

House, said he would convey the subject of the remarks to his colleague, the Minister for Agriculture, in due course.

He obviously did that because he intended to say something on behalf of his colleague, the Minister for Agriculture. I now feel that since he did not attempt to say something when he moved for the special adjournment I have been, in a way, responsible for preventing him from making such comments. That was not my intention at all.

My action was based on the thought that if ministerial statements were made at the adjournment, then anybody else who desired to say something in connection with the particular statement could comment at that stage, whereas he could not say anything at the point when the Minister had been granted permission to make a personal explanation to the House.

It is not really a personal explanation. What Mr. Dolan intended to do was to say something on behalf of one of his ministerial colleagues. In my view a personal explanation is something which a member of this House gives concerning a matter which affects him personally. The matter before us, however, does not affect the Leader of the House really, it affects the Minister for Agriculture.

In the circumstances I feel that in the future I should shut up and not try to be of any help in matters of this kind because otherwise it could cause some difficulty. The Leader of the House did not see fit to take the cue; and now in an endeavour to put matters right I apologise for any inconvenience I may have caused and I invite the Leader of the House to make the comment supplied by his ministerial colleague (Mr. H. D. Evans) so we can all hear what it is.

Question put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

THE HON. J. DOLAN (South-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [5.16 p.m.]: I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

THE HON. R. J. L. WILLIAMS (Metropolitan) [5.17 p.m.]: Mr. President, a set of circumstances occurred this afternoon which causes me to rise to my feet and ask for your guidance in the matter; because I realise you are the protector of our constitutional rights as members within this House.

This afternoon I heard something which I regard as unconstitutional, and if it is proved otherwise at the appropriate time I will apologise to the House. This afternoon I heard the expression used four times from the Government side of the House, and I read it in a question from the Opposition side, when a reference was made to the Australian Government.

I do not know what the Australian Government is. I know there is a Commonwealth Government, and it would seem that the framers of the second reading speech which was delivered by the Attorney-General also do not know what the Australian Government is, because on page 8 of the notes they refer to the fact that the Commonwealth has now proclaimed the Jury Exemption Act.

We are Australians; and our State Parliament is an Australian Parliament; it is sovereign in its own right; and if and when in the fullness of time you, Sir, investigate my objection I would ask you to direct in point of fact that reference in this House, to the "Australian Parliament" be struck from the *Hansard*, and that the term "Australian Parliament" be not legal until such time as it is proclaimed by Act of Parliament and accepted by the several separate Parliaments within the Commonwealth.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: The Constitution must first be altered.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I will give consideration to the matter raised by The Hon. R. J. L. Williams and give my ruling to the House when it next meets.

House adjourned at 5.19 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 19th September, 1973

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

DAIRY INDUSTRY BILL

Third Reading

MR. H. D. EVANS (Warren—Minister for Agriculture) [2.18 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR. I. W. MANNING (Wellington) [2.19 p.m.]: I would like to make one or two brief comments on the third reading of the measure before it leaves this Chamber. The concept of the legislation was to amalgamate two sections of one industry; that is, to unify the industry under one administrative body.

Despite the efforts of the Opposition during the Committee stage, that object has not been achieved. The administration of the industry remains divided. The primary section of the industry is to be administered by a Government department. The secondary section will be administered by the dairy industry authority, on which there is to be a wealth of sectional representation including a majority of primary producers.

Despite the qualifications of the representatives on the authority and the expertise of the staff, prices and margins in the industry are to be fixed by an outside tribunal, with the Minister for Agriculture retaining the final say as to whether prices are to be adjusted. An advisory committee is to be set up, and, in spite of the extent of the sectional representation on the authority, the advisory committee is to intercede on behalf of sections or persons not directly represented on the authority.

Vesting, which has been a highly contentious subject within the industry for a long time, remains in the Bill; and I believe it will be a contentious issue during the progress of this legislation through Parliament.

The Bill has one or two good aspects, and one of the very important ones is the introduction of an amendment to provide for negotiability of quotas. I said during the second reading debate that this was a serious omission from the Bill, and I commend the Minister for seeing the wisdom of including this matter in the legislation by way of amendment.

I think the Bill will remain contentious but it leaves this Chamber a much more desirable piece of legislation than it was when it was introduced. I support the third reading.

MR. BLAIKIE (Vasse) [2.23 p.m.]: I also desire to make some comments during the third reading debate on this Bill. I think it is just as well to remind the House that the first reading of the Bill was taken on the 4th October, 1972, which is almost 12 months ago. The Minister's second reading speech was given on the 5th October, 1972.

I raise these matters because I take strong exception to the utterances of the Minister and the Premier in relation to the Opposition's supposed opposition to this measure. I believe that had the Government shown in respect of this Bill the consideration it was supposed to show, the matter would have been finalised in this House many months ago. Instead, we have the situation that almost 12 months after the Bill was first introduced we have at last reached the third reading stage. I believe this is an indictment of the Government.

I also take exception to the manner in which the questions I have asked have been answered by members of the Government—in particular, by the Premier. I asked a question of the Premier on the 22nd August. In question 2 without notice on that day I asked whether, in view of the fact that the Bill was meeting with opposition, the opposition was coming from within the Government. The premier replied—

The honourable member, together with other members of the Opposition, made it perfectly clear that the in-

tention was to obstruct the passage of the Bill and the Government decided therefore that, in such circumstances, the prudent course to follow was to drop the Bill down on the notice paper . . .

I would not wish to take up the time of the House debating a matter which was not important. However, I believe this legislation is very important and as far as I am concerned I intend to have my objections to the Premier's attitude recorded. In fact, the Premier has cast an aspersion on me in this matter as well as on the members of my party. He made it perfectly clear that my intention was to obstruct the passage of the legislation. That is a lot of rot and it is very far from the truth.

Mr. O'Connor: The Minister for Agriculture handled it carelessly.

Mr. Taylor: The Premier pointed out a number of instances where your people said it would not get through.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BLAIKIE: If I could continue, I am quite disgusted with the attitude taken and the statements made by the Minister for Agriculture on this issue, and I would like to refer to a letter in the *Busselton-Margaret Times* on the 12th September, 1973.

Mr. O'Connor: I said he handled it carelessly and he did.

Mr. May: Why did you not bring this up in the second reading debate when the Premier was here?

Mr. BLAIKIE: I brought this up—

Mr. May: You waited until the Premier was not here.

Mr. O'Neill: He did not know the Premier would not be here. Where is the Premier?

Mr. BLAIKIE: I am now referring to the Minister for Agriculture and the contempt he has shown in his utterances in regard to this matter. I would like to quote from the letter he forwarded to the *Busselton-Margaret Times* when he said—

Both outside and inside Parliament, Liberal Party members have shown opposition and reluctance to co-operate in passing this legislation.

Where the Bill was debated in this present session it met with hostility.

After the first harassing and stonewalling debate of nearly three hours—

Mr. O'Connor: The Minister was inadequate to handle it.

Mr. BLAIKIE: To continue—

—a senior member of the Liberal Party, and former Minister remarked in the chamber with some satisfaction—

Mr. O'Connor: I did not.

Mr. BLAIKIE: It continues—

—to the effect that would be the last Parliament would see of the Dairy Bill this session.

I ask the Minister how on earth he could construe that that senior member of the Liberal Party was satisfied it would be the last Parliament would see of the Dairy Industry Bill this session. I make the statement that the Minister is deliberately twisting words to suit his own convenience. The legislation is an indictment of the Government. I am quite disgusted that the Minister blames the Opposition's attitude for the failure of the Bill to proceed. As we all know, in this House it is the Government's prerogative to decide when and where legislation shall appear on the notice paper. Further on in the letter the Minister says—

This is in keeping with the attitude of some Liberal members in their reported canvassing against the Dairy Bill in certain areas.

I would like to know who those members are and where the certain areas are. This certainly is not the case to my knowledge. With a general statement like that, the Minister is casting an aspersion on all members. It is a tragedy that such important legislation has taken almost 12 months to pass through this Chamber. I simply wish to set the record straight as to what actually happened. The legislation in regard to margarine was introduced and it went through virtually immediately.

Mr. Blackerton: Margarine does!

Mr. BLAIKIE: The Government has set these priorities. We know this is important legislation—very important to the industry. I have been involved in the manufacturing sector of the dairying industry all my life and I realise how important the measure is. Some amendments have been accepted, and I hope further amendments will also be acceptable so that we have good, workable legislation. I am pleased the Bill has finally got to the third reading stage in this House, but I am completely disgusted with the Government's attitude in regard to it. I believe the fact that the Government has continually and wrongfully harped and carped that it was the Opposition which delayed the passage of the Bill is an indictment of the Government. I support the third reading.

MR. H. D. EVANS (Warren—Minister for Agriculture) [2.30 p.m.]: In wrapping up the third reading of the Bill I would like to thank, in many cases, those who spoke for their contributions. The debate has served to enable the Bill to be thoroughly discussed; perhaps to a greater extent than one would have expected. The member for Vasse was perfectly correct when he indicated that the Bill was introduced on the 4th October, 1972; yet criticism was made of the request by a number of members opposite to refrain from proceeding with the measure.

Mr. Blaikie: Was the request made by me?

Mr. H. D. EVANS: It was made by the leader of the honourable member's party, and by the Leader of the Country Party. An approach was made to the Premier.

Mr. O'Connor: That does not forgive you for your unfair and inaccurate statements.

Sir Charles Court: You had trouble on your own side, too.

Mr. H. D. EVANS: There was no trouble at all. I am concerned at the contrast made by the member for Vasse when he referred to the margarine Bill passing through this Chamber so readily, as against the turbulent passage of the Dairy Industry Bill. I do not think a parallel exists in the styles of the respective debates. The first Bill passed without great discussion and the other received a rocky and turbulent passage. I did refer to the criticism that had been projected in this place and in other areas. A remark was made during the debate to which the Premier referred when he spoke, and a member opposite rose in acknowledgment of having made the statement.

Mr. Blaikie: Can you prove it was said with satisfaction?

Mr. H. D. EVANS: It was said with satisfaction. In other areas the Bill was produced at several of the south-west shows last year and was discussed with various producers at great length—far more than is normally the case—by some members of the Opposition.

I think all aspects of the Bill have been covered at great length, and I commend it to the House.

Sir Charles Court: We take strong exception to your comments in the Press, anyhow.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILLS (3): THIRD READING

1. Broken Hill Proprietary Company's Integrated Steel Works Agreement Act Amendment Bill.

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

2. Pay-roll Tax Act Amendment Bill.
3. Pay-roll Tax Assessment Act Amendment Bill.

Bills read a third time, on motions by Mr. T. D. Evans (Attorney-General), and transmitted to the Council.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ARTS COUNCIL BILL

Third Reading

MR. T. D. EVANS (Kalgoorlie—Attorney-General) [2.37 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR. A. A. LEWIS (Blackwood) [2.38 p.m.]: I will not take up a great deal of the time of the House. I was very pleased to hear how surprised the Premier was at the speech I made during the second reading of the Bill, but I have been interested in the arts for probably as long as he has been a member of this House, so my interest extends back into the dark ages.

I want to correct two statements I made during my second reading speech. The first was in regard to a feasibility study which the Government said it would conduct into Her Majesty's Theatre. This was not done because the vendor took the property off the market at that time and so I am hoping the theatre will remain there for a feasibility study to be carried out on it in the future with a view to ensuring that Her Majesty's Theatre will not be pulled down.

Therefore the money has not been used. I quoted Michael Holden as the person who had used it for a feasibility study into the Hole in The Wall Theatre. I apologise for making that statement, and also for calling the Western Australian Opera Company the Western Australian Ballet Company.

Mr. Jamieson: That is only a slight difference.

Mr. A. A. LEWIS: Yes, that is only a slight difference because they are both cultural bodies.

Mr. Jamieson: I would not know the difference, anyway.

Mr. A. A. LEWIS: The Minister in charge of the Bill did not answer one point that I raised; namely, that the Commonwealth Government, as yet, has not made any promises that we will get any money. That Government still has not answered the questions which appeared on the Senate notice paper of last month as to whether this arts council will even be paid its allocations. During the second reading debate I said that salaries amounting to \$190,000 were to be paid to certain people, but this amount would be well over \$250,000 now, and that at that stage there would be certain persons who would be receiving \$10,005 a year and who will now receive \$11,525 merely to hand out money to the people who deserve it. The artists, dancers, and musicians are receiving less and less because of this great bureaucracy set up by the Commonwealth Government. However I realise that we cannot expect any more from socialists.

Mr. T. D. Evans: What did they get from the previous Government? Answer that!

Mr. A. A. LEWIS: I will answer. The Attorney-General is probably not old enough to understand what culture means. He is a little man who makes a great deal of noise.

Mr. Taylor: Noise which makes sense.

Mr. A. A. LEWIS: The Deputy Premier can keep quiet because he does not even understand his own portfolio.

Mr. Taylor: You are in good form today.

Mr. A. A. LEWIS: The Attorney-General asked me a question which I will answer. Year after year, if we look at the Commonwealth Budget, we find that the amount allocated for the arts has been doubled, but so have many other items of expenditure. However the administration has been quite brutal because under a socialistic Government apparently voluntary committees cannot be trusted to spend the money where it should be spent, and where it is most deserved. They must have Big Brother sitting over them and telling them what to do.

Mr. T. D. Evans: You said that. We did not.

Mr. A. A. LEWIS: I can prove it; and the Minister can also prove it if he is able to understand the Federal Budget.

Mr. T. D. Evans: You are doing less than justice to the field of culture.

Mr. A. A. LEWIS: Is it not fantastic to hear the Attorney-General saying that? Even his own leader said last night that he was surprised I could do justice to this subject. The only criticism I have is that with the creation of this great octopus—it is not established in Canberra but in North Sydney, in the electorate of the Prime Minister who is handling the Bill in the House of Representatives—the money is not going to the people to whom it should be going. Despite our differences I am sure the Attorney-General and I could allocate the money to cultural activities much more fairly and equitably. However, there is to be a huge number of public servants, and much of the money will be wasted on their salaries—money which should be going to the arts.

Mr. Hartrey: Are you trying to tell the House about the peculiarities of socialism?

Mr. A. A. LEWIS: This trend seems to increase every time a socialist Government gets into office. Unfortunately, culture is a subject to which socialism has never been able to get close. There has never been a socialistic Government which has advanced culture.

In Russia the ballet is being ruined; and every socialistic country in the world is ruining its culture, because those countries are putting Big Brother on top of all these activities.

Mr. Bickerton: Where do you think Big Brother should be?

Mr. A. A. LEWIS: Big Brother should be kicked out of the door; and cultural enterprise and private enterprise should take over. I am wasting the time of this House in having to listen—

Mr. Bickerton: You certainly are.

Mr. A. A. LEWIS: —and reply to interjections from members who do not understand.

Mr. Hartrey: Is not the French Academy controlled by a bureaucratic department? Would you say France has a socialist Government?

Mr. A. A. LEWIS: The honourable member is talking about something that disappeared into the cultural depths in the nineteenth century. He was born in that century and he still lives in it. Let us deal with the culture of the twentieth century.

Mr. Bickerton: You have been playing the violin; that is your trouble!

Mr. A. A. LEWIS: At least I have conveyed something. It is a pity the Government cannot accept criticism in the manner in which it proffers criticism. When I start on a low key to explain something quietly and sensibly I seem to draw many comments from the little men who cannot understand.

I reiterate that the great tragedy of this Bill—as much as I support it—is that there is no certainty the Federal Government will give us even a dime; and if it did give us anything we know that 12½ per cent. of the money would be wasted on administration which we do not need.

I am sure that if he were here the Premier would understand, but some of his minions do not. The Premier agreed with me on this the other night and it is amazing how disorganised that side of the House becomes without a leader.

The point is that 12½ per cent. of the money which should be coming to the States is going to North Sydney to keep a heap of registry and filing clerks and administrators, with their ever-increasing wage claims and what have you. Consequently year after year the arts will receive much less.

I support the Bill, but I just cry because of the centralised idea for culture.

MR. T. D. EVANS (Kalgoorlie—Attorney-General) [2.46 p.m.]: I have fallen into the temptation! We have just experienced a first-grade expose of one of the weirdest branches of the performing arts, but, fortunately, most of us in this Chamber have advanced beyond the first grade!

My sense of generosity on this occasion exceeds my capacity to assess a situation on its true level, but having regard for my sense of generosity I intend to refer the honourable member's remarks to the Premier.

MR. HARTREY (Boulder-Dundas) [2.47 p.m.]: I do not intend to trespass on the good nature of the House beyond saying that my feelings on the subject are that public amusement may well be classified as being part of public entertainment, which, in turn, is part of the cultural set-up of the State. On the understanding that public amusement is a feature of culture, I would say that the member for Blackwood would be the most cultured man in the House!

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

ROAD TRANSPORT INDUSTRY

Inquiry by Select Committee: Motion

THE SPEAKER (Mr. Norton): Before I call on the member for Mt. Lawley I wish to state that in view of the fact that the firm of Bell Bros. has taken out writs against the Transport Workers' Union, the Australian Workers' Union, and the Amalgamated Engineering Union, and that Transfield has taken out a writ against the T.W.U., these matters are *sub judice* and therefore I will not allow members to refer to them in the debate.

MR. O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley) [2.49 p.m.]: I am very pleased that you have widened the scope of the inquiry, Mr. Speaker! I move—

That in the opinion of this House a Select Committee be appointed to investigate and report to this House into the road transport industry of this State, with special reference to the owner driver section of the industry, complaints of discrimination in the administration, rates paid and other matters affecting this industry.

Members will realise that in the last few days the Premier has indicated that an inquiry will be held into the transport industry in Western Australia. However that inquiry is to be completely restricted and will cover very little. It will do virtually nothing for the owner-drivers of this State.

The terms of reference of the inquiry as reported in the Press indicate that the cartage rates, taxes, permits, and other difficulties will be covered, but, although I have studied the actual terms of reference, I cannot understand what are the other difficulties that are covered. The terms of reference are restricted almost entirely to the contractor, owner-driver, and sub-contractor in road transport. They exclude rail, air, and shipping transport.

The SPEAKER: Order! I must ask members to be quiet.

Mr. O'CONNOR: They refer to the operating costs, and factors determining costs; the adequacy of rates to meet costs plus State charges; and the yield of profit. The terms of reference of the inquiry eliminate,

or exclude, some of the most important factors as far as we are concerned. They do not take into account road versus rail problems; they do not take into account administration problems; nor do they take into account the union activity which has increased in this State and which has affected the industry to a considerable extent. The union activity has also affected considerably the cost structure in connection with the industry.

I think Mr. Sander is a very capable man and that he will carry out the inquiry to the best of his ability and to the satisfaction of most people concerned. However, in my opinion the terms of reference are not acceptable. If one examines them one will find that an accountant could do all the work in connection with the proposed inquiry within a couple of days. As a matter of fact, the information has already been obtained many times previously. The result of the inquiry can only be a promise to the owner-drivers, and I think the owner-drivers discovered that a previous promise in connection with the road maintenance tax turned out to be a farce.

An inquiry into the transport industry has been necessary for a period in excess of 12 months. No-one would deny that this is extremely important to our State, more so than to any other State in Australia. It is important, firstly, because of the vast expanse of our State and, secondly, because of our limited population. A combination of a large area with a limited population causes transport costs to increase considerably. We have only to compare countries throughout the world which have the lowest transport costs. I refer to countries such as Sweden, which has a large population living in a limited area. Whether we are fortunate, or unfortunate, in this respect we have the opposite, and as a result transport costs are a major part of the total cost of every commodity manufactured in Western Australia, whether it be food, clothing or any other product.

The transport industry employs many thousands of people and is responsible for a large proportion of the costs involved in production. When we take into account the fact that a sum of money in the vicinity of \$67,500,000 will be expended on roads in Western Australia during the next financial year we realise how important the transport industry is to this State.

There is a need for complete harmony and efficiency within the industry, but at the present time we have neither. We do not have harmony, and we do not have efficiency. I ask: does any member consider that harmony and efficiency exist today? I am sure all members know that those very necessary elements do not exist.

The transport industry is fraught with lack of trust, financial and administrative problems, and general frustration. An added frustration in recent times, has been the 5c a gallon increase in fuel tax

which has made it extremely difficult for many people in the transport industry to survive today.

It is our responsibility to try to lift the people concerned out of their present predicament, and help them to reach a situation where they can operate in a reasonable and economic manner, provided they are efficient.

I believe the problems in the transport industry developed back in 1971. We had a mining boom, when ample freight was available in the north-west and other parts of the State. However, as a result of the recession in 1971 many people involved in the industry found themselves in tremendous difficulties. Many operators had purchased trucks which appeared to be economic propositions for them at the time. They also purchased facilities for their families. However, overnight the freight disappeared. The operators faced great difficulty in paying off the trucks they had purchased, and in paying off the facilities they had bought for their families.

