR: The member opposite has stood up and made statements totally contrary to the actions of his union. He knows full well that is the position.

Mr Parker: The union always has accepted exemptions on the basis of conscience.

Mr O'CONNOR: That is wrong.

Mr Parker: That is not wrong.

Mr O'CONNOR: The secretary of the union, Mr Reynolds, made a categorical statement.

Mr Jamieson: You are speaking of the wrong union.

Point of Order

Mr PARKER: On a point of order, apparently the Deputy Premier is completely mistaken. The Australian Builders Labourers' Union has nothing to do with the Australian Labor Party. I am involved with the Building Workers Industrial Union.

Debate Resumed

Mr O'CONNOR: Mr Reynolds, who was secretary of the Builders Labourers' Union, stated quite categorically, in the presence of myself, the Confederation of Western Australian Industry, and members of the trade union movement that irrespective of any exemption applied for by an individual, there was no way that person could go on to a building site unless he had a union ticket. That is contrary to what the member opposite said; he said anyone could opt out. The position is they cannot.

I am astounded that members opposite do not stand up for the rights of the individuals they claim to represent. The Civil Service Association is in exactly the same situation. When has that association not given preference to unionists?

Mr B. T. Burke: But John Spires is a member of the Liberal Party.

Mr O'CONNOR: The Industrial Arbitration Act was intended to enable a great deal of conciliation to be exercised, and the Industrial Commission has endeavoured to do that in very many ways. As a matter of fact, it was some months before the regulations were finalised; the arbitration commissioners asked me to take no action for some months so that they could discuss the total Bill with the unions and the confederation and give them the opportunity to study the Bill thoroughly. That was up to June this year.

The member for Balcatta gave some figures but did not go on with the whole story. He said there had been 140 strikes this year as against 117 last year, but he did not say that since the Industrial Arbitration Bill was introduced only half the number of hours have been lost.

Mr B. T. Burke: I said that.

Mr O'CONNOR: I did not hear him say that. I make the point that despite the number of strikes which have occurred, less than half the number of hours have been lost.

Mention was made of complementary Commonwealth legislation. We want that and have sought it, and we will continue to seek it. Many people who wanted to opt out of union membership in this State have approached us saying they cannot do so because they are members of a Federal union. The Commonwealth has not brought forward legislation in this regard. We look forward to the introduction of Commonwealth legislation so that people right throughout Australia, whether they be in State or Federal unions, will have the right to do what they want.

The member for Balcatta said the new legislation had been in operation for 12 months. That is not so, and he knows it. It came into being in February this year but it was June before the regulations were promulgated and the legislation got into gear properly.

Mr B. T. Burke: That means the number of strikes will be much higher in the 12 months.

Mr O'CONNOR: No. We took the figures for one year as against another. The honourable member also criticised the Government in regard to secret ballots. The Industrial Commission has the authority to arrange secret ballots.

Mr H. D. Evans: Why hasn't it done so?

Mr O'CONNOR: The honourable member should ask the commission. If we stepped in and asked the commission to arrange a secret ballot we would be criticised for doing that. We have endeavoured to allow the legislation to proceed as smoothly as possible. We have conferred with the commission and at the appropriate time it will take the action it deems to be necessary.

Mr E. T. Evans: What about the TAB?

Mr O'CONNOR: I will comment on that. The member for Balcatta stated that I had said union members could have a secret ballot through the TAB. I did not say that. I said it would be possible for it to be introduced but it has not yet been introduced. Members opposite have completely twisted what I said. At the time the Bill was being debated the honourable member asked how votes could be got in quickly, or something to that effect. I mentioned a system

which had been explained to me and said it was a possibility. I had conferred with the Chairman of the TAB who said it could be done. We have not tried it. It is a possibility and nothing more.

Mr B. T. Burke: It is about as much a possibility as a secret ballot.

Mr O'CONNOR: I regard the operations of some unions in this State as being similar to the operations of protection rackets in America. I think they ought to be treated as criminal acts because the bully-boys stand over individuals and will not allow them freedom of operation. I think it is disgraceful and despicable. Members on this side of the House will do everything possible to ensure the people of this State have freedom to go about their work in the way they want without being harassed and stood over by others. I think that if anything we have not gone far enough in this direction.

The member for Fremantle remarked that Senior Commissioner Kelly did not mention anything about the abolition of preference to unionists. I discussed this matter with Mr Kelly and he said that at the time he was drawing up his draft Bill most of the people who approached him wanted freedom of choice about membership of a union. Mr Kelly mentioned this in the notes attached to his report.

Mr Parker: He mentioned retention of the preference clause.

Mr O'CONNOR: Mr Kelly told me quite clearly that by far the greatest number of comments he received were from people who did not want to be members of a union and he had given serious consideration to recommending abolition of the preference clause but he thought the consequences of it might cause some problems.

The Bill now before us is designed to bring into line the provisions in connection with appeal, which members on this side of the House believe will give every person the same opportunity, whether or not he is a member of a union.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 23

Mr Blaikie	Mr Nanovich
Mr Clarko	Mr O'Connor
Mr Cowan	Mr Rushton
Mr Coyne	Mr Sibson
Mrs Craig	Mr Spriggs
Mr Crane	Mr Stephens
Dr Dadour	Mr Tubby
Mr Grewar	Mr Watt
Mr Hassell	Mr Williams
Mr Herzfeld	Mr Young
Mr MacKinnon	Mr Shalders
Mr Mensaros	*(Teller)*

Noes 16

Mr Barnett	Mr H. D. Evans
Mr Bertram	Mr Hodge
Mr Bridge	Mr Jamieson
Mr B. T. Burke	Mr Pearce
Mr T. J. Burke	Mr Skidmore
Mr Carr	Mr Tonkin
Mr Davies	Mr Wilson
Mr E. T. Evans	Mr Bateman
	(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr Old	Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Grayden	Mr Harman
Mr Sodeman	Mr Grill
Sir Charles Court	Mr Bryce
Mr P. V. Jones	Mr Parker
Mr Laurance	Mr McIver

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Sitting suspended from 12.32 to 2.15 p.m.

PUBLIC SERVICE AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 7 August.

MR B. T. BURKE (Balcatta) [2.17 p.m.]: For the reasons stated in our opposition to the previous Bill on the notice paper, the Opposition opposes this measure also.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 18

Mr Blaikie	Mr O'Connor
Mr Clarko	Mr Rushton
Mr Cowan	Mr Sibson
Mrs Craig	Mr Spriggs
Mr Grewar	Mr Trethowan
Mr Hassell	Mr Tubby
Mr MacKinnon	Mr Watt
Mr Mensaros	Mr Williams
Mr Nanovich	Mr Shalders
	(Teller)

Noes 13

Mr Barnett	Mr McIver
Mr B. T. Burke	Mr Pearce
Mr Carr	Mr Skidmore
Mr E. T. Evans	Mr Tonkin
Mr H. D. Evans	Mr Wilson
Mr Hodge	Mr Bateman
Mr Jamieson	*(Teller)*

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr Old	Mr T. H. Jones
Mr Grayden	Mr Harman
Mr Sodeman	Mr Grill
Mr Young	Mr Bryce
Sir Charles Court	Mr Parker
Mr P. V. Jones	Mr Taylor
Mr Laurance	Mr Davies

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

MAIN ROADS AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR RUSHTON (Dale—Minister for Transport) [2.22 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is to continue the system of annual road grants made by the State Government to Western Australian local authorities. The previous statutory grants scheme expired on 30 June this year.

The road grant schemes contained in this Bill cover the period commencing on 1 July 1980 and ending on 30 June 1985. They are generally similar to those in the last triennium. The only significant change is that it will cover a five-year period instead of three years. This change has been made to avoid administrative problems that have occurred at the expiration of the two previous three-year schemes.

The expiration of previous triennial schemes has coincided with State election years during which State Parliament does not normally sit till late July or August. Interim arrangements using other sections of the Main Roads Act have had to be made to continue payments to local authorities after the end of June until such time as new legislation has been passed. The adoption of five-year legislation will avoid this recurring problem. The period of five years has been selected to coincide with proposed Commonwealth road grant legislation from which a large proportion of the funds used for these grants to local authorities is derived.

The Bill fixes grant levels for the 1980-81 financial year and matching provisions for three years and makes provision for subsequent fund levels and matching provisions to be determined by the Minister. In this regard I want to assure the House that policies adopted in recent years, and which have been accepted by local authority representatives, will be continued.