I believe this is where the problem started because, in an effort to meet their commitments, many operators endeavoured to cart—or did cart—goods at rates way below cost. They did this in an effort to meet their hire-purchase and various other commitments. However, all they did was virtually to put themselves further and further into the mire.

We, on this side of the House, moved for an inquiry into this industry in October of last year.

The SPEAKER: Order! I must ask members to be quiet.

Mr. O'CONNOR: Our request was cast aside by the Government which was not prepared to have an inquiry made into the industry. The Government did not think it was necessary. On that occasion members on this side of the House gave details of the difficulties which exist in the industry. We presented many of the problems the operators faced and which the Government obviously did not realise they faced. We gave a great deal of detail in connection with their costs.

I would like briefly to read some details I have in my possession of the costs of carting various commodities from Perth to the north. The report was prepared by some road transport operators and, in it, they assessed what they considered to be the minimum cost of running a truck between Perth and the north. The calculations are based on a single-drive prime mover and bogey trailer making, on average, 40 trips per year. We must realise that many operators, at that point of time, were making only 10 trips. The figures I shall read out applied to the time the report was put forward to me. I believe that many may now be making more than this number of trips. As a

matter of fact, some are probably making double that number now, but they are still unable to operate on an economic basis.

The legal load of the unit concerned was 17 tons. The calculation is based on a trip from Perth to Port Hedland. A legal 17-ton load from Perth to Port Hedland, at the rate of \$48 a ton, amounts to \$816. Approximately 334 gallons of fuel would be used at an average cost of 40c a gallon. This means that the cost of the fuel per trip would be \$143. The cost of tyres was calculated at \$5 per tyre each 1,000 miles. On a 2,000-mile return trip the cost of 14 tyres is \$140. The wages of a driver per trip were estimated to be in the vicinity of \$200. The most a driver normally does is 40 trips a year and a great deal of overtime is involved.

Insurance worked out at \$48 per trip whilst road maintenance tax would be \$100. Approximate depreciation on each trip was estimated at \$120. Interest on \$24,000 yearly per unit equals \$1,920 divided by 40—in other words, \$48 per trip. Mechanical labour amounted to approximately \$1,200 per year which, on 40 trips, works out to \$30 a trip. Spare parts came to \$1,200 a year or \$30 a trip. Grease and oil cost \$7 a trip; extra loading permit, 50c; and license, \$8 per trip. Unexpected expenses amounted to \$10 per trip, giving a total cost of \$884.50 per trip.

Those figures were assessed on the normal cost of a 17-ton truck making a trip to Port Hedland and return. It was estimated that approximately \$816 was made on the trip, which is approximately \$70 less than the expenses involved. This was when people were carting at \$48 per ton.

When people carted for something like \$34 to \$36 per ton per trip they had to get into difficulties. They were carting at well below their costs. They were doing this, in all probability, to meet their commitments but they were doing quite an injustice to themselves.

If members care to turn to page 4161 of *Hansard* of October, 1972, they will see that I moved for the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the owner-driver section of the industry and into discrimination in the administration.

I thought that was a fair and reasonable motion because there is no doubt in anyone's mind that the industry was in difficulty then, as it is in difficulty now. Why the Government rejected the request for an inquiry by a Royal Commission at that time, I do not know, but it was rejected on the basis that there was no point in having a Royal Commission inquire into something to which the Government and the public already knew the answers. The fact that the Premier has now suggested an inquiry be conducted indicates clearly that the Government did not know the answers or the

problems and that it avoided an issue it should have faced up to at that point of time.

The industry is still in a chaotic state. Instability still exists. In some cases rates are still very low. Pressures are being unfairly exerted upon a number of owner-drivers; and I believe the latest 5c increase in fuel tax has put a further nail in the coffin of those people who have been struggling for so long.

Many of them, through lack of work, inability to obtain permits, etc., have been forced into unacceptable standards of living and, in some cases, bankruptcy. We have had instances of individuals being dragged from their beds at 10 or 11 o'clock at night, in front of their families, and being gaoled for nonpayment of road maintenance tax when indications had been given to them that this position would never exist.

Mr. T. D. Evans: Can you substantiate that last statement?

Mr. O'CONNOR: Certainly.

Mr. T. D. Evans: And give me instances?

Mr. O'CONNOR: If the Attorney-General has not been listening, there is something wrong with him. The member for Darling Range gave one instance of a man being pulled out of a caravan at Kalamunda in front of his wife and children. The Attorney-General must surely know the details of this case because it has been mentioned in this House many times.

Mr. T. D. Evans: Give me another one.

Mr. O'CONNOR: Does the Attorney-General deny that these instances exist? Does he deny there is a man in gaol at Carnarvon at the moment—Mr. Brandstater?

Mr. T. D. Evans: Was he taken out of his bed at 11 o'clock?

Mr. O'CONNOR: No, but the other fellow at Kalamunda was.

Mr. T. D. Evans: Give me another instance of that.

Mr. O'Neill: One instance is too many.

Mr. O'CONNOR: The other night on television, a fellow by the name of Meaker did not make any complimentary remarks about the Attorney-General and indicated that the Attorney-General had told him if he would get out of the State he would drop all charges.

Mr. T. D. Evans: Under whose administration was he put in gaol? You were the Minister at the time.

Mr. O'CONNOR: I was, and I believe what I did was correct at the time. The Attorney-General knows how badly the Government has acted in this matter, but he has asked for this and I will give it to him. When Meaker was in gaol in Kalamunda he was approached and asked

whether he would make some retribution and agree to pay his tax. This followed representations on his behalf by people in the area. Meaker was asked whether he would agree to pay the department so much a week or a month after he got out of gaol. His reply was that he would not pay 1c if he were let out of gaol, that he would continue to operate as a road haulier, and that he would not fill in his returns. When this Government assumed office and let him out of gaol, according to Meaker when he spoke on television the other night he was told to get out of the State and he would hear no more about it. Meaker is back in this State operating as a haulier and he was one of those involved in the march on Parliament House the other day.

Mr. T. D. Evans: You put him inside.

Mr. O'CONNOR: Yes, and he deserved to be there; but we did not make promises—as the present Government did—that no-one would be gaoled for nonpayment of road maintenance tax, and then grab them and put them in gaol as quickly as we could. The Government made those promises and that is what it has done.

Mr. T. D. Evans: Who made that promise?

Mr. O'CONNOR: The Premier. Does the Attorney-General deny it? His silence indicates he does not deny it.

Mr. T. D. Evans: I would like you to tell me when he said no-one would be gaoled.

Mr. O'CONNOR: So many promises were made and they have been broken all the way through. When I commenced speaking to this motion I said we now have the promise of an inquiry which is as fictitious as all the other promises because it will not be an inquiry into the industry but only into a small part of it.

The Government once said it would abolish road maintenance tax. The Government does not intend to abolish road maintenance tax. It has cheated in this matter. It left the Bill on the notice paper in the other House and indicated that if the first Bill was not agreed to the second one would not come to the top of the notice paper. The Premier gave the same kind of indication in this House.

Mr. T. D. Evans: You had your chance previously, and so did the Legislative Council.

Mr. O'CONNOR: We do not believe in the abolition of road maintenance tax. We believe it should remain. We believe the law should take its course, and the Attorney-General should also believe that. He was one who got to his feet, the last time I moved a similar motion, and stated there was no need to hold an inquiry into the industry because the public and the

Government already knew the answers. That is what he said and he does not deny it. Of course, he cannot deny it.

Although the Government knew all about it, what happened within a few months? I will read a report from *The Sunday Times* of the 20th May, 1973, which was just a few months after I had asked for an inquiry into the department.

Mr. T. D. Evans: In October you asked for an inquiry.

Mr. O'CONNOR: This was a few months later.

Mr. T. D. Evans: Seven months later. There is quite a difference between that and a few months.

Mr. O'CONNOR: The Attorney-General replied in November, so we can make it six months.

Mr. T. D. Evans: That is half a year. A lot of water can flow under the bridge in that time.

Mr. O'CONNOR: The Attorney-General has to grasp at straws; that is all he has to grasp at. The Attorney-General knew all about this matter, and so did the public, so there was no need for an inquiry! Yet six months later we have this headline, "False tax records to 1970?"

Mr. T. D. Evans: You were the Minister then.

Mr. O'CONNOR: It was during the last month or two that I was the Minister. I did not say I knew all the answers. The Attorney-General said he did know all the answers, and it is quite obvious he did not. The article in *The Sunday Times* of the 20th May stated—

Detectives from the Perth CIB investigating some activities of the Transport Commission believe falsifying of documents could have started back in 1970.

The investigation involves road tax forms.

Last week police impounded a number of documents from the commission's offices in Stirling Highway, Nedlands.

The road tax forms record how many miles a truck driver travels on an assignment.

The police believe documents relating to road tax have been falsified and, in some cases, destroyed.

About 20 truck drivers are linked with the investigation.

Detectives have interviewed some staff of the Transport Commission.

Police are also investigating the possibility that some truck drivers paid up to \$120 each to get falsified forms passed through checking channels.

Yet the Attorney-General said he knew everything about the industry.

Mr. T. D. Evans: This was at least six months afterwards. Be fair.

Mr. O'CONNOR: It had been going on during that time, and the Attorney-General said, "Why have an inquiry into something the answers to which we and the public already know?"

Mr. T. D. Evans: Why was that announcement made six months afterwards?

Mr. O'CONNOR: I do not know. Obviously, the Attorney-General would have spoken about the matter before that time, but he said there was no need for an inquiry.

Mr. O'Neill: According to the Government's terms of reference, there will be no inquiry into those sorts of things.

Mr. O'CONNOR: That is right, but they are matters which need inquiring into.

Mr. T. D. Evans: Perhaps other things happened while you were the Minister about which we do not know.

Mr. O'CONNOR: If so, I would be quite happy to have them inquired into. There is chaos in this industry for a number of reasons. We should inquire into all those reasons, and not restrict the inquiry to an aspect which suits the Government and does not touch upon any of its inadequacies or our inadequacies. I do not mind if they are brought forward.

Mr. O'Neill: They are trying to whitewash it.

Mr. O'CONNOR: That is right—a complete whitewashing of it. We have this sort of thing going on, and a little later we see, "Transport men face 61 charges". I do not believe even that is the finish of it; possibly others are involved. Other incidents have occurred, but I will not quote them because I do not know whether or not they are correct. However, I firmly believe that further inquiry is necessary in this regard.

We should also look further into the possibility of being able to relieve the drivers of some of the difficulties in connection with filling out forms. Many drivers find this is the most difficult part of their operations. The forms are very involved and we must remember that the ordinary driver has no clerical training. The Government has demonstrated a complete lack of understanding of the problems of these people. Unless harmony exists in this field, the whole State will be affected.

In this State we have seen a total disruption of the transport industry by the Transport Workers' Union. Mr. Speaker, I will not refer to the matters you mentioned. However, it is true that the industry in this State has been completely disrupted during the last 12 months, and that transport costs have been considerably increased because of this. The union

has attempted to put people out of business because they would not become members of the union. The Minister for Labour indicated a week ago that one union had lifted a ban on a particular company. However, apparently this is not the case and the ban still exists. Today writs have been issued on this union in regard to various matters. I will not mention these as we are not permitted to do so.

When we have a disruptive element in the community and it is decided to examine the industry concerned, our inquiries must aim at putting the industry on a sound basis. We should inquire into prices, administration, operating costs, and union activities. We must find out whether all these facets of the industry are working satisfactorily. We must have an independent inquiry. The Premier indicated certain terms of reference, and had these been abided by, we would have gone along with it. However, the proposed inquiry is so restricted that we will not go along with it.

The owner-drivers have made regular statements that the freight rates are uneconomic, and I do not think any of us deny this. In many cases the transport rates are not economic. Probably even some of the larger companies find the rates are uneconomic. Last year one of the largest companies operated with a \$3,000,000 loss. Obviously, this company is not operating at an economic freight rate, or else something must be seriously wrong with its administration, and the company would certainly investigate this aspect.

Some of the owner-drivers have been forced to operate at uneconomic rates. A good accountant would have been able to advise them what to do in this regard. It is no good carting goods below cost. If all operators refused to do this, the companies involved would have to pay the rates put forward or purchase their own vehicles.

In many cases too many trucks are on the road, and I believe we should inquire into the number of trucks operating to determine how many should be operating. Perhaps we should limit the number. I do not say it is necessary at this point of time, but I do say it is an aspect we should inquire into. It should be a stated term of reference.

The transport industry is the most disrupted industry in Western Australia. We have seen continual accusations, standover tactics, and industrial blackmail. Examples of such actions have been apparent at Bunbury, Fremantle, Kalamunda, Bindoon, and various other places.

Mr. Thompson: What firms are affected?

Mr. O'CONNOR: I am not able to mention some of them. Sometimes the actions have been against owner-drivers, and

members are aware that the Speaker has asked me not to refer to certain firms; and this attitude is quite correct.

Mr. Jamieson: I am glad you agree. That will make the Speaker happy.

Mr. O'CONNOR: An obvious difficulty exists in regard to freight rates. However, an owner-driver must operate on the basis that he obtains sufficient for a reasonable living, and also a sufficient return on his outlay.

Twelve months ago the Government rejected our request to hold an inquiry into the industry. On the 1st September I was amazed to hear that the Premier had given an undertaking to striking workers that he would initiate an inquiry into the road transport industry. These men came to the Parliament—unfortunately I was not here; I arrived just in time to see them leave—and then went to Trades Hall to see the Premier who was attending an A.L.P. conference. They complained to him about the difficulties in their industry and he gave them this undertaking. Members will be aware that last October the Premier and the Government had knocked back the suggestion for an inquiry. Again, the Government took no notice of a request in another place in April or May of this year to set up an inquiry into the industry. Why, all of a sudden, on the 1st September, did the Government decide to set up the inquiry? I believe it was done for the sake of good public relations and in an attempt to quieten down a group of men concerned about the problems existing in the industry.

We waited a few weeks to see what would happen about the inquiry, and as we expected, nothing happened. All was quiet on this issue. Then on Tuesday of last week I gave notice that I intended to move a motion seeking the setting up of a Select Committee to inquire into the industry. What happened then? The Government held a meeting during the tea suspension that evening and came back and announced that it proposed to set up an inquiry into the transport industry. I believe we forced the Government to make this move because of the notice of motion. Rather than lose face, as it would have done, the Government announced its intention to set up an inquiry.

Sir Charles Court: It now turns out to be a very limited inquiry.

Mr. O'CONNOR: I might say I have spent considerable time pointing this out.

Sir Charles Court: It is a whitewashing inquiry.

Mr. O'CONNOR: It is a complete whitewash of the issue. It would be an inquiry only into those aspects the Government wishes to inquire into.

I felt quite elated when the Premier indicated an inquiry would be held. I believed we were getting together on the problem. However, when I saw the limited terms of reference—in fact, the inquiry is only in relation to transport costs and a few limited matters—I felt it was quite unacceptable to me. I am sure the proposition will also be quite unacceptable to many of the people in the industry.

Mr. Bickerton: I do not want to ruin your argument, but do you realise that in the 12-year term of your Government, all requests for inquiries put forward by the then Opposition were knocked back?

Mr. O'CONNOR: What a lot of nonsense from the Minister!

Mr. Bickerton: Not one inquiry was agreed to.

Mr. O'CONNOR: We did not have trouble in the transport industry. It was going along smoothly at that time.

Mr. Moller: Yes, you had them in gaol!

Mr. O'CONNOR: There was plenty of work in the north. We know of the intimidation in the industry at the moment, and here is the Minister talking poppycock.

Mr. Bickerton: Do not dodge the point; I am talking about inquiries generally.

Mr. O'CONNOR: I am speaking about one motion. The Speaker will not let me deviate from this; I cannot speak to all of them.

Mr. Bickerton: Brother, were you dead when you were on this side of the House!

Mr. O'CONNOR: Despite the promise two weeks ago about an inquiry into the transport industry, the terms of reference are not those suggested by the Premier in the Press article.

I believe that if the Government is sincere, and if it believes there are problems in the industry—as we do—then it will hold a full inquiry, and not a limited one. As I said, the person appointed to conduct the Government's inquiry is acceptable to us. Mr. Sander is a first-class person, and I feel he will do a good job. But what is the purpose of giving him a job that an accountant could do in a couple of days? Why not merely get an accountant to work out the cost, because that is about all that is involved? At least if we did that we would probably save a little money. An accountant could do this job in no time. If that is all the Premier wants, he should just nominate an accountant and be straight with the people instead of misleading them into thinking that a full inquiry will be held into the industry.

We on this side of the House support a full inquiry into the industry. We want the inquiry to cover costs, operations, the administration of the industry, and the union tactics which are disrupting the industry so badly at the moment. The terms of the inquiry announced by the Premier

are unacceptable to us. I certainly hope the Premier and the Government will act sincerely and accept the terms of my motion.

Mr. O'NEIL: I second the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Jamleson (Minister for Works).

ABORIGINES

Welfare Assistance: Motion

MR. GRAYDEN (South Perth) [3.22 p.m.]: I move—

This House views with concern—

- (a) the abysmal failure of both the State and Commonwealth Governments to comprehend the nature and full extent of the problems which confront Aborigines in Western Australia; and
- (b) the hypocrisy inherent in the senseless, wasteful and extravagant expenditure by the State and Commonwealth Governments, apparently motivated in the belief that this will buy Aborigines' votes, when such expenditure is clearly contrary to both the short and long term interests of the Aboriginal people and can only result in the debasement of the Aborigines and reduce them to a permanently mendicant race.

My reasons for moving the motion are multitudinous; however perhaps my main reasons could be summarised in this way: Although huge sums of money are being spent on Aborigines, much of this money is being squandered in senseless, wasteful, and extravagant expenditure by the State and Commonwealth Governments. Measured in real terms, as distinct from the expenditure of moneys, very little is being done to give Aborigines a way of life acceptable to them. The policy of handing out huge sums in unemployment benefits on a more or less permanent basis instead of providing technical education and work opportunities is debasing the Aborigines and making them a race of mendicants. The health of Aborigines as a people is being seriously impaired by the excessive consumption of alcohol bought with social service handouts. Meanwhile, the children suffer from neglect, malnutrition, and attendant ills. Any benefits arising from a few small constructive projects being undertaken are lost in the sea of degradation, misery, and ill-health resulting from the handout policy. The policy is creating an enormous Aboriginal problem when none should exist.

That is a summary of my main reasons for moving the motion. In Western Australia I think we have in the vicinity of 30,000 Aborigines. The exact figure cannot be determined, but it is in that vicinity. When we consider the number

of people receiving social service benefits in Western Australia, we find the figure has been well in excess of 5,000 for some months now. A great majority of those people would appear to be Aborigines.

In many parts of Western Australia we have large congregations of Aborigines living on social service benefits—mainly unemployment benefits. I cite Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek, the Warburton Range area, mining towns such as Laverton and Leonora, and some pastoral towns such as Onslow and Roebourne. In those towns—and there are many others—we have congregations of Aboriginal people, the majority of whom exist on a more or less permanent basis on unemployment benefits.

The Federal Government recently altered the scale of social service benefits. I would like to read the new scale to the House so that members may see exactly what is happening in respect of the recipients of these benefits. I understand this new scale will come into operation within the next few weeks. Under the scale a man and his wife with no children will receive \$40.50 a week. If the family has one child it will receive \$45.50 per week. From there the scale increases according to the number of children as follows—

No. of Children	Weekly Benefits
2	\$50.50
3	\$55.50
4	\$60.50
5	\$65.50
6	\$70.50
7	\$75.50
8	\$80.50
9	\$85.50
10	\$90.50
11	\$95.50
12	\$100.50

Taking an average case of a man, his wife, and five children, we find that Aboriginal family will receive \$65.50 in unemployment benefits on a more or less permanent basis. As long as they want it they can have it. In addition, of course, they receive child endowment and free medical attention; and they are entitled to earn additional income.

In the case of Aborigines we are dealing with people who, in a large number of instances, have no costs at all. A great majority of the Aborigines at Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing, the Warburton Range area, Laverton, and Leonora, do not live in homes but under the trees. They do not pay local authority rates, water rates, rent, or transport to and from work because they do not work. They pay no costs at all; and yet in those circumstances a man and his wife and five children will receive \$65.50 in unemployment benefits alone under the new scale. I repeat that the benefits to which I am referring apply to Aborigines throughout Western Australia; a

great majority of those Aborigines have no costs at all; and yet they will receive social service benefits on the scale I have indicated.

Let us contrast that situation with the position of a poor old white person with five children who is employed. I will now quote from the monthly statistical summary of Western Australia for August, 1973, which is a publication issued by the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics (W.A. Office). In this publication it is found that the average weekly wage rate in this State for August 1973 is \$66.72. Let us consider the position of a European man with a wife and five children on that wage. He is going out to work every day. He is probably paying \$15 or more a week for rent and he would have to meet various other charges including those for electric light and power and possibly gas, water rates, and local government rates. In all probability a certain amount of his wages would be deducted for superannuation, and so on. He would be obliged to meet all the costs necessary to keep himself and his family.

In contradistinction to such a man the great majority of Aborigines at present are simply sitting under trees and drawing social service benefits. If those payments were used to the advantage of the Aborigines I would have no complaint. I have no complaint anywhere along the line about money being spent on Aborigines for their welfare. What I am complaining about is the senseless, wasteful, and extravagant expenditure of money which will result only in the debasement and degeneration of Aborigines and cause them to become a permanently mendicant race. So I ask members to make a comparison between those Aborigines who are receiving social service benefits and who are living under trees and those people who have to work for a living.

Apart altogether from this aspect, as a consequence of the policy pursued by the State Government and the Commonwealth Government, these people are providing for their children's future, because they know full well that if this policy is continued, when their children become adults and they, in turn, have children, they will be looked after in exactly the same way. Further, as a result of this policy we find over and over again instance after instance of Aborigines retiring from work in order that they may be paid social service benefits.

I know of numerous cases of Aborigines who have been working for local authorities with a take-home pay of, say, \$65 a week, looking at it and saying, "It is not worth while my working because if I stay home I receive unemployment benefits in excess of what I am earning now. Also I will be entitled to earn a certain amount of extra money and I will enjoy all the fringe benefits in addition." As a result

many Aborigines have given up their jobs in order that they may become eligible for social service benefits. So where is there any incentive for an Aboriginal in this vast State of ours when he can receive more by retiring from his work to receive social service benefits? This trend among Aborigines is widespread. It extends through the Kimberley, the north-west, the south-west, and throughout other parts of the State.

If the social service benefits received by Aborigines were being spent wisely on the education of their children, on their own education, or possibly to establish savings to purchase some sort of business, I would take no exception, but the great percentage of these benefits is spent in hotels. As a consequence the Aborigines as a people in this country are impairing their health. Further, whilst they are squandering their social service benefits on liquor, their children are suffering from malnutrition and other attendant illnesses.

Some time ago the people in Wiluna went out of their way to ascertain approximately how much money was spent in the town each fortnight by those people who were enjoying social service benefits. At the time they estimated the amount to be approximately \$4,000. They also ascertained that within two days \$3,500 of the \$4,000 total was in the hands of the local hotelkeeper. I might say that in respect of drinking a great deal of this problem came about in 1971 when the present State Labor Government extended drinking rights to Aborigines in the Pilbara and the eastern goldfields. A tremendous number of the Aborigines in the eastern goldfields never lived in homes. They hunted and followed their tribal way of life.

Up to a point this situation applied to the Aborigines in the Pilbara. Drinking rights had been granted to the Aborigines in this area prior to 1971. The present Labor Government in this State decided, in July, 1971, to extend drinking rights to Aborigines in the Kimberley and the eastern goldfields and as a result a great deal of the trouble to which I have referred has resulted.

Quite apart from the way the Aborigines in these areas are impairing their health by squandering their social service benefits on alcohol, it is now found that they are constantly being convicted of offences arising from drinking. Last year, in Laverton alone, 650 convictions were recorded, mostly resulting from drinking. In Wiluna I think the number of convictions was 320 in 1972. In Meekatharra the number of cases resulting in convictions was 300. One individual who had been 50 years without a conviction, in 1972 had three pages of convictions recorded against him. That is the situation in respect of offences committed by Aborigines arising from consumption of liquor.

The problem goes beyond that. It is found that the Aborigines are spending nearly all their social service benefits on liquor. A station owner in the Laverton area went to some pains over a period of months to calculate precisely what the various Aboriginal people on his stations did with their social service benefits. There are many pensioners living in that district.

I shall mention one case, and it is typical of many others. An Aboriginal couple was receiving \$64 per fortnight at that time in social service payment. Of that amount the couple spent on an average \$8 per fortnight on food and all other items, including clothing. The balance was spent on liquor at the hotel. So only \$8 of the \$64 was spent on food and clothing.

As a consequence of the way in which social service benefits have been squandered by these people, many reports appeared in the newspapers recently. One was in the *Daily News* under the heading of "Natives out of Hand—Publican". The report is as follows—

PORT HEDLAND, Monday.—The licensee of a Port Hedland hotel says that he is leaving the town this month because the problem of Aborigines and alcohol is getting out of hand.

Mr. Eric Pratt, the manager-licensee of the Pier Hotel, said today that the situation had become hopeless. There was bedlam at the hotel. Young Aborigines could not be controlled.

For that reason the licensee of this hotel at Port Hedland was leaving the town.

Another report appeared in the *Daily News* under the heading of "Drink, Fight Main Talk—Aboriginal". The report is as follows—

Fighting and drinking, were the main conversation topics for young Aborigines in Derby, the royal commission into Aboriginal affairs heard today.

Alexander Dea (22), Aboriginal liaison officer of the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority, made the claim when the commission sat in Derby.

Mr. Dea is a half-blood Aboriginal.

So, this officer of the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority emphasised that drinking and fighting were the main topics of conversation among the Aborigines at Derby.

Another report of consequence appeared in the *Sunday Independent* of the 12th August, under the heading of "Racial War Threat in Moora". This is a shocking report of events which resulted from the granting of drinking rights to Aborigines in Western Australia.

Mr. Harman: What do you propose to do about the matter?

Mr. GRAYDEN: Is the Minister talking about drinking rights or the social service payments?

Mr. Harman: The drinking rights.

Mr. GRAYDEN: A great deal can be done in this regard. I shall come back and deal with that aspect later. I have been discussing some of the problems which have arisen as a result of the extension of drinking rights to the Aborigines in the eastern goldfields and the Kimberley. It is extremely significant that the Aborigines in many of these areas are seeking to revert to the situation which applied under the Natives (Citizenship Rights) Act when the Aborigines had to make application to obtain liquor rights. In this respect a report which appeared in the *Daily News* recently contained the following—

The president of the Port Hedland Aboriginal Progress Club, Mr. Septu Braham, said that the club wanted drinking rights taken from Aborigines and a reversion to the procedures of citizens' rights.

Anyone supplying liquor to unauthorised people should have his citizens' right suspended for 12 months.

If the person supplying liquor was a European, he should be put on the prohibited list.

Other Aborigines who appeared before the commission also said they believed that alcohol was creating one of the biggest problems for their race.

This is a report relating to the evidence given before the Royal Commission inquiring into Aboriginal affairs in Western Australia.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.04 p.m.

Mr. GRAYDEN: Prior to the afternoon tea suspension I was indicating that the Aborigines in the Port Hedland area want drinking rights taken away from their people. They advocate that we should return to the situation which prevailed under the Natives (Citizenship Rights) Act. This answers the earlier interjection of the Minister for Labour when he asked what should be done about the situation.

Mr. Harman: Do you agree with that?

Mr. GRAYDEN: I agree entirely that in certain areas such as the eastern goldfields and the Kimberley we should get back to the situation which obtained prior to the extension of drinking rights in 1971. I advocate this, without having any doubts at all, in the interests of the Aborigines, and for no other reason.

As I mentioned before, excessive drinking is impairing the health of the Aborigines, the great majority of whom spend virtually all their social service benefits in hotels. As a consequence the children suffer; and this practice is leading to the degradation of the Aboriginal people.

Mr. Coyne: We should return to the system of giving the Aborigines food rations instead of money.

Mr. GRAYDEN: I agree. On the question of drinking, if the Aborigines themselves advocate that we should take away their drinking rights, because the retention of the rights is not in their best interests, why should we not do so and return to the system which prevailed previously when, if a person could establish that he lived a life akin to that of a European—and this was relatively easy to prove—he could obtain the right to drink alcohol? In those circumstances the family did not suffer unduly.

Mr. Harman: Why do you want to treat these people differently from other Western Australians?

Mr. GRAYDEN: Because they want to be treated differently and because they are a completely different people.

Mr. Harman: That will be another item in your policy speech next year?

Mr. GRAYDEN: That aspect does not come into the discussion. The Minister for Labour was closely associated with native affairs. However, what the Labor Government in this State and the Federal Labor Government are doing is implementing a policy of genocide as far as the Aborigines are concerned, and genocide means the extermination of a race. If the object is to ensure that the Aborigines are degraded and reduced to physical wrecks, then the Government needs only to proceed along the lines advocated by the Minister for Labour and allow unlimited drinking. As the social service benefits increase so the Aborigines will be able to spend more on drink and as a consequence they will be virtually exterminated.

The Aborigines themselves do not want this to happen to their people. The Minister for Labour wants to know how we can talk about taking away their drinking rights, but how can he raise such a query when Aboriginal organisations have asked that this be done?

Mr. Harman: Don't you think there are other avenues?

Mr. GRAYDEN: Just think how courageous these Aboriginal leaders are when, in a place like Port Hedland where a tremendous amount of drinking is indulged in by the Aborigines, the President of the Port Hedland Aboriginal Progress Club (Mr. Septu Brahim) has gone out of his way to advocate that the drinking rights should be taken away from the Aborigines.

Mr. Bickerton: What is his name?

Mr. GRAYDEN: The Minister for Housing is the member for the district, so he should know. The progress club would be a fairly important organisation, yet its president is advocating that the drinking rights should be taken away from the Aboriginal people. He is not doing that maliciously; he is not doing it because he has something against alcohol;

he is doing it because he realises that excessive drinking is having a serious effect on the people of his race. I think it is reasonable to say that he is only one of many who have expressed similar sentiments. I think it is reasonable for us to heed the opinions of such people.

If we were to move around the various Aboriginal reserves in Western Australia where there are congregations of Aborigines and we were to approach the women involved and ask what they thought about the situation they would say overwhelmingly that drinking rights should be taken away from their people. Those women have had the experiences, over and over again, of being beaten by their husbands. They have seen their social service benefits, which they receive fortnightly, dissipated in the hotels. They have seen their children go hungry and go without clothing because the husbands spend a great proportion of the social service benefits in the hotels.

In those circumstances we can accuse the Commonwealth Government—aided and abetted by the State Government—of wasteful expenditure and the squandering of money. That money should be directed towards the technical education of the Aborigines in Western Australia and elsewhere in Australia. It should be used to create job opportunities for the Aborigines. If they were to do some work, whether it be for the stations, for local authorities, or for others, and were to receive a wage in return then, obviously, they would benefit as a consequence. However, the policy of handouts—of giving them something and expecting nothing in return—can only lead to the debasement of the Aborigines. We do not need a Royal Commission to establish that fact. Anyone with any knowledge of Aborigines realises that this is so.

Mr. Bickerton: When the Bill to allow drinking rights for Aborigines was going through this House a few years ago—when you were on this side—how did you vote?

Mr. GRAYDEN: I voted in favour of drinking rights for Aborigines, in selected areas.

Mr. O'Connor: I did not.

Mr. Ridge: The drinking rights were granted by the present Government, not by members from this side of the House.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Bickerton: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. GRAYDEN: The member for Pilbara does not know. On the 1st July, 1971, his Government extended drinking rights to the Kimberley and the eastern gold-fields.

Mr. Ridge: That was one of the first acts of the Labor Government.

Mr. GRAYDEN: That was at a time when the nomadic Aborigines were coming into the towns.

Mr. Bickerton: How did you vote?

Mr. Ridge: I did not have an opportunity to vote.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. GRAYDEN: The drinking rights were extended at a time when, in the towns to which I have previously referred, the Aborigines were unclothed and carrying spears. It was at a time when those people were still nomadic; when they hunted for their food, and when they were dependent on the land for a living. This Government granted drinking rights at that time.

Mr. Bickerton: That Government.

Mr. GRAYDEN: Not that Government at all. On the 1st July, 1971, drinking rights were extended to the Aborigines in the Kimberley and the eastern goldfields by the present Government. No-one can dispute that and I suggest the member for Pilbara has overlooked the fact. He can refer to any of the reports from the Department of Native Welfare.

Mr. Bickerton: Which Government gave drinking rights to the Aborigines in the Pilbara?

Mr. GRAYDEN: It was a Liberal-Country Party Government, but we are not criticising that. We are criticising the extension of drinking rights to Aborigines who are not capable of handling drink, and now they are getting into serious trouble. During the first year of the term of the present Government drinking rights were extended to Aborigines in the eastern goldfields and in the township of Laverton there were 650 convictions for drinking. The normal number of convictions in that town was 30 or so. However, there were 650 convictions for drinking in the first year after the present Government extended drinking rights to that town.

Mr. Bickerton: The member for South Perth said, "extended".

Mr. GRAYDEN: That is the whole point; extended.

Mr. Bickerton: Now, who introduced the drinking rights?

Mr. GRAYDEN: It was a Liberal-Country Party Government which gave drinking rights to the Aborigines, but in selected areas.

Mr. Bickerton: And you voted for it.

Mr. GRAYDEN: Of course I did, and I would vote in favour of it again.

Mr. O'Neil: What did the member for Pilbara do?

Mr. Bickerton: I voted for it.

Mr. GRAYDEN: Drinking rights were extended to areas where Aborigines were nomadic, and that is the reason for all the trouble. Social service benefits are being handed out on a scale never seen before to huge congregations of Aborigines sitting under trees. Those Aborigines have no expenses at all, and instead of spending

the money on their families, as was originally intended, they are spending it in the local hotels. Can the member for Pilbara, or the Minister for Labour, justify that action? If they claim to justify it, they are also justifying a policy of genocide, and the Federal Government would be suspect in the extreme.

Mr. Bickerton: If the Aborigines were sitting under the trees there would not be any complaints.

Mr. GRAYDEN: I suspect the motives of this Government and those of the Federal Government. It would appear that they have embarked on a policy of genocide.

A situation existed in Alaska which was patently obvious and open for all to see. The Eskimos in that country were being reduced to a mendicant people as a consequence of liquor. Notwithstanding that experience this Government extended drinking rights to the Aborigines in the Kimberley and the eastern goldfields, and it is virtually bringing about a situation akin to that which applied to the Eskimos in Alaska. The Minister for Housing and the Minister for Labour talk about what is happening as far as drinking is concerned, and consider that drinking rights are desirable even though they seriously impair the health of the Aborigines, as a people.

During last year, or perhaps it was the year before, the member for Murchison-Eyre and I went through the Warburton Range, to the Docker River, and to the Northern Territory. On that occasion I was rather interested to find that the great majority of the Aborigines in the Docker River area came from the Western Australian side of the border. The Docker River is only just across the border of the Northern Territory. They were all members of the Pitjantjatjara tribe which inhabits that particular area.

Approximately 1,300 Aborigines from that tribe were sitting down under trees, at the Docker River, and playing cards. Under no circumstances would they think of going out and hunting kangaroos with spears, as they did a few years ago. They would not dream of shooting a kangaroo unless they had a settlement truck to take them hunting. There was no suggestion of their getting any wood for themselves unless a truck was supplied for them.

The Docker River settlement has been established in a most picturesque valley which was specially selected. The trees were beautiful but the Aborigines have simply broken the branches from the trees and left them to dry, knowing that at some future date they could use the wood. However, they certainly would not go out and obtain wood from other areas unless they were provided with a vehicle. The 1,300 Aborigines were dependent on social service handouts. As they had nothing to spend the money on, they sat down and played cards.

Mr. Bickerton: That is a change.

Mr. GRAYDEN: The same situation applies at the Warburton Mission. It was a revelation to go there after a lapse of 15 or 20 years. I visited the area in 1953 and again in 1956. At the time the Aborigines were nomadic people hunting for a living. When I returned two years ago I found that the Warburton Mission was a graveyard of cars.

Mr. Bickerton: That was before the present Government came into office.

Mr. GRAYDEN: The Aborigines had spent their social service benefits on cars and abandoned vehicles were to be seen everywhere.

Mr. Coyne: All blue!

Mr. GRAYDEN: There were literally hundreds of cars. I suppose when one car broke down they took out the engine, differential, etc. and put those parts in another car. This was the situation.

I can understand that there were bound to be some problems when social service benefits were first extended to Aborigines not so many years ago. However, now the problems have become patently obvious, particularly in the last few months, and it is high time to do something about them.

It is idiotic that several hundred Aborigines at a place such as the Warburton Mission are receiving social service benefits on a scale of this kind. A person in the metropolitan area, who supports a family of the same size, has to meet all sorts of costs which the Aborigines there do not have to meet. At the Warburton Mission no Aboriginal pays rent, water rates, local authority rates, or electricity rates.

Mr. Coyne: They do not pay for gun licenses.

Mr. GRAYDEN: No, an Aboriginal does not pay for a gun license; possibly he does not pay for a dog license, or anything else of a similar nature. He has virtually no costs. All they do is to sit down and draw social service benefits. This is excessive and wasteful expenditure on the part of the Commonwealth Government, which is aided and abetted by the State Government.

In the interests of the Aborigines themselves, if they are to receive benefits of this kind it is imperative that they should do some work in return. This does not mean that they must work for extremely long hours but they should do something to enable them to maintain their dignity as a race.

Mr. Bickerton: Do you think we should move them all to Perth?

Mr. GRAYDEN: I have mentioned the situation at the Warburton. I did not quite hear the interjection of the Minister for Housing.

Mr. Bickerton: Would you like us to move them down to Perth?

Mr. GRAYDEN: They are already moving down to Perth. There is no question about this. Perth is experiencing an influx of Aborigines from the outlying areas. Again, this has been brought about largely through the policies of the present Government which has got away completely from the idea of decentralisation. There are no work opportunities in outlying areas and little accommodation.

Mr. Bickerton: You said they would not work.

Mr. GRAYDEN: I should like to refer now to some of the other instances of wasteful expenditure on the part of both the State and Federal Governments. My first comment concerns the State Government. The Aboriginal section of the Department for Community Welfare has recently been buying stations in the north-west. I am horrified at some of the stations which the department has bought.

Mr. Bickerton: The owners were happy.

Mr. GRAYDEN: Of course they would be happy because of the prices paid. However, we must take into consideration the fact that the Aborigines who are to settle on the stations will not be happy. This is the point I am making.

Mr. Bickerton: You say that they will not be happy in the north and will not be happy if they are brought down to the city.

Mr. GRAYDEN: We want to do something of consequence for Aborigines and not effect a policy of genocide as is happening at the moment. Mt. Minnie at Onslow has been purchased as an Aboriginal station. At Roebourne, two stations, Cherrita and Mt. Welcome, have been bought. The stations which have been purchased for Aborigines by the Department for Community Welfare have never been stations where individuals could make a reasonable living. What chance will the Aborigines have? They will have none at all. Their task is utterly and completely impossible; yet, the Government has gone ahead and bought stations of that kind. For this reason I seriously doubt the motives of the Government. I believe the Government is going out of its way to make gestures with the objective of buying the Aboriginal vote and that the Government has no real regard for Aborigines.

Mr. Bickerton: The Aboriginal vote put the member for Kimberley in. We did not buy any votes!

Mr. GRAYDEN: If Aborigines were to realise what the Labor Government did in respect of Moola Bulla station in the Kimberley they would continue to elect the present member for Kimberley, if only for that reason. Moola Bulla station was sold by a Labor Government and a Labor

Government is currently buying other stations for Aborigines. Moola Bulla station in the Kimberley was regarded as the very finest. Many described it as the finest station in Australia. This is how good it was. The sale was made a long time ago—in approximately 1962, I think. At the time the station was worth \$1,800,000. It was sold by the Labor Government of the day for \$200,000.

Mr. T. D. Evans: This is trotting out the ghosts!

Mr. GRAYDEN: Some members of the Government which sold Moola Bulla now occupy prominent positions in the present Government. For instance, the present Premier was a member of that Government and there are others.

Mr. Hartrey: No Labor Government sold anything in 1962.

Mr. GRAYDEN: I said at approximately that time.

Mr. Ridge: We are now buying Taiwanese fishing vessels for the same people at a far greater price than was paid for the station.

Mr. GRAYDEN: I will try to tell the member for Boulder-Dundas the correct year. I have it written down somewhere.

Mr. Harman: I think it was in 1955.

Mr. GRAYDEN: It was later than that. The actual date is not very important. At the time there was a debate on the subject in this House.

Mr. Harman: It was a long time ago.

Mr. GRAYDEN: Altogether several hundred Aborigines were living on Moola Bulla station because it was on tribal ground.

Mr. O'Connor: It was during the Hawke regime.

Mr. GRAYDEN: Yes, that is right. It was the finest station in the Kimberley and regarded as the finest in Australia. The Labor Government of the day went ahead and sold that station for a pittance—\$200,000.

Mr. Bickerton: Have you read *Hansard*?

Mr. GRAYDEN: Since then it has been resold many times. Anyone who had remained on it would have become a millionaire. It was sold by the Labor Government of the day and the terms of the deal were quite incredible. An individual had a house in South Perth which was valued at \$15,000, or less, and he put that up as deposit. He did not put up anything else. He rounded up a couple of thousand cattle, sold these, and paid for the property.