It is important to point out that the scheme proposed in this Bill is an extension of the arrangements contained in the scheme which has operated during the past three years. In referring to the legislation which expired on 30 June, members will realise that the increases in the annual grants above the basic amount appropriated in the first year of the period were determined annually by the Minister. This new scheme is really only an extension of the current scheme and will operate on an ongoing basis for five years.

In recent years the Government has adopted the policy that statutory grants to local authorities are increased by the percentage by which Commonwealth road grants to Western Australia are increased. It is the Government's intention that this policy will be continued.

The Government has also made a practice of consulting the Country Shire Councils' Association, the Country Urban Councils' Association, and the Local Government Association each time that the grants scheme has been reviewed. This policy will also be continued to ensure that these schemes are in tune with local government requirements.

Members will be aware that Western Australia will receive an increase of 11.15 per cent in its Commonwealth road grants in 1980-81. The State Government is most unhappy at this increase, which will barely offset the expected rate of inflation in road construction costs.

The Premier and I have made repeated submissions to the Federal Government pointing out the vast road needs of Western Australia and requesting increased road funds. These, together with requests by other States supported by campaigns by local government associations and the Australian Automobile Association, have been disregarded. In fact, at the last Premiers' Conference the Prime Minister announced levels of total road funds that will be provided for all the States over the next four years which are unlikely even to keep pace with inflation. The State Government will continue its efforts to obtain increased road funds for Western Australia.

One concession made by the Commonwealth in its 1980 Road Grants Act is in the reduction in the number of road categories from eight to four. While this concession in no way makes up for the general lack of funding, nevertheless it is most welcome. One effect on local authority roads in the reduction in categories is that the previous

rural local roads and urban local roads have been combined into the single category of local roads.

The Government proposes to maintain the same ratio of funds to country and metropolitan councils in this Bill as was contained in the expired scheme.

The total funds provided in this Bill for grants to country local authorities in 1980-81 amount in rounded figures to $12.374 million, representing an increase of 11.15 per cent on the sum of $11.132 million in the last financial year. As in the present scheme which was introduced in July 1977 and which has been well received by local authorities, the total statutory grant funds will be distributed in accordance with population and weighted road length statistics.

At the request of local authorities, secondary roads have been included in the weighted road length statistics used in the formulae for distributing statutory grants to local authorities. Updated population and unclassified road length statistics have been used and these, with the inclusion of secondary roads, will result in some councils receiving greater percentage increases than others.

Eight councils will be worse off under the new distribution. These are generally related to anomalies existing before the present formula system was adopted. It is not proposed to continue the previous supplementary grant system to assist councils suffering a loss because most of the shortfalls are relatively small. Compensating adjustments have been made to councils with large shortfalls through the Main Roads Department's programme of works.

The proposed grants to individual councils, as shown in the second schedule to the Bill, also incorporate a minimum grant principle applied on a per kilometre of road basis. This principle will benefit some of the low population density outback councils.

With regard to the proposed grants for metropolitan local authorities, a total amount of $8.989 million has been provided. This is 11.15 per cent higher than the amount of $8.087 million provided in the previous financial year.

The principle of the metropolitan statutory grant scheme is that every council is entitled to a share of the base grant which represents one-third of the total statutory grant. The balance is paid into the inner and outer metropolitan urban road funds from which moneys are distributed in accordance with the priority of projects submitted by councils. In accordance with these principles, which have been successfully applied since July 1974, a sum of $2.996 million will be provided as the base grant, $4.104 million for the inner metropolitan urban road fund, and $1.889 million for the outer metropolitan urban road fund.

A population-pavement area formula is used to distribute the base grant component to individual local authorities. Updated road pavement area and population statistics have been used in determining the new base grants for metropolitan local authorities in 1980-81. Because of faster development in the outer areas of the metropolitan region and hence population growth, the outer councils will fare better from the distribution.

The only change to the metropolitan statutory grant scheme is that local authorities may spend part of the base grant on maintenance which was not permitted before. This has been made possible by the amalgamation of rural local and urban local road categories under a new category of "local roads", for which Commonwealth funds may now be spent on maintenance as well as construction.

In order to encourage the improvement of local roads, it is proposed that councils be required to spend at least half the base grant on construction. The other half may be spent on maintenance or construction. This is similar to the country scheme in which councils must spend at least half their entitlement on construction. It should be noted, however, that provision has been made in the Bill to empower the Minister to allow more than half the base grant to be spent on maintenance where he is satisfied that special circumstances exist.

The previous legislation contained matching provisions whereby country and metropolitan local authorities with the lowest expenditure, from their own resources on roads, were required to improve their expenditure effort in order to receive the full amount of the base grants. I am pleased to report that this matching scheme has been very successful in providing an incentive to these particular local authorities without being onerous on other councils. Similar principles are contained in this Bill and these have been arranged to require only those local authorities with the lowest expenditure record to improve their effort. The previous provision that councils in outback areas are exempt from matching has been retained. Provision has also been made for the Minister to set a lower matching quota if a council can demonstrate that there are special circumstances warranting a reduced quota.

The provisions in this Bill for the submission of programmes by all local authorities for approval

of the Minister are similar to the previous legislation.

These statutory grant schemes have been developed in close consultation with representatives of the executives of the Country Shire Councils' Association, Country Urban Councils' Association, and the Local Government Association. There were considerable discussions between representatives of the executives of the various associations and the commissioner and his senior officers before I had discussions with them to finalise and agree to the details.

I should like to mention that there are two standing committees, each chaired by an assistant commissioner of the department, dealing with country and metropolitan road funding schemes. Local authorities are strongly represented on these committees which meet from time to time to discuss local authority submissions and also general details of the statutory grant scheme. By this process members will appreciate that there is continuing consultation with local government.

This is an important Bill to assist local authorities to improve and maintain their road systems. While the total funds allocated in this Bill are linked with the low growth in Commonwealth funds, nevertheless, the grants provided in this Bill will continue to make a significant contribution for improving local authority roads throughout the State.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr McIver.

ESSENTIAL FOODSTUFFS AND COMMODITIES AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 7 August.

MR B. T. BURKE (Balcatta) [2.34 p.m.]: Some members who were not recently elected to the House will recall that previously there was a debate on this measure which stretched for some hours into the early hours of the morning—

Mr Pearce: We will break the record today.

Mr B. T. BURKE: That debate was the vehicle by which some very heated exchanges took place.

The Government has been unable to demonstrate, by what has occurred since the original Bill was introduced, that in fact it was necessary. I am saying there have been no circumstances under which the Act has had to be used; and the Opposition sees no good reason to support the extension of the duration of the Act by a further period, as at the time of its original introduction it saw no good reason to support it then.

The Opposition simply restates its opposition to this legislation.

MR PEARCE (Gosnells) [2.35 p.m.]: I confirm the words of the member for Balcatta. Members will recall the circumstances under which this very controversial legislation was passed. They will recall that, even planned as it was as a stunt to begin the last year of sitting before the State election, one of the reasons the debate was lengthened was that we ensured that both Houses sat until such time as the dispute on which the legislation was based had been settled. In that way, the Parliament was put in the very foolish situation of passing a Bill to resolve a particular dispute after the dispute had been solved by the normal processes of arbitration.

Originally the Government announced that the Act would have only a short term as it was designed to resolve a specific problem. Therefore, it had a time limit of one year as one of its provisions. Now the Government is asking the House to agree to an extension for three years without giving any good reasons.

I asked the Deputy Premier whether the provisions of this legislation had been used at any time during the last 12 months—

Mr O'Connor: Maybe the fact it has not had to be used is because it has been there, and it has been to the advantage of the community generally.

Mr PEARCE: That is the long way about saying, "No." In fact, the provisions of the Act have not been used to settle or resolve any disputes in the bulldozing way that the Government likes to use its powers—the Noonkanbah method, one might perhaps call it.

The Government has found no occasion to use the Act in the past 12 months. As the member for Balcatta says, one can believe only that the reason the Government is seeking to extend the duration of the Act is to give some legitimacy to its passage in the first place. However, I believe there is a more serious motive, and that is that the Government wishes to continue the extraordinary powers it gave itself in what it claims was an emergency situation.

Let us imagine there is a big strike on; the people of Perth are starving; food cannot be sent to them. It was with that sort of scenario, which never occurred, that the Government brought about this legislation. It was decided it was necessary to have such draconian measures for a short period.