This man subsequently received several hundred thousand dollars from a sale of cattle from the property. He then sold the property for \$300,000. It was sold again within a very short space of time to Mr. Stein for \$400,000, and then very

shortly afterwards Mr. Stein refused an offer of \$1,000,000. The Labor Government of this State sold—

Mr. T. D. Evans: This is just a case of trotting out ghosts.

Mr. GRAYDEN:—this property for a low figure. Now the Government is buying abandoned stations in an attempt to give the impression it is doing something of consequence for the Aborigines. Nothing could be further from the truth. Under no circumstances could the Aborigines make a go of the three stations I have mentioned—Mt. Minnie, Cherrita, and Mt. Welcome. And yet, as I say, the Labor Government is flaunting this as being something of consequence for the Aborigines.

Mr. Bickerton: They were not abandoned stations.

Mr. GRAYDEN: I hesitated to mention Panter Downs, because it is not in quite the same category. No-one has been able to make a success of Panter Downs. The difficulties in making that station viable are enormous. However, the Government has handed the station over to the Aborigines. I find this a rather strange policy on the part of a Government and it is in the category of wasteful extravagance and senseless expenditure.

Let us get away from the question of the shocking sale of Moola Bulla and onto the question of education. I wish to quote from an article in the *Daily News* of the 3rd August, 1973, headed, "Tribal dialects 'no school help'," which reads—

Part-Aboriginal schoolteacher Mrs. May O'Brien (formerly Miller) is not happy about a plan for bilingual education of Aboriginal children.

Mrs. O'Brien said today the move by the W.A. Education Department was "waste of time and money."

The department is seeking six W.A. teachers to take a course in Pitjantjatjara, the Aboriginal language of the Western Desert.

I will not read the whole article. However, this shows that the Labor Government is trying to give the impression it is doing something for the Aborigines. It says it will instruct six teachers in the Pitjantjatjara language. Members are aware that there are many different Aboriginal languages in Western Australia, and Pitjantjatjara is used only locally. It seems to me it is the height of absurdity that any Government could regard this proposal as being of real value. This view is shared by the woman I have already quoted. She is an Aboriginal school teacher and she comes from this area. She is one who knows the problem. At the moment she is teaching in Perth, and has been for a long time. She is highly-qualified and an excellent teacher, but she says that this move by the Education Department is a waste of time and money.

She should know; as I say, she is a member of the Pitjantjatjara tribe. This is another example of the Government's extravagance and squandering of money.

I would like now to turn to another example. An article appeared in *The West Australian* of the 14th July, headed, "R.A.A.F. will drop supplies to W.A. natives". It reads as follows—

An R.A.A.F. aircraft will drop food supplies this morning to the Aboriginal community at Warburton, nearly 1,000 miles north-east of Perth. It has been cut off by road because of heavy rains.

Food at the community is running low and a supply truck is unable to get past Laverton, 350 miles south-west of Warburton.

The emergency air supplies for the 400 Aborigines at Warburton have been arranged by the State Civil Emergency Service.

An R.A.A.F. Dakota was scheduled to leave Pearce about 4.30 a.m. today and parachute the food to the mission about 10.30 a.m.—in time for lunch.

If ever there was a case of wasteful expenditure, this is it! Whilst the Government was arranging emergency food drops to these people, no doubt with the sole purpose in mind of giving the impression that it has the interests of Aborigines at heart—

Mr. Hartrey: Or preventing their starving to death.

Mr. GRAYDEN: If they were starving to death, then so was the member for Boulder-Dundas. That is how much he knows of the situation. Of course, he comes from Kalgoorlie and he ought to know what the situation is.

Mr. Hartrey: How far away is this?

Mr. GRAYDEN: This is 600 miles away—not as the crow flies.

Mr. Hartrey: I am not a crow anyway!

Mr. GRAYDEN: I am rather surprised that the member for Boulder-Dundas is not aware of the way in which the Government squandered money on that occasion. If he does not know, who does?

Mr. Hartrey: You, apparently. Tell us, will you?

Mr. Coyne: If you listen he will.

Mr. GRAYDEN: While the State Civil Defence and Emergency Service was flying out food to the Warburton Range, 600 miles from Kalgoorlie and much further from Perth, a truck was bringing footballers in from the Docker River Mission, via the Warburton Mission, to play in Kalgoorlie that weekend. They came to Laverton first and then went on. So whilst the truck brought in the Aboriginal footballers, the Civil Defence and Emergency

Service went ahead with its airdrop. As I say, this move was calculated apparently to give the impression that the Government has a very soft spot for the Aborigines and nothing is too much trouble and no expenditure is too great for them.

I can recall that in about 1957 I drew the attention of the House to the plight of an Aboriginal on the Canning stock route. A helicopter owned by a certain organisation had found a crippled Aboriginal on the stock route. He was being carried around on the back of another in the middle of summer. My plea to the Labor Government of the day was for an expenditure of \$400 to pick up that injured Aboriginal. However, this action was considered to be too costly and too much trouble. Subsequently, we saw a report about 40 Aborigines who were starving on the stock route. Again nothing was done. I could quote instance after instance of this type. However, because of the new outlook on the part of the Labor Party—and I emphasise it is a very new outlook—it has taken the actions I have mentioned. It sent an aircraft from Pearce to drop food to the Warburton Mission when vehicles were bringing people from that area to play football. These vehicles had no difficulty in getting through. This is another instance of wasteful, senseless, and extravagant expenditure.

Mr. Bickerton: I think you are a member of the "dia-tribe"!

Mr. Coyne: They won the match anyway.

Mr. GRAYDEN: Obviously Government members are not aware of what is happening. Certainly the member for Boulder-Dundas did not know of events in his region.

Mr. Hartrey: Not my region—it is 600 miles away.

Mr. GRAYDEN: By bringing these things to the notice of the Government, I hope we will see some marked improvement in the very near future.

Sir Charles Court: Hope springs eternal!

Mr. GRAYDEN: There are many other matters I could mention, but I do not think there is much point in referring to them.

Mr. Bickerton: I would not think so!

Mr. GRAYDEN: So much of this wasteful, extravagant expenditure is seen that one should really save one's breath, because despite the fact that these matters are raised they will have no effect on this Government.

Mr. Bickerton: You had 12 years to fix all these troubles.

Mr. GRAYDEN: This Labor Government gave the kiss of death to Aboriginal advancement in Australia many years ago. In 1956 a Select Committee was appointed from members of this House to inquire

into the plight of Aborigines in the Warburton-Laverton area, and it arrived at this conclusion—

CONCLUSION.

The Committee has arrived at the conclusion that the plight of the aborigines in the Warburton-Laverton area is deplorable to the extreme. The natives lack even the most basic necessities of life. Malnutrition and blindness and disease, abortion and infanticide and burns and other injuries are commonplace. Game is extremely scarce on the reserve, water supplies for drinking precarious, and adequate medical attention far beyond the resources of the Warburton Mission. Employment opportunities for mission educated children are hopelessly insufficient and in the circumstances education only serves to leave them more poorly fitted for fending for themselves when thrown back on their own resources at the completion of that education. Immediate food and medical aid are urgently necessary for these people and permanent provision for them a pressing obligation on the State.

The Select Committee also made many recommendations but I will not read them to the House. However, those recommendations form the basis of what has been put into effect in respect of various projects throughout Western Australia by the State and Commonwealth Governments at the present time. Nevertheless at the time the recommendations were made by the Select Committee it was a Labor Government which placed the kiss of death on that report. As a result of no action being taken on the recommendations contained in that report 17 years have been lost.

Mr. Bickerton: How can you say that? We were not the Government then. Why did not you do something about it?

Mr. GRAYDEN: That report was made in 1956 and there was a Labor Government in office at that time. It damned the report and so we are 17 years behind scratch in regard to the implementation of the recommendations.

Let me return to the question on which I have already spoken—the wasteful and extravagant expenditure on Aborigines by the Labor Government. I may as well save my breath because nothing that I say will be given any consideration. Possibly 12 months ago I made a speech in the House outlining the situation in regard to the Aboriginal Advancement Council, and referring particularly to its president and its secretary. Following the comments I made at that time, the Minister for Labour made a speech which is recorded in *Hansard*. He said that my speech was the most disgraceful he had ever heard because I was critical of Mr. Ken Winder who was secretary of that organisation.

I would say that as a consequence of his remarks one Aboriginal child has now lost his life. I say that for this reason: When I raised the matter at that time I pointed out that Mr. Ken Winder had a police record and had fired a bullet through the car of another individual. I pointed out that he had been convicted of that offence. On another occasion he hit somebody on the head with a bottle of wine. He was convicted and was on parole at the time I spoke in the House. However, this Government disregarded what I said. Shortly afterwards he was appointed as the superintendent of a hostel for coloured youth in Perth, and not long after that, in a drunken spree, a youth by the name of Bonner, who was 17 years of age and well respected, was stabbed by another inmate of the hostel near the hostel, and Mr. Winder was in the party. I understand that today the father of that youth is a broken man. I therefore suggest to the member for Boulder-Dundas and the member for Kalgoorlie who refused to accept what I said that when they return to their electorates they should contact the father of that youth.

However, that is not the point I want to make. My point is that this Government disregarded what I had to say about Mr. Ken Winder and now we find he has a most responsible Commonwealth position. The Commonwealth Government recently established a National Aboriginal Consultative Committee. This committee has published all sorts of advertisements in the Press. I have one here, which reads—

Are you an Aboriginal? or a Torres Strait Islander? If so read this important notice:

The Australian Government has approved the formation of a National Aboriginal Consultative Committee (N.A.C.C.) to advise the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on policy matters.

The advertisement continues on similar lines.

The person who has been made responsible for enrolling all Aborigines in Western Australia so that they may become eligible to vote for members appointed to the N.A.C.C. is none other than Mr. Ken Winder. He is Western Australia's top representative in Canberra and he claims he has direct access to the Prime Minister. At the moment he is ensconced, not in a reasonable hotel in Perth, but at the Gateway Inn.

Mr. Coyne: At \$18 a night.

Mr. GRAYDEN: For a single room the lowest tariff is \$16 a night and that does not include breakfast or any other service. I understand that Mr. Winder is conducting all his activities from the Gateway Inn and that he has a suite there.

Mr. Bickerton: I bet he has!

Mr. GRAYDEN: This is all being done at the expense of the Commonwealth. I have spoken about the wasteful and extravagant expenditure on Aborigines. Let us look around this House. The member for Avon, who is the Chairman of Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited, having regard for the funds of his shareholders and in view of his holding that position, would not, I am sure, when he came to Perth, stay at the Gateway Inn. Yet Mr. Ken Winder, with the record which I have outlined to the House, has been embraced by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs (The Hon. G. M. Bryant) and he has made him his personal representative for Western Australia. He has been ensconced in a suite at the Gateway Inn and conducts his operations from there, making it plain to everyone that all this is at the expense of the Commonwealth.

Mr. O'Neill: What sort of pushbike does he ride?

Mr. GRAYDEN: I am simply quoting instances of extravagant expenditure and I think the situation is deplorable.

I return, therefore, to the reasons for moving my motion. They are simply that although huge sums of money have been spent on Aborigines that money has been squandered on senseless, wasteful and extravagant expenditure as distinct from the expenditure of money in real terms, because very little is being done to provide Aborigines with a way of life that is acceptable to them. I believe that the policy of handing out huge sums of unemployment benefits on a more or less permanent basis instead of providing education opportunities to the Aborigines is debasing these people and making them a race of mendicants. I believe that the health of Aborigines in Western Australia is being seriously impaired as a result of the excessive consumption of alcohol bought with social service handouts, and that, meanwhile, their children are suffering from neglect, malnutrition, and other attendant ills.

Finally, I believe that projects undertaken as a result of the present Government's policy are bringing about the degradation of Aborigines. This policy is creating an enormous Aboriginal problem when none should exist.

MR. E. H. M. LEWIS (Moore) [4.50 p.m.]: I feel impelled to make a short contribution to the debate. One could feel that the subject is almost *sub judice* in view of the fact that currently an inquiry into Aboriginal affairs is being held in Western Australia.

Throughout his speech on the motion this afternoon the member for South Perth has been subjected to a great deal of criticism. I do not rise to defend all his remarks because I do not agree with all of them and I do not agree entirely with

the wording of the motion. I agree with some of his remarks and with some of the wording of the motion. I rise now not in any spirit of party politics because I have always maintained that the Aboriginal problem transcends party politics.

Mr. Hartrey: Hear, hear!

Mr. E. H. M. LEWIS: I have maintained that ever since I have been a member here. However, I do wish to impress upon those members who have been elected since the member for South Perth was first elected that if they checked through the volumes of *Hansard* for the various years they would find that on many occasions he has been outspoken in his criticism of Governments of all political colours on matters he has felt were inimical to the welfare of Aborigines.

Mr. T. D. Evans: He went silent for many years, too.

Mr. E. H. M. LEWIS: I do not think he has been. A check of the records will certainly not substantiate the Minister's interjection. Because of the actions of the member for South Perth in the past we must come to the conclusion that when he makes statements he does so because of his sincere concern for the welfare of Aborigines. I say again that I have not always gone along with what the member for South Perth has said, but I do think he is actuated by a desire to do something for the Aboriginal people and by his deep concern for the fact that despite the efforts of Governments, as highly motivated as they might have been—and I am referring to successive Governments because I am not being party political on this subject—the Aborigines have been degraded. Some uplift has occurred in some spheres, but generally the degradation has continued.

Regardless of our political colour, those of us who move around the State, particularly in some of the far-flung areas, cannot but agree with the member for South Perth that many of the Aborigines are not as good as they were, and I am not referring to their morals. They have been undermined. I am an ex-Minister for Native Welfare, but I have always felt that to a degree we have been groping in the dark. We have shaped our policy on the best advice available to us over the years. This advice has been, firstly, that of our departmental heads, and I am not questioning their sincerity or ability. However they, too, have been faced with a problem. They have looked to their field officers for advice, and the present Minister for Labour was one of those field officers who have given their advice with the utmost sincerity.

We have been trying to understand dark minds over the years, and this has not been easy. It has never been possible to find out what the Aborigines feel about this sort of thing, but they are very quick

to sense the kind of answers they think we want, and they are ready to give them. Often those answers are not necessarily accurate and do not give us the information we seek.

It is because of this difficulty in communication that a few years ago, during the regime of the coalition Government, an advisory council was established. I am not claiming any kudos for that council because I know that successive Governments of all political colours have implemented good policies, and progress has been made. However, we have moved so many steps forward but at the same time we have been conscious that we have also slipped back so many steps, and the net progress has been painfully slow.

We must remember, too, that we have been trying to take a race of people out of a very old culture and assimilate them with our own, and we have been trying to do this in the short period of a few generations. This has been very difficult and cruel in some cases. If some Aborigines have fallen by the wayside, do not let us be too ready to blame them. I think we must sympathise with their situation, but sympathy is not enough.

Mr. Hartrey: We must sympathise with their neighbours very often, too.

Mr. E. H. M. LEWIS: That is right, and we do. We must also remember that an increasing proportion of these people are only part Aboriginal, the other part being white. Therefore to some degree we can blame only ourselves for their degradation.

I believe the present Federal Minister—and I am not saying this in a party-political sense, because the previous Federal Minister did much the same thing, although not on such a large scale—is motivated more by his heart than his head. Much money is being spent, but I would have preferred the motion to read—

This House views with concern—

- (a) the abysmal failure of both the State and Commonwealth Governments, past and present, to comprehend the nature and full extent of the problems which confront Aborigines in Western Australia;

That is true. No Government—State or Federal of whatever political colour—has fully comprehended the nature and extent of their problems. I would like the motion to continue—

- (b) the wasteful and extravagant expenditure by the State and Federal Governments—

I do not know, however, whether I should include the State Government because it has never had so much money that it could be extravagant in its expenditure. I do not want to include the portion concerning motivation because I do not really

think that Governments have been motivated by the thought that they can buy Aboriginal votes. My motion continues—

—because such an expenditure can result only in the debasement of Aborigines and will reduce them to a permanent mendicant race.

What can we do about the problem? An inquiry is being held at present and we can but await with interest the findings of the Royal Commission. However, this is not the first inquiry of this kind to be held—not by any means. The commissioner will travel around and keep his eyes open and his ear to the ground. He will receive submissions and then, on the evidence presented to him and as a result of his own opinions, he will weigh up the situation and make certain recommendations.

Let no-one be optimistic and think that this is the answer to all the problems and the solution to everything, because it will not be. It never has been in the past and it will not be for a long time to come. It will undoubtedly result in some further moves forward and, in that regard, it should not be a waste of time.

I concur with the member for South Perth completely in saying that there has been some fairly extravagant expenditure. The member for South Perth mentioned the expenditure of \$5,000,000 which the Minister said has been set aside each year for the purchase of stations. In the same statement the Minister admitted that it will be necessary to have white overseers in charge for an indefinite period. I could not agree with him more. The Minister is being quite realistic in this matter. It will be necessary to have white overseers for a long time. If the Government thinks it will be only one or two years before the Aborigines on the stations will be in a position to manage them for themselves, I am afraid the Government will be sadly disillusioned, because this will not be the case.

One of the biggest problems associated with the Aboriginal question—and it has been mentioned this afternoon—is the payment of social service benefits. I do not blame the present Federal Government for this because, in fact, the previous Federal Government introduced payment of social service benefits to Aborigines. They were made on the same scale as those given to white people and perhaps this is quite a reasonable attitude to adopt in looking at the matter from many ways. Why should a man with black skin receive less in social services than one with white skin?

Mr. Hartrey: If the Aboriginal has a vote he has citizenship and the same rights as a white man.

Mr. O'Connor: No, he has better rights.

Mr. E. H. M. LEWIS: The argument of colour is the one that is used. The point is that a white man, who is unemployed

and drawing social services, finds he cannot live in the manner to which he has been accustomed over the years. Therefore, he moves out and tries to obtain employment so that he may improve his standard of living. A white man, worthy of the name, is not content to exist on low social service payments and is anxious to better himself. However many Aborigines, by virtue of the standard of living to which they have been accustomed over many years, are content to live on social service payments. Many of them live completely on social service payments and can live just as well, or even better, than they did before. This is a difficult question to get around.

I go along with the suggestion that rations should be given instead of cash. However, I acknowledge that many difficulties could be involved. In many of our country towns we could see an Aboriginal whom we think ought to be trusted only with a ration order, but next to him we could see one who has adopted our way of life and is a good citizen in every respect. Many Aborigines are fine citizens. Not all are drunkards. Some are quite sober—in fact, abstemious—and good workers who earn good money, often by shearing for a large part of the year—and doing a good job, too. These Aborigines keep their wives and families in homes which are as neat as those of any white man. This happens and I know some Aborigines who would feel disdain at the thought of the Government looking after their wives and their families. I know one in particular who said that no Government would look after his wife and family because he would do it himself. This is a fine spirit.

How do we differentiate? To whom do we give a ration order and to whom do we give a payment in cash? How would we discriminate? These are some of the problems.

I concur, too, with the suggestion made by the member for South Perth that we should do more about establishing training centres. When we were in Government we set about doing this but training centres are extremely costly. When I was Minister we had the idea to establish a training centre at Port Hedland because of the large industrial and mining development in the area and the number of ancillary services which were necessary. We thought it would be extremely good if local people could be employed. We acknowledged that they would have to be trained but, having been trained and being local people, we thought they would be more likely to stick at their job.

We set about the task of establishing a training centre. The anticipated cost was \$750,000 or less at the time. Of course, it has escalated since then. We had to look to the Commonwealth and, at that time, it was like squeezing blood out of a stone to try to get money from the Commonwealth for this purpose. We have not

always had the best co-operation from the Commonwealth Government. When Mr. Wentworth was the Federal Minister he laid it down that all States had to eliminate any form of discrimination against Aborigines. He waved a big stick and said that if the States did not do this he would take the steps to see that they did. Queensland was in some trouble because it had a number of Aborigines, as we did, who were not ready for drinking rights. This was one of the forms of discrimination.

The Minister for Housing interjected on the member for South Perth and asked whether he supported the legislation that was introduced at that time. I remind the Minister for Housing that the legislation in question did not give Aborigines access to liquor in any part of Western Australia. With the exception of those with citizenship rights they were forbidden legal access. Let us put that category aside for the moment. Those without citizenship rights were prohibited from legal access to liquor.

In 1963 we amended the Act to give the Minister power to make exceptions to this rule.

Mr. Hartrey: They did it long before 1963. It may not have been law, but it was done. It did not really extend to liquor.

Mr. E. H. M. LEWIS: That was incorporated in the citizenship rights.

Mr. Hartrey: Yes.

Mr. E. H. M. LEWIS: Setting aside the comparative few at the time with citizenship rights the great majority of Aborigines in this State had no legal access to liquor. The Parliament then amended the Act to give the Minister the right to lift this prohibition, either in whole or in part, and, consequently, on the 1st July, 1964, the prohibition was lifted in the south-west part of this State. The Minister did not have to bring a Bill before the Parliament to enable the prohibition to be lifted. He had the power by virtue of the legislation which had already been passed. The member for South Perth supported this legislation as did members of the present Government.

Mr. Lapham: Where did the idea of giving Aborigines access to liquor come from initially?

Mr. E. H. M. LEWIS: Is the honourable member referring to Aborigines outside those with citizenship rights?

Mr. Lapham: Yes.

Mr. E. H. M. LEWIS: I could be subject to correction because I am going back a few years. I confess to having introduced the legislation. Whether it is a failure or otherwise, I confess to this. I was advised by the head of my department at the time that this was what we ought to do. This advice was given long before 1964. In fact it was given almost a

couple of years previously when I first took over the portfolio. I was under some pressure to do this but I resisted it because I feared the consequences. I travelled to the north and to the Eastern States visiting many reserves in all parts of Australia. I went at my own expense to New Zealand to see the situation with the Maoris. I came back and said, rather reluctantly, that we would try this in the south-west part of the State where the Aborigines were more sophisticated than those in other parts of the State. I took the action with a great deal of trepidation.

On the day the prohibition was lifted I gave my department instructions to phone various country towns to see what the situation was and to let me know immediately. At first they reported every day; then, every week; and then, every month. I followed the position closely. It was not until 1966 that the next step was taken and the prohibition was lifted to include towns such as Port Hedland, and others in the north. After that, Aborigines in the western half of the State virtually had access to liquor.

Mr. May: Was it because of the reports you received from the officers on the position in the south-west that you extended it to the north?

Mr. E. H. M. LEWIS: I was encouraged during that two-year period. I was advised that the Aborigines seemed to be taking to their liquor and were not unduly excessive in their consumption. Of course some were and some were not. The indication was that, in the course of time, they would learn to drink like white men. In this respect I want to say that the white man, himself, has improved in his drinking habits over the last 50 years. When I was a boy I remember it was a daily sight to see a drunken man. One seldom sees a drunken white man today. They are rare, by comparison.

Sir Charles Court: These days they are driving home instead of walking home.

Mr. E. H. M. LEWIS: I think there has been an improvement, whether they drive away or walk away. In those days they staggered away.

Mr. May: They could not afford cars.

Mr. E. H. M. LEWIS: It was in 1966 that we lifted the prohibition in the north-west part of the State. I was asked how long it would be before the prohibition would be lifted in the remaining parts of the State. I would not give an answer but said we would wait and see. We waited, and kept on waiting, and we went out of office. I will not say that we would have done this had we been returned to office. I do not know what I, or a new Minister, would have done.

We were under some pressure, but I was conscious of the problems that could arise in those areas where Aborigines still walk around with spears, as women walk around with handbags.

Mr. Hartrey: Often with an old sheep's head on the top of the spear.

Mr. E. H. M. LEWIS: I travelled along the trans-line, around Kalgoorlie, to Jiggalong and to the Warburton. From what I saw I trembled at the thought of giving these people ready access to liquor. It ill behoves the Minister for Housing to chastise the member for South Perth for supporting the original legislation. If it was a bad measure we all erred together. I am certain the measure was accepted without too much debate at the time. I know there were some who questioned the wisdom of it and, in looking back, I think they were probably justified.

Mr. Lapham: A few did.

Mr. E. H. M. LEWIS: The member for South Perth mentioned the language difficulties. We have groped with this subject over the years. In more recent times I have heard the present Federal Minister for Education advocate that Aborigines, in the early stages of their formal education, ought to be taught in their own language. This is a controversial matter among educators. I talked on this subject with officers in the department when I was Minister, but the advice given to me was that the sooner Aborigines got away from their own language the better. It was said that they should go into schools like any other youngsters and, in that way, they would soon pick up English. This is what we did. Whether we were wrong and the present Federal Minister is right will be revealed only by time. We were only groping, as I have said. I do not think there is any more logic in his reasoning than there was in ours.

The Aboriginal advisory committees are a step in the right direction. More recently I have seen a real ray of hope with the attitude adopted by Aboriginal elders. The elders are now becoming deeply concerned about the moral degradation which is quite evident amongst their race as a whole. They are getting together and saying that they must do something about this. I believe a ray of hope is now shining and that the present Royal Commission of inquiry will come out with some recommendations whereby the jurisdiction over the behaviour of Aborigines, especially in outback areas, can be left to the tribal elders. Perhaps their law may not conform with ours in many ways but I believe that they themselves will discipline their own people. In the course of time they might respond and become all the better for it.

The tribal elders have told me on many occasions that they have trouble with their own people who break away from the tribal system. If we give tribal elders the power to discipline their people, there is some hope for the future.

I rose to speak without having any notes but, having listened to the member for South Perth, I thought I should make some contribution to the debate. I do not altogether agree with the wording of his motion but I agree with his concern, as I think we all must. I hope we will attack this problem quite outside party politics because it is too grave to do otherwise.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. T. D. Evans (Attorney-General).

EMPLOYMENT

Commendation of Government: Motion

MR. BATEMAN (Canning) [5.16 p.m.]: I move—

This House notes with satisfaction that the number of registered unemployed, as disclosed by the figures released for August, is below those for February, 1971, one week before the Government assumed office, and the number of unfilled vacancies is greater, and in the opinion of this House, the Government is deserving of commendation upon its outstanding success in achieving such a remarkable change in employment opportunities, despite the early difficulties with which it was confronted.

I trust members will not treat me quite so abrasively as they did the member for South Perth, because I am giving the Government a pat on the back for what it has done, rather than criticising it for not doing what people think perhaps it should have done.

Sir Charles Court: I am sure this was done by ballot. You would not do it from choice.

MR. BATEMAN: I am sure no-one in the House would disagree with my motion. I have some figures to which I would like to refer. They are difficult to memorise so, with your permission, Mr. Speaker, I will quote them. They were released only a few days ago by the Department of Labour.

The number of registered unemployed in Western Australia at the end of August, 1973, was 6,258; at the end of July, 1973, the figure was 7,956; and at the end of August, 1972, the figure was 12,544. The figures for unfilled vacancies as at the same dates were 4,295, 3,545, and 1,777 respectively.

The number of registered unemployed in Western Australia in August, 1973, decreased by 21.3 per cent. compared with the previous month. This was the greatest reduction ever recorded for the month. In seasonally adjusted terms, unemployment fell by 12.6 per cent. to 6,542 in that month.

If my memory serves me correctly, last Christmas there were positions available for all the students leaving high schools and private schools, and that was the only time since the war years that positions had been available for all school leavers. This

also reflects some credit on the Government because of its policies which brought this situation about.

During August, 1973, there was a further recovery in labour demands, while unemployment fell to the lowest August level for three years. This, again, is a fillip to the Government. Unfilled vacancies continued to rise sharply, reaching the highest level for the month since 1969.

During the Supply Bill debate, the member for Mirrabooka gave a very good speech for which he had obviously done a tremendous amount of research. He quoted many facts and figures which were queried through interjection by the Leader of the Opposition. All the figures which were queried are contained in the report to which I am referring, and I will be happy to make the report available.

I have been very interested in the unemployment problem in this State ever since the present Government was elected. When I moved the Address-in-Reply, I said—

Since taking office the Government has been beset by the backlash in Western Australia of an Australia-wide recession, derived from international trade and currency troubles unequalled for a generation. The Government has worked hard not only to hold the line during the past two years, but also to lay a foundation—

THE SPEAKER: Is the honourable member reading from debates of this session?

MR. BATEMAN: Yes.

THE SPEAKER: It is not permitted under Standing Orders.

MR. BATEMAN: I had an idea you would probably stop me, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HUTCHINSON: You are consulting your notes fairly closely?

MR. BATEMAN: Yes.

MR. O'CONNOR: It would be hard to put this story over without them.

MR. BATEMAN: During that debate I said the Government was laying a foundation from which the State would take off when the economic climate or conditions improved.

My motion was prompted by the dramatic improvement revealed in the latest figures relating to employment in Western Australia, which I have just quoted. At the end of August, 1973, 6,258 Western Australians were registered as unemployed but there were no fewer than 4,295 unfilled vacancies. This very satisfactory state of affairs indicates that Western Australia has made the most dramatic recovery of all the States, yet a great deal of criticism is regularly levelled from the other side of the House at the performance of the Government.

Sir Charles Court: There is plenty more to come.

Mr. BATEMAN: In August of last year we had 2.84 per cent. unemployment; we now have only 1.38 per cent. Figures do not lie no matter how we look at them. Of course, in August last year our percentage unemployed was the highest in Australia. We are now achieving something like parity with Victoria, Queensland, and New South Wales.

Mr. O'Neil: Nothing like it.

Sir Charles Court: No, no!

Mr. BATEMAN: Yes it is.

Sir Charles Court: You give us the figures. The three highest percentages of unemployment and the three worst hit States are the Labor States.

Mr. Taylor: Do you remember when the Opposition was in Government the same thing applied and for the same reason?

Sir Charles Court: That is not so.

Mr. BATEMAN: There is a forecast of good prospects for further substantial reductions during the next two months and I am sure this will continue.

In order to understand fully the immense significance of our recovery, I believe it is essential to make a brief review of the circumstances from which the State has recovered. Most of us realise that for the 30 months we have been on this side of the House, we have had to listen to repeated attacks from the Opposition in regard to the unemployment situation. Since taking office in March, 1971, I believe we have gone a long way towards resolving the problem. I will try to develop this theory as I move further into my speech.

We had an unemployment problem when we came into office. The previous Government had an unemployment problem and it had had it for approximately two years.

Sir Charles Court: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. BATEMAN: The problem became worse and worse. When we took office the Opposition felt that the situation would be aggravated and we would be faced with a crisis. I feel certain in my own mind that this is what the Opposition members wanted to see.

Sir Charles Court: We had no employment problem.

Mr. BATEMAN: The Opposition wanted the public to believe we were responsible for the problem. I feel this was a falsification of the fact and not a representation of the true situation. It is true that from side to side and from top to bottom, Australia was already in the grip of a vicious recession, and I made much of this during my speech to the Address-in-Reply because it was very evident that we had this problem on our shoulders right from the beginning. Nobody with a brain in

his head would suggest for a moment that the problem was caused by anything but a shrinking of overseas markets. I also referred to this in my Address-in-Reply speech.

As one of the major trading nations of the world, we rely on the world markets for our prosperity. It is as simple as that. If we look at the problem logically, when customers are buying business is brisk. Of course, when business is brisk, more help is hired. Obviously, when we do not have customers business falls off and retrenchments result. No-one likes to put people out of work, and it is certainly not the philosophy of my Government to do so. We believe in full employment.

It is the same for a retail store as it is for a nation. When things are going badly for the retail stores, they are also going badly for the nation. I am sure that our friends in the Country Party will agree with this philosophy because when the farmer is in a bad situation and cannot sell his wool or sheep, we are all affected—even the city dwellers.

It is quite evident that when the world is having problems, we are having problems also. I believe things will come good during the next few months, and I am sure we will see a further decrease in the unemployment figures. In fact, I believe we will need to have a jolly good look at our immigration policy and perhaps bring in more people to cope with the development taking place in the State. The other day the Premier opened three new projects in the north. I am sure Western Australia does not have the work force to cope with all the new developments, and this will be a further problem for us to face up to. We must bring in more qualified migrants.

I will, however, mention some salient features in regard to our economy, such as the unnecessary restrictive 1971-72 Federal Budget. The then Treasurer followed slavishly and helplessly in his party's precept of creating unemployment as a hedge against inflation. I agree this is a way to control inflation, but it is a vicious way and one which my party would never accept. It just is not on. I am sure we can find other ways to control inflation than by escalating unemployment. However, this desperate ploy was followed by further floundering and then by the hearty promises that all would ultimately go well.

Here again, there appeared to be an inhuman disregard for the nation-wide misery of deeper and ever deeper economic gloom. Finally, this was followed by the humiliating volte-face of the Federal mini-Budget of April, 1972. With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote two short extracts from *The West Australian* of the 13th April, 1972. It follows—

But the mini-budget is nonetheless welcome, even as another instalment of the pump-priming efforts Canberra has been making since the budgetary

strategy it framed in August began to misfire. It is a case of doing the right thing for the wrong reasons.

Further on the newspaper went on to say—

A budget designed to restrict demand without discouraging growth left a train of spiralling prices and costs, lack of business confidence and rising unemployment in its wake.

If I dwell upon that sorry sequence of events, it is only because it was the real breeding ground of the economic doldrums from which Australia has now been hoisted by the Whitlam Labor Government.

However, I would like to refer to the censure motions moved against the Government by the Opposition, and I refer firstly to the motion moved on Wednesday, the 12th April, 1972, by the member for Floreat—although I do not like to mention the name of a member if he is not in the Chamber. We find that with consummate gall and disregard for facts, the honourable member spoke to his motion censuring the Government for a number of putative derelictions. I would like to examine the four points he made during that unsuccessful attempt to censure the Government.

The honourable member said that Labor had failed to recognise in advance the economic signs which ultimately led to very serious unemployment.

Mr. Rushton: It was your actions in 1971 that caused the trouble.

Mr. BATEMAN: I will cover that a little later. In answer to that claim of the member for Floreat, I direct the attention of the House—and particularly the attention of the honourable member—to figures which were freely available at the time from the Bureau of Census and Statistics, and which would have provided our predecessors with a very clear indication of what was to come. I refer to the unemployment statistics covering the last two years of the term of office of the previous Liberal-Country Party Government—

Sir Charles Court: Let us have the figures, because we finished up with a very favourable unemployment figure in spite of a rural recession.

Mr. BATEMAN:—when the number of unemployed in Western Australia rose by 2,083.

Sir Charles Court: The percentage was still very low. You are forgetting the percentages; they are what count.

Mr. BATEMAN: I have the percentages, and we will compare them later. It would seem that a fatal inability to recognise trends is not peculiar to Labor Administrations. The member for Floreat also said that my Government displayed complete ineptitude in halting and reversing the downturn of development. In that

matter he spoke in the same vein as his leader—I refer to the latter's famous injunction to a Liberal group in Harvey, which he addressed at the depth of the recession, that "Now is the time to put something in the development pipeline". We have heard that time and time again.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: Not in the last two or three months.

Mr. BATEMAN: Neither the Leader of the Opposition nor the member for Floreat was in any way specific regarding what the Government might have done; and for this I do not blame them.

Sir Charles Court: Yes we were, but no-one would take notice.

Mr. BATEMAN: We will get onto that in a moment. At that time one of the Leader of the Opposition's favourite projects—the Amax alumina project at Mitchell Plateau—was dying on the vine for sheer lack of interest and funds from overseas investors.

Sir Charles Court: It was crucified by your Government.

Mr. BATEMAN: No fear it was not. Also, wool was virtually unsaleable; wheat acreages were restricted by order of the then Federal Government; nickel production was treading water; and—as all members will be well aware, because at the time the Premier made mention of this—our Japanese customers were imposing heavy restrictions on their purchases of iron ore. We had many problems at that time.

In the circumstances it would be extremely interesting to know exactly what was going to be put into the development pipeline. Certainly I would have been very interested to know what was going to be put into the pipeline, and I am sure many other people would have been interested also.

The member for Floreat also said that the Government had failed to utilise general special grants from the Australian Government to solve the unemployment situation. Once again, I am sure the House will be aware of the fact that those grants were subject to very restrictive conditions, and were not really sufficient to repair the damage done by the policies of the Federal Liberal-Country Party Government, let alone to promulgate any new sources of employment.

Moreover, it was quite apparent from utterances from various members of the Liberal Party hierarchy at the time that they wished to appear very contemptuous of any Administration which would either seek funds from the Federal Government or presume to use such funds if they were granted. In this context the memories of those gentlemen proved to be extremely short.

I would like to remind the House that the then Premier—the present member for Greenough—made the most urgent representations to the then Federal Government for a very sizeable handout in respect of the 1970-71 Budget. This request to Mr. Gorton was refused, although Mr. McMahon later complied to a subsequent request by our leader when he became Premier; and had it not been for the fact that the State then received a grant of nearly \$5,000,000, we would have been faced with a deficit of \$10,000,000 in 1970-71. So much for the aftermath of the “golden years”; and I think we have heard that term mentioned quite frequently.

The fourth point of condemnation of the member for Floreat was that the Government showed no signs of imaginative advance planning. Here again, the honourable member is on very shaky ground. I draw the attention of the House to the fact that the Government which was in full charge of the development of the Pilbara for half a decade or so—and I am sure the Leader of the Opposition will appreciate these comments—left office without ever having produced the slightest indication of having anywhere amongst its effects the co-ordinated plan for Pilbara development which it had promised for so long.

On the other hand, the Tonkin Government—within 18 months of assuming office—produced and published the immensely detailed and imaginative plan which is now exciting the interest of major developments from both overseas and inside Australia.

Sir Charles Court: Who wrote that for you?

Mr. BATEMAN: The former Deputy Premier is no longer with us, but I am sure he would agree with me wholeheartedly in this matter.

Mr. Rushton: That concept was explained two years before the Tonkin Government took office.

Mr. BATEMAN: One is well aware that the political exigencies of the situation compel members on the other side of the House to sneer at our plan for the Pilbara, and to denigrate it on every possible occasion.

Mr. Rushton: Those sound like the words of the Premier.

Mr. BATEMAN: In this respect, let me warn members opposite that they are laughing at their own funerals.

Mr. W. A. Manning: It sounds like a prepared speech to me.

Mr. BATEMAN: I believe the member for Floreat has been adequately disposed of, so I will now turn to the Leader of the Opposition. I am sure he will enjoy every bit of this, just as the member for Floreat did.

Mr. Jones: The member for Floreat is very quiet.

Mr. BATEMAN: It is interesting to note that in June, 1972, when debating in this House the subject of unemployment and the economy, the Leader of the Opposition taunted the Premier with reminiscences of the buoyant employment situation during what he has since referred to as the “golden years”, to which I referred a little while ago. He drew the attention of the Premier to the fact that for years unemployment was at the rate of 1.7 or 1.6 per cent., and suggested that the Premier must long to go back to those days.

Sir Charles Court: We were referring to January and February, 1971.

Mr. McIver: And there is nothing left.

Mr. BATEMAN: At the time the Premier said that the present Leader of the Opposition would be sorry for that statement and if he has any finer susceptibilities one could imagine he must now be feeling very sorry. This is very true when one studies the figures that are revealed by the Department of Labour.

Sir Charles Court: What about comparing like with like?

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: Surely you are not denying having said that, are you?

Sir Charles Court: Not at all, but you put the poor member for Canning up to making this speech on behalf of the Government, and you are not comparing like with like.

Mr. BATEMAN: The unemployment figure in this State under the Tonkin Labor Government is now a little more than 1.3 per cent., which is a considerable improvement on the much-touted “golden years” of the Leader of the Opposition when he was in office. For this happy situation this State owes exactly nothing to any breath of co-operation or encouragement from the Opposition, and particularly from the Leader of the Opposition.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would suggest that the honourable member should not read his speech.

Mr. BATEMAN: I quite agree, Mr. Speaker. I admit I have some notes in front of me, but all members refer to notes at various times. I have noted repeatedly, when members have been speaking in the House, that they refer to their notes. However, you are quite right, Sir, in drawing my attention to the fact. Nowhere along the line has the Opposition tried to co-operate. On the contrary, it has criticised the Government at every opportunity. Let me say that nowhere in the world will there be found a monument for criticism. It is the simplest thing in the world to criticise as it does not require any brains or intelligence.

I am sure there has not been a time when the Leader of the Opposition has not grasped an opportunity to "have a go" at the Government about unemployment in Western Australia and to try to paint a picture that the situation is hopeless. I am sure the Leader of the Opposition will not deny that. He knows, as does everybody, the psychological effect of constant denigration on morale—and so on performance.

Members will also recall that in earlier times the Deputy Leader of the Opposition also had a "bit of a go". On many occasions he would rise to his feet and refer to "gloom and doom" and he would make many interjections on similar lines from time to time on the unemployment situation in those years.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition never ceased to criticise the Government about the factories that were slowing down, and he continually used the words "gloom and doom". I am sure that he, too, must feel that the golden days of the Leader of the Opposition have come to an end and that they are now being enjoyed under a Labor Government. In fact, in the next couple of months this will become certain.

Mr. Thompson: Would you suggest that at the time of the Balcatta by-election they were the golden days of the Labor Government?

Mr. BATEMAN: I think we will give the Balcatta by-election a bye for the moment. It is now quite obvious that in the excitement of the time, the Liberal's left hand had little idea of what the Liberal's right hand was about. In August, 1972, in the resumed debate on the censure motion moved by the member for Floreat, the Leader of the Opposition, in respect of unemployment, said he would "solve the problem" and would "stake his reputation on the success" of his performance in that respect.