The classical scholars might like to cast their minds back to the Roman times when dictators were appointed under such circumstances. When the Roman State was in great danger, the people installed a dictator and all of the democratic processes were suspended. However, when that was done strict time limits were placed on the period of such a dictatorship. As the Roman Republic ground to its end, the people who assumed the dictatorship kept extending the period of it. That appears to be the same sort of thing the Government is doing now.

Having given itself the extraordinary powers set out in the Act, the Government now wishes to increase the time period for the holding of those powers fourfold, although it cannot point to any emergency which exists now or which may exist in the foreseeable future that would make the holding of the powers necessary. The Government cannot even point to an occasion in the last 12 months when the draconian powers have been required.

Earlier, by way of interjection, I said jokingly that the Opposition would be likely to break a record in the discussion of this Bill. I was referring to the record we set last year; but of course we are not intending to do that. However, I reiterate strongly that the Opposition is not agreeable to this extension of Government powers. We were not agreeable to the Government having the powers in the first place; and we will not agree to an extension of the powers.

If the Government is to resolve industrial disputes using the powers which this Bill is designed to extend, and if the Government is to use the bulldozer tactics of this legislation, we do not go along with it.

MR SKIDMORE (Swan) [2.39 p.m.]: I do not want to cover any ground already covered by the member who has just resumed his seat, or the member before him. I want to make it quite clear I oppose the measure. I see no validity in the extension of it.

The original legislation was introduced for the purpose of browbeating the union into doing what the Government wanted it to do on the specious argument that there would be a shortage of foodstuffs. Nothing could have been more ridiculous or further removed from the realities of the situation. I do not want to canvass the issues I raised at that time. We certainly had a long debate.

I see no reason for this Bill to be before us except perhaps that the Government must have some plan in mind to make this legislation remain on the Statute book for longer than the period mentioned in the original Bill. I would like to receive assurances from the Minister that this is not the case. I cannot accept the dubious reasons he put forward in his second reading speech, when he said the legislation was to ensure the public interest was not abused or neglected.

The Act has not been used in any form whatsoever and there has been no reason for it to be used. It is not good enough for the Government simply to say that the time limit is being extended in the best interests of the public. The legislation was introduced originally to meet the so-called emergency at that time and I am beginning to doubt that we have received the true reasons for the time limit on the legislation being extended. I oppose this Bill just as I did the original Bill. The sooner this legislation is removed from the Statute book the better.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Labour and Industry) [2.42 p.m.]: I offer no apologies for endeavouring to extend the life of this legislation. I offer no apologies because we on this side care for the public and what happens to them.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Mr O'CONNOR: The member for Gosnells mentioned that there had been no inconvenience caused to the public which had necessitated the use of this legislation. Quite frankly, if we go back to the time when we introduced the original legislation we will remember the public were being denied supplies of milk, eggs, bread, and other commodities of this type. Had it not been for the very good work of a great number of volunteers who bottled the milk and others who went out and sold eggs, the public would have been very greatly inconvenienced.

Mr Skidmore: No-one died from not getting his milk.

Mr O'CONNOR: I listened to the member for Swan without interrupting even though I did not like what he had to say, and he should show me the same courtesy.

We have had the legislation for something like 12 months and although it has not had to be enforced the position could arise whereby the public are denied the commodities they need while Parliament is not in session. This would be of great disadvantage and inconvenience to them. Given these circumstances, the legislation should continue for a while to make sure the people and their families have what they are entitled to. In these circumstances I would welcome the Opposition's support of the legislation.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 21		
Mr Blaikie	Mr Nanovich	
Mr Clarko	Mr O'Connor	
Mr Cowan	Mr Rushton	
Mrs Craig	Mr Sibson	
Dr Dadour	Mr Spriggs	
Mr Grewar	Mr Trethowan	
Mr Hassell	Mr Tubby	
Mr Herzfeld	Mr Watt	
Mr Laurance	Mr Williams	
Mr MacKinnon	Mr Shalders	
Mr Mensaros		*(Teller)*

Noes 15		
Mr Barnett	Mr Jamieson	
Mr Bertram	Mr McIver	
Mr Bridge	Mr Pearce	
Mr B. T. Burke	Mr Skidmore	
Mr T. J. Burke	Mr Tonkin	
Mr Carr	Mr Wilson	
Mr H. D. Evans	Mr Bateman	
Mr Hodge		*(Teller)*

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr Old	Mr T.H. Jones
Mr Grayden	Mr Harman
Mr Sodeman	Mr Grill
Mr Young	Mr Bryce
Sir Charles Court	Mr Parker
Mr P.V. Jones	Mr Taylor
Mr Crane	Mr Davies
Mr Coyne	Mr E.T. Evans

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

MAIN ROADS AMENDMENT BILL

Message: Appropriations

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

AGRICULTURE AND RELATED RESOURCES PROTECTION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 7 August.

MR H. D. EVANS (Warren—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [2.48 p.m.]: This measure is before the House because the four years of operation of the vermin fund scheme as it applies in pastoral areas is to come to an end. It is therefore essential that some action be taken to decide what policy is to be adopted with regard to pastoral areas.

The intentions of this Bill are threefold. The first is to retain the present 3c in the dollar of the existing level of Government contribution from the CRF for the 1980-81 and 1981-82 years. This has been the situation in the past. The money from the Government from its CRF has been a major contribution and it is a surprising amount. It is one of those situations that cannot otherwise be avoided. It was intended that the rate of the fund payable by the pastoralists be increased to 4.5c in the dollar with the Government matching this amount.

It can be seen from the answer I received to a question asked on 14 August last that this amount has certainly been balanced in favour of the pastoralists over the past three years. I should like to indicate to the House the magnitude of the finance that is involved.

It is not recognised generally that the Agriculture Protection Board has a very considerable annual budget. In relation to the goldfields and the Gascoyne-Murchison areas, the direct expenditure by the APB in the past three years was: in 1977-78 a total of $392 900 was spent in the goldfields and $362 000 in the Gascoyne-Murchison area; in 1978-79 the figure increased to $432 500 in the goldfields and $393 100 in the Gascoyne-Murchison area; and in 1979-80 the figures were $353 937 and $388 123 respectively.

To ensure the matter is understood fully, and to indicate the position of pastoralists, I should like to quote the answer received to the second part of the question to which I have referred. It reads as follows—

> Sources of funds are Consolidated Revenue Fund and a rate levied on pastoralists under the Agriculture and Related Resources Protection Act. No breakdown of rates collected from individual areas is available but based on overall expenditure in the Kimberley, Pilbara, Goldfields and Gascoyne/Murchison, this would be in the proportion of $11 CRF to $1 pastoral rate.

In effect, the pastoralists contribute one-eleventh of the total expenditure of the APB. That situation would have been terminated this year and, as I have indicated, it was intended to increase the rating level to 4.5c in the dollar, with the Government matching the amount that was collected by the pastoralists.

Under the circumstances, it is reasonable to extend the existing scheme for a further two years. This year has been a bumper one for a large percentage of the pastoralists. However, it will be some years before the pastoralists can recover from the drought to which they have been

subjected for some time. I do not imagine extensive stocking will take place in the immediate future, although the vegetation and feed for the stock will have returned to its previous condition.

It is not easy to obtain stock, especially at the present time when prices can be expected to rise sharply. Therefore, the increase in revenue to pastoralists cannot be expected to change markedly and a deferral of a decrease in the contributions to the APB fund is defensible and justifiable in the circumstance to which I have referred.

The second matter dealt with by the amendment seeks to give the Commissioner of State Taxation power to recover outstanding rates. Again, this is not unreasonable. The rates charged at the present time can be regarded as minimum figures under the circumstances. It is only fair and equitable that these rates should be paid. Therefore, the State should be in a position to recover the outstanding amounts from any defaulters.

For that reason, I do not believe the House can take exception to the Commissioner of Taxation being accorded these powers.

The third matter is not related to the two previous issues and concerns the intention under the Act to increase powers with regard to proscribed agricultural chemicals and to enable inspectors to search vehicles and premises.

This matter has implications for the grain growers of this State. It probably concerns also people involved in viticulture and horticulture. The member for Geraldton represents the area about which there has been most concern in regard to hormone sprays, particularly herbicide 2,4-D.

There is no question that, over the next few years, chemicals will play an increasing role in agriculture. Over five million acres of wheat-growing country will be treated with dieurin, or one of the other proprietary lines, to control weeds in cereal crops in the current year. That is an extraordinarily large area to be treated with chemicals; but it means that weeds can be controlled much more effectively. This has a direct influence on the crop yield as a result of the amount of moisture available for the crop and the ease of cultivation or harvest. This adds up to an increase in the net profit to the operator.