Mr. T. D. Evans: It is a wonder that Billy McMahon did not grab him if he were that good.

Mr. O'Connor: Perhaps if he had, things would be better than they are now.

Mr. BATEMAN: He was asked by a Government member at the time how long he would take to achieve his miracle and the Leader of the Opposition said he would do it within six months of taking office. Should any member doubt this I would suggest that he read *Hansard*, because it is available as a reference.

It thus becomes fairly reasonable to suggest that having achieved an unemployment rate of 1.38 per cent.—certainly much lower than the Leader of the Opposition had ever thought possible—we should be substantiated in Government for some considerable time to come.

The Opposition has a curiously ambivalent approach to statistics. On the one hand it would never believe those which we have constantly quoted as demonstrat-

ing the serious decline in employment during the last two years of the Brand-Court Government. On the other hand, it has made constant and joyful use of successive statistical evidence of rising unemployment during the first months of the present Government. There is no doubt that the Opposition has criticised the Government continuously. As I said earlier, there was a two-year "lead-up" to this situation. When we took office there was a serious unemployment problem in this State.

This leaves one in some doubt as to the usefulness of quoting to the Opposition the present employment figures as published by the Bureau of Census and Statistics; that is, the figures I have just mentioned. However, in this regard, if members of the Opposition choose to ignore or to disbelieve the official organ of the Australian Government, may I direct their attention to the ever-growing columns of appeals—sometimes desperate—for workers in all categories which are now a feature of the "Situations Vacant" columns in *The West Australian*, *The Sunday Times*, the *Sunday Independent*, and every other newspaper printed in this State.

Mr. Thompson: That is good.

Mr. BATEMAN: My word it is good! A few years ago the Wednesday and Saturday issues of *The West Australian* used to feature large columns of "Situations Vacant", but now these columns are featured extensively in every issue of that newspaper.

Those lengthening columns reflect the extremely buoyant conditions in this State which have been brought about by the present Government. I am convinced of that. Those conditions have been achieved by this Government's dogged hard work—often under very disturbing circumstances—and by its careful housekeeping, and its having taken the fullest advantage of every opportunity. I am sure that those members on the Opposition side of the Chamber would agree with me that this Government has worked very hard and very doggedly to achieve the situation which we are enjoying at the moment and which we will continue to enjoy in the future.

This Government has held, and has reinforced, the faith and good opinion of overseas investors and operators, despite the Opposition's dire predictions to the contrary in an effort to queer our pitch at the very start. Labor has kept faith with the electorate with the volume of legislation it has had promulgated, as promised, although several of its major legislative innovations have been blocked by the Opposition majority in another place.

Mr. O'Neill: What has this to do with the unemployment figures for 1973?

Mr. BATEMAN: Finally, the Government has demonstrated its will and ability to plan. This is evident in the number of major projects now awaiting either the

Australian Government's imprimatur, or the complete recovery of overseas demand, before they are put into commission. I commend the motion to the House.

MR. O'NEIL (East Melville—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [5.49 p.m.]: I listened with a great deal of interest to the speech by the member for Canning and I must say that although his speech does not deserve our sympathy, he himself certainly deserves it. It is quite clear that he drew the short straw in being selected to put this motion before the Chamber.

Mr. Hartrey: There was competition for the privilege.

Mr. O'NEIL: I bet there was! The member for Canning quoted some figures, and I will quote rather more extensively from figures that have been supplied from the same source—the Bureau of Census and Statistics.

First of all I want to make the point that the whole attitude of the member for Canning and his motive for moving the motion indicate this is a matter of grasping at straws for some little thing which will enable someone to pat this Government on the back.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: Is it a little thing to have got the unemployment figure down to below what it was when we took office?

Mr. O'NEIL: If that is a fact, I agree.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: It is a fact.

Mr. O'NEIL: The Premier must admit that the wording of the motion clearly indicates that the figures have been used in such a way as not to give a true reflection of the situation, because the motion states that the figures relating to August, 1973, are below those relating to February, 1971.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: That was a week before this Government took office.

Mr. O'NEIL: The Premier must know that basically we must compare like with like. We cannot take the figures for December and compare them with the figures for January, and arrive at the conclusion there is an improvement. We cannot say that because there is an improvement of 100 in the number it is an improvement, if the basis on which we make the comparison is not the same. The only way to compare figures is to do so on a percentage basis and use the same period of time.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: If you were to compare them on a percentage basis what the member for Canning said would still be correct.

Mr. O'NEIL: Let me refer to some figures which have been extracted from the statistics supplied by the Bureau of Census and Statistics. Members receive a copy of these statistics each month. The figures which I have extracted show the percentage of unemployment of the work

force in each of the States of Australia, and for Australia as an average, for the years 1969 to 1973. I make no apology for quoting those figures and interpreting them in the way I want to.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: Interpreting them the way you want to!

Mr. O'NEIL: That is what I am here for. In case *Hansard* has difficulty in recording the figures I have prepared a copy for the reporter. However, there is one statement which I must make before I deal with those figures. In all of the so-called improvement referred to by the member for Canning, in respect of the numbers of people employed as against those unemployed, no recognition was made of the fact that a considerable number of people in Western Australia were and still are employed on the dole.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: Where is that shown?

Mr. O'NEIL: Their wages are paid for out of money which was given to the State by the Commonwealth, because there was no employment opportunity to engage those people.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: I was surprised to hear you say that. You know very well there is nobody in this State employed on the dole.

Sir Charles Court: Many employed on sustenance.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: That is, unless they are employed by the Liberal Party.

Mr. O'NEIL: They are really sustenance workers. The employment figures have been distorted, because many people in the State are being employed on work which has been made available through moneys provided by Commonwealth Governments of both political colours. They have given this Government funds so that these people do not have to rely on social service.

Sir Charles Court: What is more, the State Government is asking for more of this money.

Mr. O'NEIL: Why should the member for Canning make a great feature about the fewer people who are unemployed today compared with the number in February, 1971?

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: What is wrong in making a feature of a fact?

Mr. O'NEIL: That was why I indicated I had sympathy for the member for Canning in having drawn the short straw to move this motion in the House.

Mr. Jamieson: What about the number of available jobs?

Mr. O'NEIL: Did the member for Canning quote these figures?

Mr. Jamieson: Let us get down to other facts and figures.

Mr. O'Connor: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is killing you in respect of the figures.

Mr. O'NEIL: Let me get down to my facts and figures and look at the situation which existed in August, 1969, during the term of office of a non-Labor Government in this State, and a Liberal-Country Party Government in the Commonwealth sphere. At that time the percentage of the work force unemployed for Australia as an average was 0.86 per cent. The State with the lowest rate of unemployment was New South Wales with 0.77 per cent.; then came Western Australia with 0.83 per cent. Victoria came next with 0.84 per cent.

Mr. O'Connor: These were three States with Liberal Governments at that time.

Mr. O'NEIL: Yes. The figure for Queensland rose above the national average and it stood at 0.99 per cent. South Australia, which had a Labor Government, stood at 1.03 per cent.

Mr. Jamieson: Did South Australia have a Labor Government then?

Mr. O'NEIL: I stand corrected. It did not at that time.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: You are certainly interpreting the figures as you want to interpret them!

Mr. O'NEIL: Still dealing with August, 1969, the figure for Tasmania was 1.42 per cent. of the work force.

In August, 1970, the Australian average of the work force unemployed stood at 0.88 per cent. In that period the best State was New South Wales with a figure of 0.81 per cent.; followed by Victoria with 0.84 per cent.; then Queensland with 0.92 per cent.; and then Western Australia with 1.08 per cent.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: The figure for Western Australia slipped a bit.

Mr. O'NEIL: I admit that is above the Australian average of 0.88 per cent.

Mr. Jamieson: The State was going down the hill.

Mr. O'NEIL: The figure for South Australia was 1.12 per cent., and that for Tasmania was 1.17 per cent. There is an explanation for the position in which Queensland found itself. All of us recall that Queensland was suffering very extreme drought conditions, which had obtained for 10 years prior to the years I am referring to.

In August, 1971, after the present State Government in Western Australia had been in office for about half a year, there was the approaching Budget of 1971 which caused some difficulties and maybe some of these problems were in anticipation of that. In that month of 1971 the Australian average of the work force unemployed stood at 1.13 per cent. New South Wales had the best record with 1 per cent.; followed by Queensland, which elevated its position from above the average to being in second best position, at 1.04 per cent. Then followed Victoria with 1.15 per cent. So in

that situation we found three non-Labor States with unemployment figures much better than the Australian average. Below those three States came South Australia with 1.38 per cent.; Western Australia with 1.53 per cent.; and Tasmania with 1.71 per cent.

In August, 1972, the figure for the Australian average stood at 1.73 per cent. This time, instead of New South Wales being at the top, we found Queensland in that position. This State managed to overcome its difficulties. Because of the type of economy which existed in Queensland—and this is not dissimilar to the economy of Western Australia—that State managed to be the best in Australia in respect of the rate of unemployment.

Mr. Taylor: Queensland was going through a mineral boom period, as Western Australia did two years before; and the Government recognised that point.

Mr. O'NEIL: This Government was making the excuse that we were caught in an international problem. How then could Queensland, with the same sort of economy as ours, be the best State while we were the worst?

Several members interjected.

Mr. O'NEIL: In August, 1972, Queensland had the best figures from the point of view of employment opportunities. New South Wales was second with 1.61 per cent. while Victoria was third with 1.63 per cent. The Australian average was 1.73 per cent., and then came Tasmania, from being the worst to being the first State above the Australian average. Let us have a look at its percentage which was 2.36 while in the previous year it was 1.71.

South Australia followed that with 2.49 per cent., and Western Australia was at the bottom with 2.89 per cent. of its work force unemployed. Significant, too, is the fact that all the States with a better unemployment figure than the national average were non-Labor States while all the States with figures above the national average were Labor States.

Mr. May: A Labor State has the best percentage decrease.

Mr. O'NEIL: If that gives the Minister any satisfaction he can have it.

Mr. May: It gives me a lot of satisfaction.

Mr. O'NEIL: The figures for this month which, somehow or another, motivated this ridiculous motion, I presume were from the same source as my figures; that is, the Department of Labour's monthly review of the employment situation. Let us see where we are now.

It is true that we had an unemployment percentage of 2.89 this time last year, and that has improved to 1.38 per

cent. But let us have a look at the figures in the other States. In Queensland, 1.05 of its work force is unemployed—top of the tree, and back where it has been for the most part over the last four or five years.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: Would you quote Queensland's August figure for last year?

Mr. O'NEIL: Last year it was 1.15 per cent. and this year it is 1.05—an improvement. This year the percentage in Victoria is 1.09, while last year it was 1.63—an improvement. For this year the percentage in New South Wales was 1.17, and last year it was 1.61—an improvement. The Australian average this year is 1.18 per cent. while last year it was 1.73—still an improvement.

Before I commenced to quote these figures I said that Western Australia had certainly improved and probably to a greater degree than the other States.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: Actually cut its figure in half.

Mr. O'NEIL: I have not checked that, but the Premier could do so on the figures I have given him. The first State above the Australian average is Western Australia. From being the very worst in the Commonwealth it is now only the third worst, and if that gives the Government any satisfaction let it have it.

Mr. May: Does it not give you satisfaction?

Mr. O'NEIL: Of course, but I am replying to what I believe is a puerile motion based on information which is not related to the real situation. Western Australia's percentage of the work force unemployed this year is 1.38 compared with its last year's figure of 2.89. So that is an improvement.

Mr. Harman: A big improvement.

Mr. O'NEIL: Yes. In South Australia the figure is 1.58 per cent. and Tasmania has again fallen to the bottom of the tree with 2.18 per cent.

The significance of the table if one reads it is that for the last three years at least the Labor States have had unemployment figures higher than the Australian average and the three non-Labor States have had unemployment figures which are lower than the Australian average.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: But you overlooked one thing in that statement. There has not been a Labor Government in Tasmania in any of those three years.

Mr. O'NEIL: One could also say much the same for 1971, because the present Government came into office in February. I said that excuses would be made concerning the 1971 figures because the Government would say it had not been in

office for the whole year. However, the figures as presented are interpreted in the way I think they should be interpreted. The Premier would be the first to accept that when one makes a comparison one must compare like with like. One cannot compare numbers of unemployed in August of one year with numbers of unemployed in February of another year because the employment force will change in size. That is why the statistician used these particular methods to determine the relative positions in respect of unemployment from State to State. Simply to say there are only 6,000 registered unemployed today compared with a considerably higher number in February does not tell the story factually.

I am sure all members on this side of the House are pleased that Western Australia is not as badly off as it was at this time last year when almost 3 per cent. of the work force was unemployed. However, we cannot really be pleased until such time as we get back to where we used to be, which was well below the Australian figure. From being the best State in Australia from the point of view of employment opportunities we descended in August of last year to being the worst.

Even though at one time it was indicated—and I think it was indicated by a Labor Government—that 5 per cent. of unemployment was virtually full employment, those days have passed, thank goodness. Members from both sides of the House should aim to achieve what we believe in: full employment, despite the problems which such a situation would bring with it in respect of pressures.

I will conclude on the note that I enjoyed the speech delivered by the member for Canning. I sympathise with him for having drawn the short straw, and I am certain that if he examines the situation closely and factually he will realise what a puerile motion he has moved.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. W. A. Manning.

Sitting suspended from 6.08 to 7.30 p.m.

QUESTIONS (32): ON NOTICE

1. WOOD CHIPPING INDUSTRY

Commonwealth Power

Mr. RUSHTON, to the Attorney-General:

- (1) Can the Commonwealth Government at this late stage still stop the wood chipping industry in Western Australia proceeding although the legislation be passed and assented to by the Western Australian Parliament?
- (2) If so, how can the Commonwealth Government do this?

The **SPEAKER**: This question is seeking an expression of an opinion on the legal powers of the Commonwealth and is therefore inadmissible.

2. LAND ACQUISITION

Clarification of Commonwealth Government's Decision

Sir **CHARLES COURT** to the Premier:

- (1) Further to my questions without notice Nos. 6 and 8 of 21st March, 1973, in reference to the Commonwealth Government's announced decision to curb overseas interests from buying Australian land—will he advise if he has received clarification from the Commonwealth Government of its decision?
- (2) If received, can we be advised as to the details of the Commonwealth policy and decision?

Mr. J. T. **TONKIN** replied:

- (1) Clarification has not been received.
- (2) Answered by (1).

3. SUPREME COURT CASE

Court versus Pratt

Mr. **HARTREY**, to the Speaker:

In view of the answer made by the Hon. the Attorney-General on 13th September, 1973 to my question without notice relating to the case of *Court v. Pratt*, and the view taken by the House of Commons and the English Court of Appeal of the circumstances in which the *sub judice* rule is applicable to Parliamentary debates, will he please refer to the report of the case of Attorney-General v. *Times Newspapers Ltd.* (1973, 1 A.E. R p.815) and having perused and studied same, advise the House whether he considers that the *sub judice* rule as defined in Standing Order No. 2 still applies to prevent Members from discussing the question of whether or not the Leader of the Opposition misled the House in a personal explanation which by leave he was permitted to make to the Legislative Assembly on 14th September, 1972?

The **SPEAKER** replied:

The case referred to has been listed for hearing on the 11th October, 1973 and in my opinion Standing Order No. 2 "*Matters—sub judice*" applies.

The reference to Lord Justice Denning's remarks and the House of Commons decision is noted. In view of the early hearing of the case I must adhere to my original decision made on 8th November, 1972.

4. CHANNEL 7 STADIUM

Construction on Railway Land

Mr. O'CONNOR, to the Premier:

Further to question 22 on 13th September, 1973 concerning the stadium to be constructed on railway land in Perth, does the 1.4218 ha referred to in answer to (2) include the total area involved including parking area, etc.?

Mr. J. T. **TONKIN** replied:

No. The 1.4218 ha site is for the erection of the building and the provision of parking areas to service the stadium and tavern. Public car parking will be provided for at car parks 3, 3A, 5 and 8, as well as in other public or privately owned car parking facilities in the area.

5. CHANNEL 7 STADIUM

Maple Ridge Pty. Ltd. Signatories

Mr. O'CONNOR, to the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

- (1) Who are the participants or shareholders of Maple Ridge Pty. Ltd., who signed an agreement on 27th July, 1973 with the W.A.G.R. for development on W.A.G.R. land?
- (2) What share is held by each participant?

Mr. **MAY** replied:

- (1) and (2) The name "Maple Ridge Pty. Ltd." was used to enable the parties concerned to sign the lease agreement and in order that development could be commenced.

It is understood the company is in the process of being re-registered and details of the new organisation are not available now but could be available early next week at the companies office.

6. LAND

Pt. Walter Reserve: Usage

Mr. O'NEIL, to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) For what purpose is the land, known as the Pt. Walter Reserve, currently being used?
- (2) Are there any plans or proposals for its future use and, if so, would he detail same?

Mr. H. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) Portion of class "A" reserve No. 4813 comprised in Cockburn Sound location 1717 and containing 11.6372 hectares is vested in and held by the Minister for Education in trust for the purpose of "recreation".

The balance of this reserve containing about 53 hectares and as comprised in Cockburn Sound location 679 is vested in the City of Melville for the purpose of "recreation" with power to lease the whole or any portion thereof for any term not exceeding 21 years. It is utilised as a public golf course.

- (2) Cockburn Sound location 1717, together with the associated buildings and facilities is being utilised by the Departments of Education and Community Welfare. This occupancy is expected to continue for a period which conforms with the estimated "working" life of the buildings and facilities. Ultimate use has not been determined.

7. MINING

Federal Budget Decisions: Submission for Reversal

Sir CHARLES COURT, to the Premier:

- (1) What progress has been made in preparation of the case for presentation to the Commonwealth Government in support of the request for reversal of Budget decisions which resulted in the public protest meeting in Kalgoorlie, 30th August, 1973?
- (2) When is it expected to be completed and presented to the Commonwealth Government?
- (3) What State Government discussions and representations to the Commonwealth Government on the subject have taken place since 30th August, 1973, and with what result?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

- (1) The preparation of the case is proceeding, and progress is satisfactory.
- (2) The case is expected to be completed during the first week in October, and it is proposed to have it presented to the Commonwealth Government shortly afterwards, dependent upon suitable arrangements being made.
- (3) On behalf of the State Government, I made representations to the Prime Minister and the Federal Treasurer on 6th September, and to the Commonwealth Attorney-

General on 7th September. Further representations were made by me to the Federal Treasurer and the Attorney-General on 17th September. Reactions, so far, are encouraging. The Federal Treasurer has requested some further information, which I have undertaken to supply, and he has promised to give consideration to this on his return from overseas in about two weeks' time.

8.

HOUSING

Interest Rates: Representation to Commonwealth

Mr. MENSAROS, to the Premier:

- (1) Was he correctly reported in *The Sunday Times* of 29th July, 1973 that "the Government has decided against increasing the burden of people buying homes through terminating building societies"?
- (2) If so, in view of his Government's policy, will he now make representation to the Federal Government to reverse that Government's decision which will result in higher interest rates generally and also for home buyers especially?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) There is ample evidence that the Federal Government is closely studying the problem of interest rates, and doubtless is aware of all the relevant criteria.

9.

LAND LEGISLATION

Support

Mr. MENSAROS, to the Premier:

Referring to his reply given to question 2 on 13th September, 1973, could he say how many (similarly documented as the objections mentioned in his reply) submissions has the Government received from—

- (a) individuals;
- (b) local authorities;
- (c) organisations,

in favour of the general contentions and provisions of the three land Bills at present on the Legislative Assembly notice paper?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

There have been no formal submissions other than those referred to in my previous reply.

10. *This question was postponed.*

11. **POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT***Mandurah and Pinjarra*

Mr. RUNCIMAN, to the Minister for Development and Decentralisation:

- (1) Can he advise on the estimated population for the towns of Mandurah and Pinjarra for the years 1980-2000?
- (2) Is he aware of any development which is causing some millions of dollars to be invested in property in and adjacent to Mandurah?
- (3) While this development has been in evidence over the last 12 months it has been stepped up over the last few weeks, and can he give any reason for this?

Mr. TAYLOR replied:

- (1) I am not aware of any current estimate of future population for these towns. However, the Shire of Murray projections contained in its 1971 town planning scheme indicates Pinjarra's population to be 21,900 by 1990.
- (2) No. However, I am aware of an endeavour by at least one property developer to obtain the approval necessary to promote a residential and industrial estate in the Mandurah area.
- (3) No.

12. **RURAL RECONSTRUCTION SCHEME***Interest Rates*

Mr. McPHARLIN, to the Minister for Agriculture:

Now that the Federal Government has raised interest rates which will have a severe impact on primary producers, will he give an assurance that—

- (a) the interest rate at present applying to contracts already

in existence with the Rural Reconstruction Scheme will not be altered;

- (b) any proposals brought forward by the Commonwealth Government to increase interest rates on future rural reconstruction loans will not be accepted?