In that regard, the use of chemicals in agriculture will be increasingly important in the years ahead if farmers are to offset what is commonly known as the "cost-price squeeze".

The storage of proscribed chemicals is another matter. The amendment seeks to formalise the existing situation which applies to the Geraldton area.

Mr O'Connor: Is that concerning mainly 2,4-D?

Mr H. D. EVANS: It concerns mainly 2,4-D, but it takes in the broad spectrum of proscribed chemicals. Those which have the inherent dangers of 2,4-D are proscribed under the regulations and this amendment seeks to formalise and regularise the situation which pertains in the vicinity of Geraldton.

Concern has been expressed, particularly by the Farmers' Union, that the amendment should not seek to extend areas already under a degree of control. What is implied here is in the existing prescribed areas, Geraldton being one, this type of proscribed chemical cannot be used. The reason for this is obvious. It involves the protection of crops, such as tomato plantations. On one occasion, tomato plantations in the Geraldton area were wiped out when a train passed through with a leaking container of 2,4-D. That is an indication of the potency of these chemicals.

Mr O'Connor: Unfortunately, I was Minister for Railways on that occasion and I remember it quite well.

Mr H. D. EVANS: That would have cost the Minister dearly. If one removed the lid from a container of that material and drove through the Swan Valley, one would practically eradicate all the vineyards. We must have this type of control for the protection of the horticultural and viticultural industries.

It is understandable that farmers who need to use this type of chemical show concern in regard to the extension of these prescribed areas and the areas should be prescribed only when full consideration has been given to the range of agricultural industries involved. If we create an additional prescribed area, it means a grain grower might not be able to use the chemicals he needs to control the management of his crop.

So, the protection offered in the existing legislation is to be increased and strengthened in several ways. The powers of inspectors to search vehicles and premises are to be extended. This often causes some consternation in certain areas but as this is to apply only to a particular situation, there is little reason to become alarmed by the changes.

The Opposition does not seek to oppose the three changes I have mentioned. However, I had hoped that the Minister for Agriculture would have been in a position to give an indication with

regard to the recommendations of the Jennings report on the pastoral industry. He has indicated that legislation will be introduced very shortly to implement the Jennings report recommendations.

The recommendations will impinge on the arrangements between the Agriculture and Related Resources Protection Act and the future of the pastoral industries. The future of the pastoral industries is at present in the melting pot.

A total overview of the pastoral industries in the light of increasing cost burdens is required. Added to that is the question of soil erosion control and rejuvenation. These matters could have been dealt with in the overall examination of this measure. However, it is probably equally important to ensure that the pastoralists do have some relief and that they know exactly what the rating situation will be in the next two years. For that reason, the Opposition raises no objection to the legislation.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Deputy Premier) [3.03 p.m.]: I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for his general support of the Bill. It is obvious he believes, as I do, that this legislation will be of advantage to the industry generally.

With regard to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's comment on the Jennings report, I will refer his remarks to the Minister for Agriculture and request him to contact the member and supply him with the required information.

Mr H. D. Evans: There is a Bill which will come forward shortly which will provide that opportunity.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

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

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 7 August.

MR McIVER (Avon) [3.05 p.m.]: This is a Bill to amend the Taxi-cars (Co-ordination and Control) Act, 1963-1978. The Bill contains three main amendments.

The first amendment allows the board to allocate a taxi licence to those people who, before this Bill, did not qualify to have a taxi licence although they were acceptable. There was a situation in an outer metropolitan shire where a person applied for a licence and met the requirements but because of the existing legislation his application could not be approved.

The second amendment allows the board to increase the taxi fee from $50 to $100. Initially, there was some confusion because an announcement in the Press stated that the licence fee would be increased to $100. This announcement appeared in *The West Australian* on 8 August and the taxi industry was up in arms about the matter. However, when the matter was explained to the taxi operators and it was stated that this was something which may be imposed in the next 10 to 15 years, it was accepted.

Since notice of this legislation was given there has been no quarrel with the taxi industry and the commission. The industry is quite happy with the amendment.

In my opinion the third amendment is very important, because until the present time the Transport Commissioner has been the sole adjudicator with respect to disciplinary action. In other words, it has been an appeal from Caesar to Caesar. However, with this amendment if people in the taxi industry are required to go before a board for disciplinary action, there will no longer be a sole arbitrator. The matter will be heard before a board. Of course, if the decision is unacceptable the taxi operator still has a right of appeal to a court.

The Opposition appreciates fully the complexities involved in the taxi industry and all members are aware of the long hours these taxi operators work. They must work long hours to maintain a reasonable standard of living. I feel that in this day and age it is rather shameful that men should have to work 70 to 80 hours a week to maintain a reasonable standard of living. However, those hours are acceptable to the operators.

I make an appeal to the Minister to make the taxi drivers' lot a little easier by providing some amenities for taxi operators in the city.

I consider we should provide some amenities for our taxi operators, both the men and the women, where they can relax. I have already indicated that the owner taxi drivers work up to 80 hours a week, and they need somewhere to relax, even if provision were made for shower recesses, or somewhere they could freshen up. Perhaps an urn could be provided so that the drivers could have a cup of tea or coffee. I do not think such an amenity would involve much expenditure,

especially when one considers what this Government provides in other areas.

I do not intend to delay the passage of the Bill. It is quite plain to the Minister that the Opposition has no quarrel with its three amendments. Accordingly, I support the legilsation.

MR HERZFELD (Mundaring) [3.11 p.m.]: It is not my desire to delay this measure unnecessarily, but I want to take advantage of this opportunity to express my appreciation for the amendments. I do so for three reasons.

Firstly, I believe the Bill recognises a need and provides assistance for those people living in the outer metropolitan area who are without an adequate public transport service. Secondly, in my association with the provisions of this Bill I found there was a real case of industry interest preventing a justifiable service being provided. I found that the members of the Taxi Control Board objected to what, I believed, was a reasonable case for a service in my area. Thirdly, I want to place on record the tortuous path which a back-bencher has to follow to achieve a result for his constituents.

Mr Mclver: Fair go. The board did not obstruct the situation. It could not provide a service because of the present law.

Mr HERZFELD: I think the honourable member has it wrong. He has not studied the legislation closely.

Mr Mclver: Your constituent happened to write to me so I think I am right.

Mr HERZFELD: My constitutent may have written to the honourable member, but it appears the honourable member did not do very much for him because it was left to me to do something for the constituent.

I will turn to the problem of public transport in the outer metropolitan area. It is difficult for the public transport authority to provide the sort of schedules people would like provided. That service cannot be provided because of a lack of support, and because of the lack of population in outer areas.

All too often, as I travel throughout my electorate, I see MTT buses travelling for miles and carrying no passengers. It is a shame that the people who live in outer areas do not support a little better the public transport which is provided. However, I do recognise that people are entitled to exercise a choice in the way they move about, and quite obviously their preference is for the use of their own cars. For that sector of the community who do not own private vehicles, it is most appropriate that the amendment to section 16 of the Act has been brought forward. The amendment will provide the Minister with the discretion to allow the board to issue a licence to a person who does not qualify under other sections of the Act. Of course, the Minister will take that action only if there is good reason for him to do so.

That brings me to the case involving my constituent who, back in February of last year, saw the need for a taxi service within the Mundaring Shire. He took up the matter with the Taxi Control Board, but he was advised that the board felt the area was adequately serviced. Of course, those who lived in the area, and who have had the need for a taxi service from time to time, would most certainly deny that. In a letter to my constituent, dated 12 April 1979, the board said, after due consideration, that it was not prepared to issue a restricted licence for the Mundaring Shire as the existing service in the area was felt to be adequate for the present demand.

That was a strange decision in view of the fact there was ample evidence there was not an adequate service to meet the demand. Indeed, on many occasions when I have returned to the Perth Airport, and have wanted a taxi in order to return to my residence, I have been asked by the taxi driver where I wanted to go. When I have told the driver my address, which is at the western end of the area I represent, I have been told by the driver that he did not want to go that far. So, for those people who live further east the problem is even greater.

During the time I have represented my electorate I have had many instances of constituents coming to me and complaining about the lack of a taxi service in the area. I did not accept the board's decision, and I took the matter further. As a consequence, and after a great deal of correspondence, the board decided that perhaps there was a need for a taxi service more directly related to the needs of the district. Although the board denied the need for a restricted taxi licence, it did agree to put in a taxi bay. At the same time the board pointed out that at least eight taxi drivers were residents in my electorate.

Although the taxi bay was provided, there was never a taxi to be seen on the rank. That action by the board provided absolutely no benefit at all to my constituents. I continued to press the matter and I was able to persuade the Minister that there was a need for a restricted licence in my electorate. When the Minister took action through the board, and applications were called, it was found that the only applications received were from people who could not meet the

requirements of the Act as it stood. The Act required that the person seeking a licence of this nature be a full-time operator with experience in the industry for a period of some two years, I believe.

Of course when one is pioneering a service one cannot guarantee one will immediately be provided with full-time work. The service needs to be established and its existence needs to become known before it will be fully utilised. One of the people who were prepared to invest money in a taxicab was quite willing to take that risk and start with the service on a low key until such time as it built up. In order to do that, he had to operate on a part-time basis.

It is as a result of these needs and the recognition by the Minister that this was the way the service had to start that this legislation is before the House. I am very pleased about the way the Minister responded to provide a solution once he recognised the problem. It is of no consolation to me that it will have taken something like two years from initiation before the service I desire for my constituents will be established.

It has taken a great deal of correspondence, many meetings, a grievance debate in this House, and the introduction of this legislation to reach a point where a taxi will become a reality in the Shire of Mundaring. It may not be a very big deal as far as this House is concerned but I believe it is a big deal for my constituents to have another form of public transport available to them. I therefore welcome the legislation and give it my wholehearted support.

MR RUSHTON (Dale—Minister for Transport) [3.22 p.m.]: Firstly, I express my appreciation to the member for Avon for his comments. He has demonstrated a knowledge of the three points raised and expressed opinions relating to them. The additional major point was the question of amenities for taxi drivers.

The member for Avon would know that some time back I initiated an inquiry in order to help the taxi industry find a better future. I had the representatives of the taxi industry join me and I suggested they might form themselves in to a committee, with some help from me, and with a consultant to run it for them and have a good look at the industry with a view to putting forward some recommendations to improve their lot. They have done that and I expect a report at any time now. The consultant working with them has had some ill-health and the report has been delayed a little. I will consider the question of amenities when making the review and see what can be done. I will put the matter to the Chairman of the Taxi Control Board.

Secondly, the member for Mundaring has obviously been interested in the matter and I appreciated his comments about the way we are acting to ensure a service is introduced at Mundaring. I know the member for Mundaring had been discussing the matter with the Taxi Control Board for a long time seeking a solution, but when he brought the matter to my notice it was not long before we found a solution and took action. Naturally, it takes time to bring legislation forward, but as far as I and the Government were concerned there was no intention of delaying the matter, and we now have the legislation before us.

The honourable member mentioned the question of transport in the outer areas and the difficulties experienced. My electorate has the same problems. It grieves me, too, to see a bus that is not fully loaded in the off-peak periods, and even at other times we often do not have the loadings we would like in the outer areas. The efforts we are making in public transport are redressing some of these problems. Transfer stations are being developed and the one at Midland has been successful. On week days something like 12 000 people use the facility and the parking areas, and it has been my experience to see parking facilities double in the time I have been responsible for this portfolio. This is an area which we must ensure receives every consideration. The intention is to establish more transfer stations. One has been established at Kelmscott in recent times.

Car pooling provides another opportunity for outer areas to improve transport, and other alternatives are being considered, which I hope to develop and bring forward at a later stage. We cannot allow the deficits to increase. We must attack the problem in the most positive way. I am dedicated to ensuring public transport is efficient and effective and provides service to the public. We have a widely dispersed, low-density community to which we must adapt with public transport which is suitable and economic.

I thank members for their support of the Bill and commend it to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

SLAUGHTER OF CALVES RESTRICTION ACT REPEAL BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 9 September.

MR H. D. EVANS (Warren—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [3.30 p.m.]: The provisions of the Act which this Bill seeks to repeal are now redundant. The Act endeavoured to preclude the sale of female calves on the vealer market.

The dairy industry has changed tremendously since the days when the vealers were killed on the floor of the milking shed, sewn up in hessian, and sent to market on the train the next day. As the Act is now redundant, we support the Bill to repeal it.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

STALLIONS ACT REPEAL BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 9 September.

MR H. D. EVANS (Warren—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [3.32 p.m.]: The Act which the Bill seeks to repeal made it an offence for owners of stallions which were not registered to use them for breeding purposes on mares other than their own. As with the previous measure, circumstances have changed over the years. Horses are no longer used in farm work, and again this Bill is an endeavour to clean the Statute book of unnecessary legislation. We believe that is a desirable course to follow.

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool) [3.33 p.m.]: Will the repeal of this legislation pose any threat to the Thoroughbred horse industry? Perhaps the Deputy Premier could enlighten me about this matter. It could happen that a person could maliciously put his stallion to a mare of a valuable bloodstock line, and the owner of the mare would then not be able to breed a purebred Thoroughbred from that mare on that occasion.

The Act we are seeking to repeal protected not only those with, say, Clydesdale horses, but also the owners of other breeds, including Thoroughbreds. I would like to hear comment, either in reply or at some time in the future, as to whether the Thoroughbred industry will still be protected when the Stallions Act is repealed. I am not aware of any other Statutes that would provide such protection, and surely there is justification to be careful.

Mr H. D. Evans: Registration is required in the Thoroughbred industry through trotting and other clubs.

Mr JAMIESON: I am well aware of that, but if someone were maliciously to put a stallion which was not a Thoroughbred to a Thoroughbred mare, such an action might be detrimental to the breed.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Deputy Premier) [3.35 p.m.]: I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for his support of the measure, and I will endeavour to reply to the comments of the member for Welshpool. My understanding is that there is no problem. Thoroughbred and pacing stock are protected adequately, not only by way of registration, but also by way of legislation.

The provisions of the Stallions Act are no longer being complied with, and so we are endeavouring to permit the people concerned to operate as they have been operating in the past.

I will refer the query raised by the member for Welshpool to the Minister for Agriculture and ask him to confirm in writing the comments I have made. My understanding is that there is no problem as far as the racing industry is concerned.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

House adjourned at 4.05 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

691 and 728. *These questions were further postponed.*

RABBITS

Burns Beach

772. Mr CRANE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Is there a serious rabbit infestation at Burns Beach, where I understand rabbits are destroying shrubs, young trees and garden plants on the Burns Beach caravan park?

(2) If "Yes", and in view of this claim, will the Minister—

(a) have an inspection made of the area by the Agriculture Protection Board to obtain a report on the seriousness of the infestation;

(b) advise what eradication steps or preventative measures can be taken to rid the Burns Beach area and residents of this serious infestation;

(c) report when such action will be taken and identify the methods to be used?

Mr OLD replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) (a) Inspections have been carried out on a regular basis by Agriculture Protection Board staff.

(b) The European rabbit flea has been released in an endeavour to establish myxomatosis in the area.

(c) Answered by (a) and (b) above.

773. *This question was postponed.*

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Building Appeals Committee

774. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Local Government:

(1) With reference to question 567 of 1980 which revealed that during the last three years approximately two-thirds of all appeals to the Minister were upheld. Does this very high proportion of appeals upheld represent an excessive restriction on the autonomy of local councils to make decisions for their own areas?

(2) If "No" to (1), what does the Government see as the implications of this very high rate of appeals upheld?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

(1) These appeals related to decisions of councils affecting the way in which people were permitted to make use of their own property.

I do not believe, and I am sure that the public would not believe, that it is unreasonable for a right of appeal to exist in these circumstances.

Because the legislation does not permit a council to approve a building work which would be contrary to the building bylaws, councils frequently have no choice but to refuse approval. In many cases the councils themselves advocate that approval be given on appeal.

The honourable member's platitudinous reference to the autonomy of local government is not relevant in the context of building appeals.

(2) There are no implications.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Elections: Property-based Franchise

775. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Local Government:

(1) What is the historical justification for a property-based franchise system with plural and multiple voting for local elections?

(2) What is the relevance of this historical justification today?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

(1) The honourable member should be in as good a position as I to research the history of property based franchise and multiple voting.