Mr. H. D. EVANS replied:

- (a) No consideration has been given to an alteration to existing interest rates for rural reconstruction loans already made, but an assurance is not possible.
- (b) This must be dependent on conditions applied by the Commonwealth to the provision of funds.

13. **RAILWAYS***Wheat Cartage*

Mr. GAYFER, to the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

In respect of the carriage of wheat by the W.A.G.R., would he please advise of each of the following centres—

Meckering;
Katanning;
Corrigin;
Kalannie;
Wubin;
Kulin;
Brookton;
Wagin;
Morawa;

- (a) distance in kilometres to natural port terminal;
- (b) present freight rate;
- (c) anticipated freight rate;
- (d) percentage increase of (c) over (b)?

Mr. MAY replied:

	(a) Distance in kilometres	(b) Present freight rate	(c) Anticipated freight rate	(d) Percentage increase
		\$	\$	%
Katanning to Albany	185	4.50	5.20	15.5
Meckering to North Fremantle	187	4.30	5.20	20.9
Corrigin to Bunbury	320	5.60	6.50	16.1
Kalannie to North Fremantle	336	5.60	6.70	19.6
Wubin to Geraldton	327	5.70	6.60	15.8
Kulin to Bunbury	330	5.70	6.60	15.8
Brookton to North Fremantle	254	4.70	5.60	19.1
Wagin to Albany	237	5.00	5.70	14.0
Morawa to Geraldton	204	4.70	5.40	14.9

With respect to wheat in the Fremantle zone, the rates to North Fremantle were previously assessed on the narrow gauge route via Cottesloe despite the actual longer haul south of the river.

With greater tonnages shortly to be directed to Kwinana, the opportunity has been taken to charge via the south of the river route which will be shorter to Kwinana and in the long term, to the growers' advantage.

16.

POLICE

Under-age Drinking Convictions

Mr. THOMPSON, to the Attorney-General:

- (1) How many convictions for under-age drinking were recorded against persons in this State in each of the three full years prior to lowering of the drinking age to 18 years?
- (2) How many similar convictions have been recorded in each full year since the age was lowered?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) and (2) The following information has been prepared on figures available with the effective date of the lower drinking age being 1st July, 1970.

Year ended	Prosecutions	Sent to lectures
30/6/69	406	310
30/6/70	760	573
30/6/71	66	485
30/6/72	208	721
30/6/73	190	892

17.

INTEREST RATES

Effect on Woolgrowers

Mr. McPHARLIN, to the Premier:

- (1) Will he state the Government's policy in regard to the action of the Federal Government in the raising of interest rates?
- (2) Will he protest to the Federal Government and point out that this action will tend to prevent the badly needed rehabilitation of many woolgrowers?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

- (1) The policy of the State Government is against increases in interest rates, but it is recognised that there are circumstances in which increases are unavoidable.
- (2) There is ample evidence that the Federal Government is closely studying the problem of interest rates, and doubtless is aware of all the relevant criteria.

18.

CURRENCY REVALUATION

Effect on Primary Production

Mr. McPHARLIN, to the Premier:

- (1) Will he state the Government's policy in regard to the recent action by the Federal Government in revaluing the Australia dollar a further five per cent?
- (2) Can he indicate where there have been any reduced production costs in the farming industry as a result of the revaluation in December 1972?

14.

WATER SUPPLIES

Ongerup

Mr. W. G. YOUNG, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) Is he aware that the town water supply dam at Ongerup has not filled this season?
- (2) As it now appears certain that water carting will be necessary in the Ongerup-Borden districts (farm dam water content is average to poor) would he expedite the inquiry into the "Mills Lake proposal" to pipe water into Ongerup?

Mr. JAMIESON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Proposals (including the possible use of Mills Lake) to provide a supplementary supply of water to Ongerup are being urgently investigated.

15.

EDUCATION

Cluster Classrooms: Door Closers

Mr. THOMPSON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is it a fact that a child attending a State school had part of a finger removed as a result of a door in one of the new cluster buildings slamming shut on his hand?
- (2) Will he have door closers fitted immediately to all doors in the cluster schools?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) An official report on this matter has not been received but it is understood that an accident did occur.
- (2) Heavy duty door closers have been placed on some doors in the cluster schools. These make the task of opening the doors difficult for small children. However, the matter is being investigated and, if necessary, door closers will be fitted where required in cluster units.

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

- (1) The revaluation of the Australian dollar places upon Western Australia a disproportionate amount of the disadvantage which results. Accordingly, we do not favour such policy.
- (2) No.

19. BANK HOLIDAYS

Application

Mr. RUSHTON, to the Minister for Labour:

- (1) Has he received an application from the Australian Bank Officials' Association and the Commonwealth Bank Officials' Association for the granting of Monday, 24th and Monday, 31st December as bank holidays?
- (2) (a) Has he decided to approve the application; or
(b) has he decided to reject the application and, if so, for what reasons has he reached this decision?

Mr. HARMAN replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) and (b) No valid reason was advanced to justify additional holidays, and accordingly the application has been rejected.

20. KELMSCOTT SCHOOL

Grounds and Fence

Mr. RUSHTON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Have arrangements been finalised to transfer the closed Kelmscott police station and land to the Education Department?
- (2) When are the school grounds between the Bristol classrooms and Orlando Street to be filled and drained?
- (3) When is the school fence along Orlando Street, east of the police station, to be constructed?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) It is understood that this work has been completed to the satisfaction of the school.
- (3) This matter will be investigated when finality is reached on the transfer of the police land.

21. HILLMAN SCHOOL

Construction

Mr. RUSHTON, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is he aware 257 homes have been completed at Hillman?
- (2) Is he aware there are 74 homes under contract and under construction at this point of time?

(3) Is he aware there were 59 building permits issued in July for homes at Hillman?

(4) Does he concede the accuracy of Hillman parents' present statistical estimate of 200 primary school children being resident at Hillman now?

(5) Will he immediately take initiatives to have the Hillman school built ready for students by the beginning of the 1974 school year?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

(1) A complete house count of the Hillman area by officers of the Education Department on 3rd August, 1973, revealed the following:

Occupied houses ..	145
Unoccupied houses ..	13
Houses under construction ...	68
	<hr/> 226

(2) Yes, the figure quoted closely corresponds with that established by the house count.

(3) No, but I accept that this could be so.

(4) No. 131 children actually residing in the Hillman area attend nearby schools at present, viz.—

Bungaree primary school	115
Rockingham Beach primary school ..	12
Star of the Sea School ..	4
	<hr/> 131

(5) The 1973-74 loan funds have already been fully committed but a primary school for the Hillman area will be constructed to open in February 1975.

22. PUBLIC SERVICE

Appointments Not Under Section 23

Mr. MENSAROS, to the Premier:

(1) How many salaried officers are at present employed in Government departments who are not appointed by virtue of the provisions of section 23 of the Public Service Act?

(2) How many such employees were appointed during each of the years or financial years since 1970?

(3) Are the conditions of work such as working hours, holidays, sick leave entitlement, long service leave, salaries, notice for terminating employment, etc., for such employees the same as the conditions for employees appointed under the Public Service Act?

- (4) If answer to (3) is "No" could he describe the difference in conditions in detail?
- (5) Which is the employees' organisation (union) of which these employees referred to in (1) can be members?
- (6) Are the conditions (compulsion, preference or entirely free choice) of belonging to such employees' organisation by these Government employees referred to in (1) the same as those of public servants appointed under the Public Service Act who are members of the Civil Service Association?
- (7) Would he table the report and recommendations, submitted on 26th November, 1971, of the inter-departmental committee established on the request of the Auditor-General to investigate the validity of appointments to Government departmental services?
- (8) Which of these recommendations have been implemented so far by the Government and which are proposed to be implemented?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

- (1) to (8) This information will take some time to compile and will be communicated to the Member as soon as completed.

23. COUNTRY HIGH SCHOOL HOSTELS

Capacity and Eligibility

Mr. MENSAROS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Could he please list the Government schools which have boarding hostels attached to them, together with the capacity for the number of boarders each of these hostels has?
- (2) What are the conditions of eligibility for acceptance of a student as a boarder in any of these hostels?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

(1) Senior High Schools	Boarders
Albany:	
Boys	69
Girls	32
The Priory	44
Bunbury	96
Carnarvon	80
Esperance	96
Geraldton:	
Boys	96
Girls	75
Katanning	112
Merredin	130
Narrogin	150
Northam:	
Boys	140
Girls	82
Port Hedland ..	100

- (2) Hostel accommodation is provided for students who intend to enrol in Government secondary and primary schools and who do not have access to a bus service to transport them to such schools. Where applications for accommodation exceed the capacity of the hostel it is necessary for the Hostel Committee to decide priorities.

24.

RAILWAYS

Advertisements: Rights

Mr. MENSAROS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

- (1) Are W.A.G.R. advertisements handled now wholly or partly by the Railways Department itself or by agents?
- (2) Could he disclose which part is handled by the department and which by agents, who are the agents, and have they sole rights?

Mr. MAY replied:

- (1) During the term of the previous Government, Australian Posters Pty. Ltd. was given exclusive rights to outdoor advertising on railway property.
- (2) No outdoor advertising is handled by the Railways Department.

25.

ROADS

Tourist Drive: Canning Dam

Mr. RUSHTON, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Why is the tourist drive to Canning Dam along McNess Drive still closed?
- (2) When is this access to the Canning Dam to be opened?

Mr. JAMIESON replied:

- (1) The drive is cut at the Canning Dam portal and carrying heavy transport, and public safety is essential.
- (2) Not definitely determined, but possibly July or August next year depending upon the contractor's progress.

26.

FISHERIES

Tuna and Fishmeal Industries

Mr. BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Fisheries and Fauna:

- (1) Would he give any details of Western Australian fishing interests fishing for tuna in grounds off the continental shelf of this State?

- (2) Has the Government or his department provided any technical and/or financial assistance to this venture and, if so, would he give details?
- (3) Would he provide information of any assistance, either technical or financial, rendered by the Commonwealth Government?
- (4) Who are the companies involved in this project and from which base port do they intend to commence operations?
- (5) Has the Government or his department made any assessment regarding the establishment of a fishmeal industry in Western Australia and would he please provide details of negotiations to date?

Mr. BICKERTON replied:

- (1) There are a number of fishermen and fishing companies interested in catching tuna off the Western Australian coast. On the south coast a small tuna fishery has already been developed, and on the west coast developmental work is in progress. One of the principal vessels involved in this development is the *Western Star* operated by Markwell Ross Fisheries Pty. Ltd.
- (2) The Government has provided technical advice to industry by undertaking aerial surveys for tuna and making the results of their surveys available to industry. Also the department's Senior Research Officer (Development), who is an expert in the field of tuna fishing, has given advice to many members of the fishing industry.
The Government has provided financial assistance in terms of the charter of the fishing vessel *Torbay* to undertake a survey on the south coast in 1969 and 1970 and the loan of a purse seine net, puritic power block and sonar set for use by Markwell Ross Fisheries Pty. Ltd. on the vessel *Western Star*.
- (3) The Australian Government has approved a grant of \$95,000 to Markwell Ross Fisheries Pty. Ltd. to develop purse seining for tuna off Western Australia.
- (4) Markwell Ross Fisheries Pty. Ltd. I understand the vessel refuels at Learmonth, but the home port is Fremantle.
- (5) The Government has investigated the market potential of fish meal, but until a fish resource has been proven and it has been shown that the resource can be supplied to a

processing plant at about \$20 per ton further progress cannot be made.

27. WEST BUSSELTON SCHOOL

Additional Classrooms

Mr. BLAIKIE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) With the projected increase in school numbers at the West Busselton primary school, would he advise when additional classrooms will be built?
- (2) If "No" to (1), would he initiate immediate investigation to ensure that adequate accommodation is available for the commencement of the 1974 school year?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) and (2) Additional permanent accommodation is scheduled for West Busselton in the 1974-75 financial year.
Temporary accommodation will be provided as needed for the beginning of 1974.

28.

MEAT

Lamb Exports: Ban

Mr. BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Is he aware that the Commonwealth Government proposal for export meat levy could also include a partial ban on export of lamb?
- (2) Have the Lamb Marketing Board and the farmers' union expressed concern over this possible action by the Commonwealth Government?
- (3) What steps has the Minister taken to ensure that the lamb industry will not be adversely affected by this decision?

Mr. H. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) It is understood that the report of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Prices (sub-committee B—meat prices) is to be tabled in Federal Parliament. Details of the proposals will be obtained as soon as possible.
- (2) The Farmers' Union has expressed its concern to the Minister for Primary Industry over possible restrictions on meat exports, particularly lamb. The Lamb Marketing Board has informed me of the adverse effects that restrictions on lamb exports would have on orderly marketing of lamb in Western Australia.
- (3) The Minister for Primary Industry has been requested to give recognition to Western Australia's special position in relation to exports of

lamb. Western Australia will have a substantial surplus of lamb available for export in the next four months, but access to Eastern States markets is limited both by cost and market requirements.

29. COURT PROCEEDINGS

Exclusion of Press

Mr. B. T. BURKE, to the Attorney-General:

- (1) What is the procedure to be adopted when the Press is to be excluded from court proceedings?
- (2) Who is responsible for finally deciding whether or not the Press should be admitted?
- (3) Does the process of exclusion vary, for example in children's court proceedings?
- (4) Is he satisfied that the correct exclusion procedure is being followed?
- (5) If not, in what areas does current practice fall short of the requirements?
- (6) What steps have been taken to correct any shortcomings?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) The presiding judicial officer asks the Press to leave.
- (2) The presiding judicial officer.
- (3) No.
- (4) Yes.
- (5) and (6) Answered by (4).

30. WOOD CHIPPING INDUSTRY

Telegram from Senator Wriedt

Mr. RUSHTON, to the Premier:

Will he table a copy of Senator Wriedt's telegram of 20th August relating to the wood chipping industry project and environmental matters?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

Yes, papers tabled herewith.

The papers were tabled (see paper No. 337).

31. STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION

Contracts in Excess of a Three-Year Term

Mr. THOMPSON, to the Minister for Electricity:

Further to the reply to question 22 on Tuesday, 18th September, 1973, will he give details of the 11 contracts with a performance period exceeding three years?

Mr. MAY replied:

Country towns assistance scheme lease agreements for the term of 21 years with each of the following—

1. Shire of Kondinin (Karlgarin).
2. Shire of Kondinin (Hyden).
3. Shire of Dumbleyung.
4. Shire of East Pilbara.
5. Shire of Kent.
6. Shire of Upper Gascoyne.
7. Shire of Shark Bay.
8. Shire of Yalgoo.
9. Shire of Cue.

and

Two lift maintenance contracts with Otis Elevators.

32. STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION

Land at Mt. Lawley: Usage

Mr. O'CONNOR, to the Minister for Electricity:

- (1) Is it anticipated the State Electricity Commission intends to use some land in the Mt. Lawley Golf Club area and near the 17th tee?
- (2) If so, will he provide details—
 - (a) of the area involved;
 - (b) for what purpose is the land required;
 - (c) when will the land be required?
- (3) Is there any other land in the vicinity that would be suitable apart from on the golf course?
- (4) Is it necessary to bring a Bill to Parliament before the S.E.C. can use this land?

Mr. MAY replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) A maximum of 1.8 acres.
(b) A combined switching station and zone substation.
(c) February, 1974.
- (3) Yes, but not as suitable.
- (4) This matter will be presented by the Lands Department in the Reserves Bill when all formalities are complete.

QUESTIONS (6): WITHOUT NOTICE GOVERNOR

1.

Appointment

Sir CHARLES COURT, to the Premier:

- (1) Has a name gone forward yet for the new Governor?
- (2) If not, when is it anticipated that a submission will go forward?
- (3) If it has gone forward, when does he expect an announcement to be made?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) By the end of this month.
- (3) Not applicable.

2. ABLE STAR ENGINEERING CO.
PTY. LTD.

Tabling of File

Mr. GAYFER, to the Minister for Development and Decentralisation:

Will he table the file in connection with Able Star Engineering Co. Pty. Ltd.?

Mr. TAYLOR replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question. Regrettably, however, litigation is presently pending between a member of the company concerned and the Official Receiver of the company. Therefore, the matter is *sub judice*.

3. GOVERNMENT
DEPARTMENTS
Motor Vehicles

Mr. THOMPSON, to the Premier:

I apologise for not giving the Premier any notice of this question.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: I think you will have to put it on the notice paper.

Mr. THOMPSON: On the 15th August I asked a question in relation to motor vehicles used by officers of Government departments. At that time the Premier indicated it would take some time to compile the answer to my question. Has the month which has passed since then been sufficient time to obtain the answer? If not, when can I expect to receive it?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

All I can say at this stage is that it was necessary for me to circulate all Ministers in order to obtain the information from the various departments. As yet I do not have the information available. When it is available I shall see that it is conveyed to the honourable member.

4. RAILWAYS

Wheat Cartage

Mr. GAYFER, to the Premier:

I asked a question today of the Minister representing the Minister for Railways. The reply was handed in because of its length, although I do not think it is very long. Is the Premier aware that of the nine sidings

and stations listed, the anticipated freight rate increase from them to the natural port terminal will be of this order—

%
15.5
20.9
16.1
19.1
16.8
15.8
19.1
14.0
14.9

How does the Premier reconcile this answer with his statement that rail freights are going up only 15 per cent.?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

I have been caught this way before. I ask that the question be placed on the notice paper.

5. PUBLIC SERVICE

Appointments Not Under Section 23

Mr. MENSAROS, to the Premier:

In relation to question 22 I asked today, whilst I appreciate that the answer will take some time to compile, would the Premier be kind enough to give an undertaking to hand in the question instead of presenting it to me so that it can be recorded in *Hansard*?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

Yes. My purpose in indicating that it would be forwarded to the honourable member was an endeavour to get it to him more quickly. If he wishes the answer to be presented to Parliament, I have no objection to that course.

6. MEAT

Lamb Exports: Ban

Mr. BLAICKIE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

In relation to question 28 I asked today, in view of the importance of the report of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Prices, sub-committee B (Meat Prices) which is to be tabled in the Federal Parliament shortly, will the Minister make every endeavour to have copies of this report made available to the members of this Chamber because of the importance of the meat industry to this State?

Mr. H. D. EVANS replied:

Yes, I will be quite happy to do that. I will also hand in any other relevant information as soon as it is available.

OFFICIAL PROSECUTIONS (DEFENDANTS' COSTS) BILL

Second Reading

MR. T. D. EVANS (Kalgoorlie—Attorney-General) [7.55 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

It was the stated policy of this Government to review the laws which prevented legal costs being recovered by successful defendants of charges laid by the Crown, including statutory authorities.

This Bill has been drafted following a report of the Law Reform Committee, as it then was, and provides for financial relief to an accused in a trial held in a Court of Petty Sessions or a Children's Court who is acquitted or who has the charge against him withdrawn, or in cases where the charge is not proceeded with.

The scheme also includes appeals from summary trials and the appellate court may award costs where the defendant is successful by reason of his appeal. The amount of the costs ordered, other than court fees, shall be in accordance with a scale to be prescribed. However, provision is made in the Bill to allow the court to make an order in excess of the amount prescribed where it is satisfied that the payment of greater costs is desirable.

Not all successful defendants are to be entitled to costs as prescribed, as the court may order that a particular defendant is not entitled to full or part costs in certain circumstances. An example of this is where a charge is dismissed under section 669 of the Criminal Code; that is, the provision for first offenders. Members will be aware that in such an instance a judicial officer may be convinced that an offence has in fact been committed, having regard for the antecedence of the offender. However, because it is a first offence, the judicial officer may decide not to record a conviction and the charge is said to be dismissed pursuant to section 669 of the Criminal Code.

Another example could be where a defendant did something which was unreasonable and contributed to the institution or continuation of the legal proceedings; or he had done something during the course of the proceedings which was calculated to prolong the proceedings unnecessarily or cause unnecessary expense. In that case the court has a discretion in determining its order as to costs.

The payment of costs ordered shall be made to the defendant upon his certificate of the court being produced to the Treasurer of the State where the public official who was a party to the proceedings happened to be a person falling into the following categories: a Minister of the Crown, a public servant, a police officer, or a person acting as an agent of these officials.

Where the public official, who was a party to the proceedings, is employed by a statutory body, other than a Government department or instrumentality, or is an agent of such a body, the costs shall be paid by that body.

I point out that such a body would necessarily include a local authority.

I interpolate here to indicate that in April of this year I asked the Minister for Local Government to draw to the attention of the many local governing authorities in Western Australia the intention of the Government to proceed with this legislation. I also asked the Minister to draw to the attention of the authorities the obligations which could arise under the legislation in certain circumstances to pay costs to successful defendants. I have with me a circular dated the 13th April, 1973, distributed by the Department of Local Government. It refers in paragraph 3 to the payment of costs to acquitted persons. I am advised that as of the 11th September last no comments or complaints from local authorities had been received and recorded by the Department of Local Government pursuant to the distribution of the circular. So it may safely be assumed that local authorities have had adequate notice of the intention of the Government.