(2) If, as I imagine, the historical basis was the principle that those who can be called on to meet the rate burden should be able to decide who sets that burden, then it is still of great relevance.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Elections: Property-based Franchise

776. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Local Government:

Considering that about 60 per cent of municipal revenues in Western Australia do not come from rates, but from fees,

charges, loans and grants from the State and Commonwealth Governments, how does she justify the maintenance of a property-based franchise in view of the existing financial structure of councils and the nature of their services?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

Rates not only constitute the greatest single source of local government revenue but are also the only significant item which a council can collect by compulsion and which can be set at whatever level the council decides.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Elections: Valuation Scales

777. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Local Government:

Since the draft Bill on Part IV of the Local Government Act appears to increase the valuation scales for determining the number of votes a person may cast at a local election, so that many electors will receive fewer votes than at the moment, and in view of her commitment to maintain the only multiple voting system in Australian local government—

(a) how were these new scales calculated;

(b) why have the scales not been adjusted since 1960;

(c) does she envisage that the scales adopted in the draft Bill will remain in force for another 20 years;

(d) how frequently is it intended that new scales will be adopted.?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

(a) By an examination of the valuation characteristics of a range of different municipalities.

(b) Because no amendment for this purpose was passed by Parliament during that period; not even during the time that the honourable member's own party was in Government.

(c) Until legislation is passed by the Parliament, I am unable to say whether the scales set down in the draft Bill will ever come into force, let alone whether they will remain in force over the next 20 years.

(d) That would depend on the wishes of the Parliament.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Elections: Valuation Scales

778. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Local Government:

(1) With reference to the draft Bill on Part IV of the Local Government Act which proposes to readjust the scales for property values in determining how many votes an elector may cast, what effect will this change have on electors in local government elections?

(2) (a) What proportion of these electors currently entitled to four votes in a mayoral or presidential election will receive a reduction in the number of votes they may cast;

(b) what proportion will, under the proposal, receive three votes, two votes or one vote;

(c) what proportion of electors entitled to three votes in a mayoral or presidential election will receive a reduction to two votes or one vote;

(d) what proportion of electors currently entitled to two votes for a councillor will receive one vote because of the new scales envisaged by the draft Bill?

(3) If the answers to questions (1) and (2) are not available, how is it that the new valuation scales were calculated and yet the consequences of this change not anticipated?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

(1) to (3) The exact nature of any changes will not be known until draft legislation is introduced into the Parliament.

At that stage the honourable member will have adequate opportunity to study the specific provisions and raise questions accordingly.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Elections: Aliens

779. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Local Government:

(1) Is it a fact that the member councils of the Local Government Association voted 23 to 8 in 1978 in favour of aliens being entitled to vote at local government elections?

(2) Why has she not incorporated this policy in the draft Bill to re-enact Part IV of the Local Government Act?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

(1) In 1978 the Local Government Association advised that it supported the inclusion of aliens. However, I was not aware of details of the vote of member bodies.

(2) Because it did not seem appropriate to do so. However, I remind the honourable member that the reason for circulating a draft Bill was to enable all councils to comment on this and other issues.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Elections: Adult Franchise

780. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Local Government:

With reference to the working committee established by the former Minister to report on the local government electoral system, did that Minister instruct that working committee not to consider the option of adult franchise in local government elections?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

No.

HEALTH

Child Health Clinic

781. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Health:

(1) Further to his answer to question 277 of 1980 relevant to a proposed new health clinic, and with particular reference to a proposed new child health clinic for Bluff Point, where in Bluff Point will the clinic be located?

(2) When is it expected that the clinic will be in operation?

Mr YOUNG replied:

(1) No specific location has been determined.

(2) Unknown. The local authority has not made a firm commitment. Funds were provided in 1979-80 budget and carried forward in 1980-81 estimates to ensure availability if required.

782. *This question was postponed.*

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Country Prices

783. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Consumer Affairs:

(1) Has the Consumer Affairs Bureau conducted any further investigations into country price levels as a follow up to last year's much-publicised surveys of certain Pilbara towns?

(2) If "Yes", will be please advise the details?

(3) If not, will he please explain why not?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

(1) No. This was specifically done following a door-knock in the area by the member for Pilbara and myself during the Hamersley strike and following reaction mainly from housewives.

(2) See answer to (3).

(3) Only if such action is warranted by a sufficient number of legitimate complaints from a specific town or district.

HEALTH: MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS

Katanning

784. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

(1) Is he aware of allegations that a Katanning doctor refused to treat a woman at the hospital on 31st August and that, consequently, she had to be driven 40 kilometres to Kojonup for treatment?

(2) (a) If so, has he conducted an investigation into the allegations; and

(b) if so with what result?

(3) If he has not conducted an investigation, why not, and will he now do so?

(4) Will he advise the House of the outcome of his investigations?

Mr YOUNG replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) (a) Yes;
(b) the patient was a private patient of Dr Ong who has a locum arrangement with Dr Lowe at Kojonup.

(3) Answered by (2)(b) above.

(4) Answered by (2)(b) above.

HEALTH: MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS

Katanning

785. MR HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

(1) Is it a fact that only two of four doctors in Katanning provide emergency services for the hospital?

(2) Do doctors in country towns who will not provide emergency services for the hospital have access free of charge to hospital facilities?

(3) Is any action available to the Government to encourage or compel doctors to provide emergency services?

(4) Is the Government satisfied that emergency medical services available in Katanning are sufficient?

(5) Has consideration been given to the appointment of full-time medical staff at the Katanning Hospital and, if so, with what result?

Mr YOUNG replied:

(1) No, three doctors in town provide an emergency service.

(2) Yes.

(3) No.

(4) Yes, when it is considered that three out of four resident practitioners voluntarily provide an emergency after hours service, the present service compares favourably to those provided at other country centres of similar size.

(5) No.

786. *This question was postponed.*

CEMETERY

Pinnaroo

787. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Local Government:

(1) Have the by-laws for Pinnaroo Cemetery been framed to allow for the erection of headstones?

(2) Was it originally agreed that graves would be marked by a ground level tablet only, on the basis that the cemetery would have a memorial park atmosphere?

(3) If headstones are now to be allowed, what additonal money will be required in order to enable headstones to be introduced?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) I am unaware of any such agreement.

(3) I do not know but I will shortly be discussing the whole question of a headstone area with the Chairman of the Pinnaroo Cemetery Board.

788 to 790. *These questions were postponed.*

BUNBURY FOODS LTD.

Government Guarantee

791. Mr DAVIES, to the Honorary Minister assisting the Minister for Industrial Development and Commerce:

Can he give an indication of when I will receive a reply to my letter of 27 August 1980 concerning a list of conditions covering assistance given to Bunbury Foods Limited?

Mr MacKINNON replied:

I understand that the information requested by the Leader of the Opposition has now been supplied to him.

HEALTH

Handicapped Persons: Parking Bays

792. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

Will she insure that bays are set aside in car parks for disabled people?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

Although I am not in a position to give any assurance, I will have the matter examined to see what can be done.

HEALTH: DRUGS

Debendox

793. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Health:

Does the Western Australian Public Health Department consider the drug Debendox safe?

Mr YOUNG replied:

The examination of Debendox in Australia has been carried out by the Congenital Abnormalties Subcommittee of the Australian Drug Evaluation Committee and is under continuing review. Its advice to date is that the frequency of birth defects in the children of mothers who have taken Debendox during pregnancy has not been demonstrated to exceed the frequency in the children of mothers who did not take Debendox.

The department believes that although the use of Debendox in pregnancy has not been shown to increase the risk of birth defects, the usual cautionary approach to the use of any drug in pregnancy should apply.

COMMUNITY WELFARE

Christian Welfare Centre

794. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Community Welfare:

Can he give details of the way in which a recent Social Security grant of $40 800 to the Christian Welfare Centre will be spent?

Mr HASSELL replied:

A grant of $40 800 was made to the Christian Welfare Centre to enable it to provide a home support service for motherless families.

Most of the grant was for purposes of salaries, with small amounts of money for mileage, administration and weekend camps.

This money was given as second year funding under the Family Support Services Scheme. This scheme is funded by the Commonwealth through the Department of Social Security and administered jointly by the State and Commonwealth.

795. *This question was postponed.*

REAL ESTATE AND BUSINESS AGENTS

Deposit Trust

796. Mr DAVIES, to the Chief Secretary:

(1) How much is currently held in the Real Estate and Business Agents Deposit Trust?
(2) How much is held in that Trust's interest account?
(3) How much is being invested under section 129 of the Real Estate and Business Agents Act?
(4) Who invests on behalf of the Board?
(5) How much has been transferred from the Trust interest account to be applied for the purposes of parts (a), (b) and (c) of section 130 of the Real Estate and Business Agents Act?
(6) What is the balance in the Fidelity Guarantee Fund?

Mr HASSELL replied:

(1) $3 745 424.06.
(2) Nil.
(3) All funds received.
(4) The registrar in accordance with the board's investment policy.
(5) Nil.
(6) $677 005.

797. *This question was postponed.*

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

WA SMALL BUSINESS SERVICES PTY. LTD.

Chairman

165. Mr DAVIES, to the Honorary Minister Assisting the Minister for Industrial Development and Commerce:

(1) Is the Minister aware that there is no company registered in WA by the name of Small Business Services Pty. Ltd?
(2) Could he explain how a former Liberal member of Parliament, Mr M. C. Williams, could be appointed as chairman, on an annual salary of $3 000, of a company that does not exist?
(3) Is the Minister aware that when he announced Mr Williams' appointment together with the names of eight members of the board of directors for the company on 21 August this year, no such company existed?

Mr MacKINNON replied:

(1) to (3) Yes, no such company is incorporated at this stage. The memorandum and articles have been drafted by the Crown Law Department and are being reviewed currently by the board referred to, which was appointed in anticipation of the memorandum and articles being incorporated.

The reason for appointing the board was that it will be charged with the administration of this service, and therefore, it was believed it should have some input into the details to be included in the memorandum and articles. The board is considering these at the moment, and we hope they will be back at the Crown Law Department next week and then the documents will be filed with the Corporate Affairs Office for the company to be incorporated and the board to be appointed officially under the Companies Act.

RAILWAYS

Grain

166. Mr CRANE, to the Minister for Transport:

(1) Was a grain freight steering committee formed recently under the Minister's direction comprising a representative from—

Westrail

Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd.

Australian Wheat Board

Grain Pool of Western Australia

Farmers' Union of Western Australia

pastoralists and graziers?

(2) Was a technical committee formed from the deliberations of the above committee?

(3) What are the names of the personnel and the representative organisations they represent on the technical committee?

(4) What are the terms of reference of both the steering committee and the technical committee?

(5) Will the information of actual cost of grain haulage be made available to the grain committee?

(6) What share of the infrastructure costs of Westrail will be allocated to grain haulage?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

(1) A grain freight steering committee was recently formed under my direction comprising representatives from—

Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd.

Australian Wheat Board

Grain Pool of Western Australia

pastoralists and graziers.

the Farmers' Union

(2) Yes.

(3) Mr R. Delmenico, Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd.
Mr R. Ford, Grain Pool.
Mr W. Hewitt, Australian Wheat Board.
Mr J. Groves, Farmers' Union.
Mr G. Maisey, pastoralists and graziers.
Mr S. Hicks, Director General of Transport's Office (Non-voting Chairman).

(4) The two committees were formed to investigate the feasibility and legal aspects of the grain industry entering into contract negotiations with Westrail to haul the grain harvest. They will also look into the possibility of achieving any modification under an agreement they considered desirable to the scheduled rates due to apply from 1 November, 1980 based on incentive benefits from performance achievements.

(5) and (6) The grain committee will be meeting with representatives of Westrail to discuss the advantages of entering into negotiations for a contractual agreement in the accepted commercial manner.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Elections: Adult Franchise

167. Mr CARR, to the Minister for Local Government:

In her answer to question No. 724 yesterday, the Minister claimed not to know how many resident adults are denied a vote in local government elections because of the property franchise. In view of that, and in view of her refusal to attempt to find out, I ask how she expects to be able to prepare and introduce fair and reasonable legislation to alter voting procedures

when she does not have and will not acquire such essential and basic information?

Mrs CRAIG replied:

I have indicated to the member for Geraldton by reply both to questions without notice and questions on notice that the information the Government found necessary in relation to the redrafting of the electoral provisions in part IV of the Local Government Act has been ascertained by consultation with all local authorities not once, but twice. In addition, we have had considerable discussions with a committee. It is on that basis we will arrive at the appropriate provisions to be incorporated in the new legislation.

HEALTH

Trachoma

168. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Health:

(1) Is the Minister aware of the disastrous financial deal that Western Australia received at the June Premiers' Conference?

(2) Is he aware of the Treasurer's statements in this House during his second reading speech on the Supply Bill that the Government is facing "severe budgetary problems" in 1980-81 and that "there is no doubt that expenditure will have to be curtailed with greater severity than has been the case in recent years"?

(3) If the Minister is aware of the foregoing, how can he justify on financial grounds his Government's withdrawal from the national trachoma and eye-health programme?

Mr YOUNG replied:

(1) to (3) I am glad the Leader of the Opposition has given me an opportunity to make a statement in respect of this matter, and the manner in which he has given me the opportunity makes me even more enthusiastic to make it. Yes, I am aware of the fact that Western Australia, along with some other States, perhaps, has not had the best of deals from the Commonwealth in respect of the forthcoming financial arrangements. I am aware of the fact also that we have some budgetary problems this year and expenditure will have to be heavily curtailed.

With regard to the national trachoma and eye-health programme, I think the Leader of the Opposition should be informed immediately that as I see the position no further financial burden will be imposed on the State by its not continuing in the programme in respect of the treatment of trachoma and other eye diseases amongst Aborigines. The reason is that the Western Australian Government for many years has been carrying on a service to Aborigines through the community and health services programme in the most remote places of Western Australia. That service has been carried out for many years in conjunction with the Western Australian branch of the Royal Australian College of Opthalmologists—long before Professor Hollow set up the national programme.

The national programme, although it is a valuable adjunct to ongoing care in this area, cannot be considered as being the only care programme for eyes or any other health aspect of Aborigines in the far flung areas of this State; because the health of Aborigines depends almost entirely on an ongoing programme which the Western Australian Government instituted and has been carrying on for quite a number of years in respect of the total environmental health of these people.

I am sure the Leader of the Opposition would have been aware when he was the Minister for Health that this programme is indeed effective. That has been acknowledged by the Commonwealth Government in recent correspondence with me over the last couple of months—both by the Minister,

to whom I wrote about the matter, and by the Director General of Medical Services in Canberra.

It has been suggested by some people who I believe have misinterpreted the reports of the national trachoma and eye-health programme, that Queensland and Western Australia have the highest incidence of trachoma in Australia. That may be so, but what has not been said in the giving of that information is that we also have the highest population of Aborigines. What also has not been said—and it is important to say it—is that the incidence of trachoma is very low indeed amongst young Aborigines. It is mostly found among the older generations who did not have the opportunity to be treated under the community and health services programmes, which have existed for about 20 years.

All in all, I cannot see that it will cost the State any more to carry on its present programme. I see the national trachoma and eye-health programme under Professor Hollows as being more in the nature of a research programme than a treatment programme. It should be remembered that in the environmental situation which causes trachoma unless we get to the root cause of the problem, treatment will not be effective. The environment must be improved, which can only be a long-term programme. Visiting them once every couple of years, swabbing eyes, and leaving drops, will be effective only in clearing up existing signs of trachoma, and may not be effective in the long term.

Mr Davies: Before you sit down, can I ask you a supplementary question: Who will do the research?

Mr YOUNG: I think the Leader of the Opposition is trying to come out of this with a little credibility.

Mr Davies: It is not a question of that.

Mr YOUNG: Western Australia has the only complete set of figures in all the country in respect of rates of morbidity, mentality, and physical health amongst Aborigines. Therefore, I think we can do the research without Professor Hollows' help.

HEALTH

Trachoma

169. Mr HODGE, to the Minister for Health:

(1) In view of the article in this morning's newspaper which stated that the Commonwealth Government had provided $2 million for research work into trachoma, why is the State Government prepared to give up that sort of expenditure? With the shortage of funds for health care, I would have thought the State Government would be very anxious to retain any financial assistance from the Federal Government.

(2) From where is the Minister going to find the additional expert staff to expand the present community service in this area? Currently, there are waiting lists of at least six months in the Kimberley for people requiring specialist eye treatment, so it would seem there is a shortage of staff.

Mr YOUNG replied:

(1) Inherent in the honourable member's question is the suggestion that if the Commonwealth throws some money at a problem, the problem will be solved, and that a project must necessarily be carried out because money is available. I have given a fairly lengthy explanation on this matter to the Leader of the Opposition, and I would have thought the member for Melville would have gathered that we are quite happy to undertake this programme ourselves. In addition, both the Commonwealth Government and our Public Health Department have no objection to Western Australia providing the service which, at the moment, Professor Hollow's team feels it can provide to the Aboriginal community.

Mr Hodge: Is the Commonwealth Government going to give you the $2 million?

Mr YOUNG: I am not going to ask for the $2 million. I will eventually get it through to the member for Melville. Is the $2 million supposed to have been spent in Western Australia alone, or is it the total amount?

Mr Davies: It is the total Australian programme.

Mr YOUNG: That share of the money which has been spent in Western Australia by the Hollows team does not necessarily need to continue to be spent for this health service to continue. I have made the point that the Aborigines' environment is most important in the curing of tracchoma, and that the Hollows team did not solve the cause of the problem. The team would treat the problem on encountering it and take statistics and all that sort of thing.

Mr Hodge: Then it was not making a contribution at all.

Mr YOUNG: I am not saying that; I am simply referring to the programme carried out by the Commonwealth team. It would evaluate the situation and give advice on the cleaning up of trachoma as and when it was encountered, but it could not treat the basic cause of the problem, which is the environmental conditions of the Aborigines. Aborigines live in conditions which are natural to them in a country which is their own, but unfortunately their lifestyle contributes to the trachoma problem. The Hollows team has made only sporadic visits to outback Western Australia—as infrequently as four or five years and even longer, in some areas—and quite often, six months after it has left an area, the problem of trachoma may well be back in full flight. So, it is not solving the problem. There is nothing wrong with the State Government going it alone, particularly when the Commonwealth has acknowledged we have the expertise to do so.

(2) There is no need for us to appoint additional expert staff. The Royal Australian College of Ophthalmologists has guaranteed its continuing support of the programme for as long as it is able. The member for Melville referred to a six month waiting list to see an eye specialist. If he is talking about the Caucasian population, that is a separate question. However, if he is referring to Aborigines in isolated areas being required to wait six months to have a serious eye disorder treated, and he provides me with details of the individual cases, I will rectify the situation.

HEALTH

Air Lead and Ozone Content

170. Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Transport:

(a) Is he familiar with the contents of the document "Future Lead and Emission Controls" by the Vehicle Emissions and Noise Standards Advisory Committee dated June 1980?

(b) If "No", will he study the report?

(c) If "Yes" to (a), is he aware that of 18 Australian capital city sites for which mean quarterly atmospheric lead levels were measured in the September quarter 1979, and 17 sites for which similar measurements were made in the December quarter 1979, the highest lead levels were recorded at a site in William Street, Perth?

(d) Is he also aware that in 1979 Perth was the only major city outside Melbourne and Sydney to record an ozone air pollution level higher than the level recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council?

(e) Is he aware that for the past six quarters measured, Perth has consistently exceeded National Health and Medical Research Council recommended maximum permissible level of lead in the air?

(f) Therefore, how does he explain his claim, reported in *The West Australian* of 4 July 1980, that the danger of serious pollution from exhaust gases in Perth is remote?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

I thank the member for Rockingham for adequate notice of his question. I point out that in part (e) of the question provided to me it refers to "the past four quarters" whereas the honourable member's question just asked referred to "the past six quarters". Perhaps there has been a typographical error. My answer is as follows—

(a) and (b) I have not studied it in depth, but I am aware of its broad contents, and will study it further in due course.

(c) Yes. I understand that the highest William Street level recorded was in the September quarter and it was about 6 per cent higher than the next highest recording in Australia in that quarter, which was in Sydney.

(d) Yes. I understand that in 1979 on one day the ozone level in Perth reached a level of 0.14 parts per million compared with the recommended limit of 0.12 parts per million.

(e) Yes.

(f) My statement on 4 July was made in respect of vehicle emission control regulations which deal with gaseous emissions, not lead. I do not believe that to slightly exceed the recommended ozone limit on one day during a 12-month period can be regarded as serious. I made the point that the considerable swing towards the purchase of smaller cars, which intrinsically emit fewer pollutants, makes the danger of serious pollution more remote.

We will be taking account of the new information in this report in considering the new proposals on vehicle emission controls—including lead—which will be forthcoming in the next few months.

PINBALL PARLOURS

Inquiry

171. Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Police and Traffic:

My question relates to pinball machines. I am aware the Government was considering appointing a committee to examine the question. I further preface my question by saying that my officers have recorded a number of telephone calls concerning the machine "Space Invaders", which has allegedly been taken from some pinball parlours.

Can the Minister inform me whether the committee of inquiry is operating, how it is constituted, whether it has recommended the withdrawal of any machines and whether the police have taken any action to have these machines removed as a result of a report of the committee—I do not know how disastrous it is going to be—or whether the machines have been withdrawn by the private owners themselves?

Mr HASSELL replied:

I have never indicated that I proposed to establish a committee on this matter. In response to the questions previously asked by the member for Ascot, I undertook to have the matter checked. I subsequently asked the Commissioner of Police and the Director of the Department for Community Welfare to advise me on the matter, which they did, separately. Both indicated that although there were isolated examples of problems experienced with the misuse of some machines, there was no continuing evidence of a major problem in this State; accordingly, neither department recommended we should take any specific action at that stage.

The Department for Community Welfare advised me that in its view there was a need to monitor further certain areas. At the time this matter was raised, it was school holiday time, and the department suggested that when things returned to their normal pattern it would have another look at the matter. I asked it to do so, and to advise me in due course. That is the position as it stands at the moment. I was pleased to hear there was no general area of concern about the machines.

On the matter of the machine mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition—the "Space Invaders" machine—I am not aware of that particular machine or what has been done about it by anybody, whether they be the owners of the machine, or the police, or what. If the machine offends against the gaming laws, then the police act. If the operators allow the machines to be used outside the permitted hours, the police act on that. Beyond that, I could only answer a question on notice about that particular machine.

ALEXANDER LIBRARY

Building: Tenders

172. Mr PARKER, to the Minister for Works:

(1) Is it true that, in respect of the management contract recently let for the building of the Alexander Library in James Street Perth, the lowest tenderer was A. V. Jennings Industries, a large and reputable firm; and that the second lowest tenderer was Multiplex Constructions Pty. Ltd., another large and reputable firm; and that despite the fact that A. V. Jennings Industries was the lowest tenderer, the tender was given to Multiplex Constructions Pty. Ltd.?

(2) If that is the case, why was it so?

(3) Is it also the case that A. V. Jennings Industries have indicated they wish to have a full inquiry into the matter?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

(1) to (3) I have no information about the tenders in this case. I will inquire and give the information to the member.

Mr B. T. Burke: You will probably give us the wrong information, as you always do.

HEALTH

Trachoma

173. Mr BRIDGE, to the Minister for Health:

(1) Is he aware that, despite an anti-trachoma programme set up by the Western Australian Government as a result of efforts by Professor Dame Ida Mann in 1955, the amount of eye disorder in the Kimberley in 1977 was at the same level as 23 years previously?

(2) Is he satisfied that the State measures have the capacity to deal with this unnecessary, treatable problem?

Mr YOUNG replied:

(1) I was not previously aware of the allegation that the figures in respect of the incidence of trachoma had remained the same over a period of 23 years, as alleged by the member for Kimberley. I am not certain how those figures could have been obtained, in view of the lack of statistical information available prior to approximately 10 years ago in respect of Aboriginal health in far-flung places. If the member for Kimberley is referring to nomadic Aborigines—if he is referring to some of the people in the far-distant parts of the State and not to—

Mr Bridge: The national report which is now available talks generally about the State, not just particular areas. It is the normal information that the level of eye disorder in Western Australia in 1977 had remained unchanged since 1955. It is a well-known fact.

Mr YOUNG: The member for Kimberley is talking about eye disorder. I missed the point originally when he said "eye disorder". I have not received previous notice of this question. I thought he was talking about trachoma.

If the member for Kimberley is linking in any way the national trachoma and eye-health programme with general eye disorder in this question, then there is really no comparison between the State-wide figures and the question asked by the member. To clarify in my mind what the member for Kimberley wants, is he in fact talking about general eye disorder, or is he linking the question of the national trachoma and eye-health programme following the two previous questions?

Mr Bridge: Perhaps to assist you I will say I was speaking in terms of the trachoma reports, rather than generally.

Mr YOUNG: If the member for Kimberley is linking the matter to trachoma, the only thing I can say is that I do not have any statistics on a State-wide basis that would be meaningful, because of what I said earlier about the general nature of statistics from Aborigines in distant places prior to 10 years ago. To make the point absolutely clear, it would be best if the member for Kimberley were to put the question on the notice paper so that he knows exactly what he wants to ask, and I will know exactly what to answer.

(2) I am satisfied that the State measures will be competent to deal with the matter.