Attention should be drawn to the fact that where costs are ordered the public servant, police officer, or statutory authority employee is not personally responsible to pay the amount ordered. Costs awarded for which the State Treasurer is responsible shall be met from the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

In June of this year the Lord Chief Justice of England (Lord Widgery), when giving a practice direction in the Queen's Bench Divisional Court, enunciated examples of reasons for not ordering costs in favour of a successful defendant. It is of interest to read that the criteria adopted in England approximate those included in this Bill.

On numerous occasions over the past few years demands have been made for reform to end the injustice suffered by an acquitted person who has not been compensated. It is submitted that this Bill, which has been drafted as a result of considerable research and consultation with responsible sectors of the community, is a piece of legislation vital to the protection of the personal rights and freedom of the citizens within our community.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Mensaros.

Message: Appropriations

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

LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR. T. D. EVANS (Kalgoorlie—Attorney-General) [8.05 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

At the request of the Law Society of Western Australia and the Barristers' Board, the Government has considered proposals to amend the Legal Practitioners Act. Each of the amendments arises from the need to recognise changing circumstances and, in turn, to ensure that the relevant legislation does not become outmoded. The amendments in the Bill can be classified under three broad categories—

- (1) Constitution of the Barristers' Board.
- (2) Restrictions as to articulated clerks.
- (3) Control of certain practitioners.

The present provision of the Act is for five practitioners to be elected annually by the profession. This has remained unchanged since 1893, notwithstanding that the total number of practitioners on the roll has increased more than tenfold since that time. I am referring, of course, to the constitution of the Barristers' Board, created under the Legal Practitioners Act of 1893.

It is important, particularly from the point of view of the disciplinary role performed by the board, that the elected members should hold the major place in the constitution of the board. It is proposed therefore to increase the number of elected members of the profession to seven.

The Act now provides that the State Crown Solicitor and the Deputy Commonwealth Crown Solicitor shall each have no more than four articulated clerks at the same time. The Law Society requested that the limitation be lifted, and the proposal had the support of the Barristers' Board. The purposes of allowing the Crown Solicitor and the Deputy Commonwealth Crown Solicitor each to have four articulated clerks are—

- (1) To provide recruitment for each department.
- (2) To assist the community in aiding law students to proceed to admission to the bar and so meet the needs of the community for legal practitioners.

The law school has in recent years experienced difficulty in arranging articles for all graduates. It is believed larger firms of solicitors have increased their number of articulated clerks as an obligation to the profession and to the community. The extent to which the intake of articulated clerks will be expanded by the departments concerned will be governed by funds avail-

able and opportunities to employ them gainfully so that they receive appropriate training.

A further amendment sought by the Barristers' Board provides that the board may at any time appoint a certificated practitioner to inquire whether or not another practitioner is for any reason incapable of properly conducting his practice.

The practitioner so appointed shall report to the board which may, if it decides that the practitioner investigated is incapable of properly conducting his practice, apply to a judge for such order as the judge thinks fit. This provision is aimed at providing further protection for the public and, together with the previous amendments, is commended to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Mensaros.

MOTOR VEHICLE (THIRD PARTY INSURANCE SURCHARGE) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 13th September.

MR. McPHARLIN (Mt. Marshall) [8.10 p.m.]: This is a small measure, and one which we do not intend to oppose. It will certainly be accepted by those who will be favourably affected. The measure will come into operation as from the 1st April, 1974. This provision is to give the licensing authority sufficient advance notice of the date from which exemption will operate.

The Bill intends to remove the surcharge on third party insurance on fire fighting vehicles used by farmers. These vehicles have been specially fitted for such purpose at the expense of the farmer and normally they would be used only on his property. Therefore there would not be any need for them to be licensed. However the vehicles have been specially fitted for fire fighting and at times it is necessary for them to be used on a road or to be driven across a road for the purpose of fighting fires that may occur from time to time.

The Bush Fires Board, being a competent body, has made representations for the removal of this surcharge, and the amount that will be lost to revenue will not be very great. It is estimated that the loss to revenue will not exceed \$5,000 a year. Such a small amount will not have any significant effect on a farmer's normal costs. Nevertheless it is a relief to know that this small measure will bring about a small reduction in costs. Small as it may be, perhaps it represents a faint glimmer of light filtering in from somewhere, and indicating that when the Estimates are being considered, further relief will follow.

Further, this is a move that will be accepted by all shire councils. I feel sure there will be no opposition from them. I cannot imagine their objecting to something being removed which would effect a reduction in costs. Also it will not have any effect on the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust because this surcharge does not represent income for the trust. The surcharge is not paid to the trust, but to the Government. Only the insurance premium is paid to the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust.

In the past those vehicles which have been used for fire fighting have been granted concessions in regard to licenses, and the surcharge that was made amounted to \$5. Therefore, as I have said, there will not be a great amount lost to revenue. Also there would not be a great number of fire fighting vehicles of this type in the State.

The main purpose of the Bill is to amend section 3(2) by adding after paragraph (e) a new paragraph to be known as paragraph (ea). Section 3(2)(e) of the Act refers to wheelchairs but I do not think there is any implication behind it in regard to any farmers that I know. The amendment in the Bill applies to a person engaged in the business of farming or grazing and concerns the use of their vehicles which are specially fitted for fire fighting purposes only.

In supporting this amending Bill I trust that the Government may, when introducing other measures, bring about further reductions in costs in other categories that apply to farmers, because in recent months we have seen an increase in interest rates which will mean that further costs will be added to the farmer's burden. Also the revaluation of the dollar will have its impact upon the rural community, and other measures which will come forward will further burden very heavily those engaged in farming pursuits in the next 12 months because these costs will affect their business of farming.

Therefore any small measures of relief will be gratefully received and I hope the Treasurer will accept my comments in the manner that I have expressed them. A couple of nights ago we had a debate on pay-roll tax and an increase in that tax will affect those in rural areas to some extent, and the removal of this surcharge will not be of great significance to them, but it is a start towards the Treasurer easing the pressure a little, which will be welcomed by those on this side of the House. He does not get much support for many of his actions, but this is one where he will get real support. I suggest he keeps that in mind by granting further relief in other directions and he will get more support. I support the Bill.

MR. BLAIKIE (Vasse) [8.18 p.m.]: I, too, support the measure before the House. Much of what I intended to say has already

been said by the Leader of the Country Party. However I wish to place on record some acknowledgment of the work performed by the bushfire brigades since their inception in this State. I doubt whether anyone can assess the real value of these brigades. They are organised on a fairly loose basis, but in times of crisis and need the brigades move straight into action. In any rural community they have proved to be of immense and immeasurable value.

The measure before us is one that will grant some recognition of the work this organisation has performed. The purpose of the Bill is to exempt fire fighting vehicles from the surcharge on third party insurance and I support the Government for its action in introducing it.

I made some representation to the Minister for Police in regard to fire fighting vehicles, which concerned another matter, and I had hoped some provision would have been included in this measure to cover the situation. I refer to the braking system of vehicles used for fire fighting purposes. I consider that some exemption in regard to the braking system of a fire fighting vehicle should be granted by amending the regulations under the Traffic Act.

As the Premier said in his introductory remarks when moving the second reading of this Bill, these vehicles are used specifically for fire fighting purposes and invariably, unless a crisis occurs whereby a fire is imminent and there is immediate danger, they are not required to travel over roads. It could well be that these vehicles would not traverse roads for several years, but there are odd times when this would be necessary.

I wholeheartedly support the measure and sincerely hope the Minister for Police, who will have further representations made to him again this year to relax the regulations made under the Traffic Act in relation to the code of trailer braking—especially imposed on fire fighting vehicles—will agree with those representations.

This Bill is only a small measure, but it is indeed a generous move on the part of the Government and I commend its action.

MR. J. T. TONKIN (Melville—Treasurer) [8.20 p.m.]: I thank members who have indicated their support of the Bill. Frankly I would have been surprised had any member opposed it. I can assure the Leader of the Country Party that I am not looking for ways in which I can get rid of revenue; in fact, I am searching for ways in which I can obtain more.

It was felt that in the circumstances this was a reasonable step to take, as it was necessary to encourage these people to make their vehicles available, and there was no reason why they should be put to some expense in order to render what is a public service. It looks as though there

will be no difficulty at any stage to the passage of the Bill, and for this I am very thankful.

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.

IRON ORE (MURCHISON) AGREEMENT AUTHORIZATION BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 23rd August.

MR. COYNE (Murchison-Eyre) [8.24 p.m.]: I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words in support of the agreement contained in the Bill before us. I must admit that initially, due to some information I received from people in the electorate which was not really on the ball and the fact that I had not clarified my thoughts on the matter, I was not completely in favour of the Bill.

Of course, I now realise that the whole purpose of having this agreement between Northern Mining Corporation and the Government ratified is to bring about some arrangement to enable the company to attract additional capital into the development of the project, the feasibility of which has yet to be proved. I realise that in this respect the company has a long way to go, particularly in view of the recent fiscal measures taken by the Commonwealth Government. This has made it much more difficult for companies operating in the mining areas of the State.

Looking at the map that has been tabled, it will be seen that a direct railway line will be built from a port just north of Geraldton to the Weld Range, a distance of some 230 miles. It did appear that Yalgoo, Mt. Magnet, and Cue would suffer as a result of the discontinuance of the existing railway line.

However, the Railways Department has agreed that this line will remain in service until after this project has got off the ground; and, will remain in service for 13 to 15 years until such time as the deposits are developed to a satisfactory state of production.

Northern Mining Corporation proposes to mine the Weld Range deposit in the first place, and then later to take in the Mt. Gould and the Mt. Hale deposits, which are slightly north-west of Mt. Weld. For the sake of the whole Murchison region I hope this project proves to be viable, and will in due course get under way. If it does it will prove to be a great lift to the whole region, and give a strong impetus to the Port of Geraldton which requires some such project to raise the

quality of life of the people there, to attract a greater population, and to attract additional industries.

Looking further afield, this project will enhance the prospects of other mineral developments in the eastern Murchison. I refer to the Ferrovandium Corporation which is located at Barrambie and is at present conducting tests to establish a pilot plant in order to prove the prospects of its operations.

Further east is the Yeelirrie uranium deposit. Last weekend we had the opportunity to view that deposit from the air. We saw that a great deal of work had been done there, although at present the project is at a standstill. The uranium oxides have been deposited in huge dumps, waiting for markets to appear. No doubt, in due course this project will also get under way once again.

In the south-east direction there is the Perseverance or the Selcast nickel operations. Last weekend we also had the opportunity to inspect that; it is a fantastic project. This is an ore body containing some 40,000,000 tons of 2.2 per cent nickel. Although the project is experiencing difficulties at the present time, there is no doubt in my mind of its eventual success. I do hope that in due course the project will become airborne.

From the way these deposits are located it will be seen that in the long term a standard railway line stretching from Geraldton to Meekatharra, and arcing back in the direction of Mt. Keith, the Perseverance project, and Malcolm to form one line from Geraldton to Esperance, could be built.

Mr. May: Would you include Yeelirrie?

Mr. COYNE: Yeelirrie is a little bit off the line. It is predicted that in the 1980s there will be a big upsurge in the use of uranium by Japan. It is claimed that Western Mining Corporation has \$550,000,000 worth of uranium at Yeelirrie.

If the uranium operation becomes airborne it would certainly be worth establishing the line. We do not know where the supplies will be obtained, but I know that the Leonora and Kalgoorlie people would like them to come from the Kalgoorlie area. In the interests of economy the best source would probably be through Esperance, although it would be best to freight the uranium concentrates, nickel, and iron ore from Geraldton. Consequently we could have a long line being used all the way.

I support the project wholeheartedly and wish the company well. I hope its feasibility studies are successful and that it can prove to outside interests that the project could be viable and that consequently it can attract the capital to get the project off the ground.

I am sure that those people in the Murchison who still have misgivings about the loss of the railway line would be satisfied if they received a full explanation. From time to time as the opportunity arises in my electorate I will certainly express my support for the project.

MR. McPHARLIN (Mt. Marshall) [8.32 p.m.]: Briefly I would like to express my support for the project, the subject of the Bill before us.

In his speech the Minister told us that the agreement provides for the mining of deposits in the Weld Range, Mt. Gould, Mt. Hale, and Robinson Range locations. Indeed it is an agreement of significant regional importance and should be supported to enable the project to get off the ground.

The Bill provides for an initial expenditure of \$140,000,000 which is a rather large sum. However, the project will create employment and a railway line will be built which will be of importance not only to the company concerned, but also to the producers along the line. I understand that those wishing to do so will be permitted to use the line immediately it is established; and then after a period of time the railway line will become the property of the State, which is a very favourable arrangement.

Under the Bill the Government must be satisfied after a period of five years that the conditions applying have been met before it will agree to the project going ahead. The company has indicated it has had difficulty in raising the finance, and the Government has undertaken to guarantee a loan of up to \$42,000,000 for the establishment of the railway line, but only after the project has been proved viable to the Government's complete satisfaction.

These are rather severe conditions, but I consider the project must be proved viable, and this places the responsibility on the company. If it cannot prove that the project is viable, the guarantee will not be given.

Such conditions would satisfy even the most severe critic of the project. If such restrictive conditions were not imposed the Government would be open to criticism. However, it appears that the project will be investigated fairly thoroughly before it is given the green light to go ahead.

I cannot recall that the available tonnage in the area was mentioned in the Minister's second reading speech, but I understand that some millions of tons are available in three areas and this tonnage would be sufficient to make the project viable.

The royalty rates mentioned are similar to those in the McCamey's Monster and Rhodes Ridge agreements and apparently the company is satisfied with them.

The Minister indicated that it was essential the Bill be passed to enable the company to have the okay to go ahead with its planning. I add my support to that of the other members who have spoken. This development in that area will offer employment opportunities. A new port will be established just north of Geraldton and this will assist in decentralisation. It will give an incentive to the district which will be able to develop in a desirable way. I therefore support the Bill.

MR. MAY (Clontarf—Minister for Mines) [8.37 p.m.]: It is not normal for a Minister to debate a Bill he has introduced on behalf of a colleague, but in this instance I think it is clearly evident that the Mines Department is closely related to the Department of Development and Decentralisation, as is the case with all new mining ventures. This one in particular required close co-operation between the two departments.

When the iron ore committee looked at the first application by Northern Mining, it thought that the project was a very marginal one, and if we were to get it off the ground it would require quite a deal of planning because of the fragmented deposits which had to be included in the agreement.

When towards the end of last year we called for applications for iron ore reserves—they closed in February of this year—we received a considerable number of applications for the Robinson Range area. However, the committee felt that this deposit should be granted to the company mentioned in the Bill before us, in order that the project may be a viable proposition. The company will now mine the Weld Range, Mt. Gould, Mt. Hale, and Robinson Range areas and this might give the project an opportunity to get off the ground.

It is an extremely marginal proposition because at the present time our iron ore is receiving a considerable amount of competition from both South Africa and Brazil. Although the Robinson Range area does not contain ore of a particularly high grade because of its Fe content, it is still one on which planning should be done now so that it will be ready when markets become available at some future date. This was done with McCamey's Monster and Rhodes Ridge. It is no good waiting until the economic situation is virile, before carrying out planning. The object is to bring the project to a stage where the economics are proved and, when the climate is right, the project can proceed and compete with any other country in the world in terms of contracts. The contracts are what concern us because until such time as the agreement is ratified the company is not in a position to offer its product to the consumer.

Exploration in the Murchison area is virile at this point in time, in spite of comments made in terms of diminution of the exploration rate in Western Australia. We have received a number of applications for gold prospecting areas, nickel claims, and claims for various other types of minerals. There have been a number of applications for temporary reserves.

We called applications for temporary reserves in an endeavour to generate exploration in the mining sector. However, even though we called for applications we considered we still had to allow for some areas which we termed "active areas" so that prospectors would be able to get in and explore without the areas being tied down by large companies. In the case of the Paterson Range one company applied for a number of temporary reserves. We granted a few, but left the rest of the area open as an active area so that others could apply to explore there.

The present Northern Mining venture is of a very marginal nature but we hope it will get off the ground. It can get off the ground only if the market improves, and the company concerned can show that its product is acceptable on overseas markets.

Mr. O'Connor: The company has got some sales?

Mr. MAY: It has letters of intent. The company feels it will be able to get sales once this agreement goes through. We have to appreciate that a considerable quantity of high-grade iron ore is available at the moment.

Mr. O'Connor: There is no doubt it is a difficult situation.

Mr. MAY: The situation is the same as that which applies to Rhodes Ridge where there are deposits of very high phos iron ore. It will be some time before that venture is able to get off the ground. We are moving now and trying to integrate the area so that the deposits can be used when the time is opportune.

Mr. O'Connor: But there is some fairly high-grade stuff available?

Mr. MAY: The idea is to plan ahead, and not to work out the high-grade ore. We cannot expect people to go to isolated areas and set up homes for a period of only 10 years. The whole concept of the Pilbara area is to try to arrange the planning, and blend the high grades with the medium grades so that the mines and the townships have a long life.

The previous Government commenced this operation and we have carried it on by assisting in terms of education and in various other facilities. A family usually goes to the north because of the high wages which are paid. However, high wages are not of much use if the children have to be sent to secondary schools in

the metropolitan area. The idea is to ensure large provincial towns so that the schools and hospitals can be upgraded and the children can remain with their families while they are being educated. This method has helped many families living in the north.

The member for Moore mentioned a technical school for instructing Aborigines in Port Hedland. We have been looking at the prospect of having an annexe to the School of Mines somewhere in the Pilbara so that the young people will be able to attend the school in the environment in which they live. It is very difficult to get young people from the metropolitan area to go north and take up positions as mining engineers, etc., in the iron ore industry, or any other industry. However, if a young person is educated in the north, and grows up in the area, it is usually easier to persuade him to remain there.

The original planning by the iron ore committee ensured that particular reserves were integrated before we passed this matter on to the Minister for Development and Decentralisation who is responsible for the final agreement being presented to Parliament. We have had close co-operation in this regard, and we hope it will be of benefit in terms of the iron ore deposits. If we are to compete with overseas companies it is obvious we have to make sure that our iron ore deposits are developed in such a way as to ensure long life for the benefit of the companies involved, and for the benefit of our State and Australia generally. I support the Bill.

MR. TAYLOR (Cockburn—Minister for Development and Decentralisation) [8.45 p.m.] : With apologies, Mr. Speaker, I think the fact that the Minister for Mines spoke may have led you to believe that the debate on the Bill had been wound up.

The **SPEAKER**: The Minister for Mines introduced the Bill.

Mr. May: On behalf of the Minister for Development and Decentralisation.

The **SPEAKER**: The Minister for Mines therefore closed the debate.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mr. A. R. Tonkin) in the Chair; Mr. Taylor (Minister for Development and Decentralisation) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1: Short title—

Mr. TAYLOR: We can all learn, and I have certainly learnt a lesson this evening. However, with your indulgence, Mr. Deputy Chairman, I will make one or two comments of a general nature in connection with the various clauses which we will discuss during the Committee stage.

It was interesting to note the comments of those who spoke to the Bill—the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Country Party, and the member for Murchison-Eyre, in whose area this proposition hopefully will get under way.

The Minister for Mines, particularly, was responsible for the compilation of the agreement. I would inform members that the agreement was put together and prepared in a special form by my predecessor, the former Minister for Development and Decentralisation, in conjunction with the Minister for Mines. As the Minister for Mines has said—as did also the Leader of the Opposition—this is a matter which has occupied the attention of both departments, and the attention of a number of Ministers over several years because of the obvious value of having such development within the Murchison area.

I will have an opportunity to speak to the various clauses of the Bill but I will make some general comments at this stage. The members who spoke to the Bill emphasised that there was a certain vagueness about some of the wording in the measure, and pointed out that it appeared to allow considerable latitude to the venturers who will be attempting to make the proposition a profitable one. The latitude was allowed, purposely, so that there would be flexibility for those who were preparing to make the venture a viable proposition and get some form of industry off the ground.

The Leader of the Country Party also made the point that all avenues seemed to be covered, as far as the Government was concerned. Should the Government desire, it can call a halt to the proceedings at any time. This certainly applies as far as guarantees for assistance in connection with finance are concerned or any proposition in connection with any future partnership. It also applies regarding the route of the railway, and the matter of the port; all those aspects will be in the hands of the Government of the day. Any operation can be stopped, and any provision can be re-enacted at any point in time.

The member for Murchison-Eyre was a little concerned, as was the Leader of the Opposition, on the effect that this railway and the new mining project may have on existing towns in the area. The Leader of the Opposition raised the matter and, by interjection, I indicated at the time that it is the intention of the Government at this stage that the railway through to Meekatharra will continue and will operate as it does now.

Further, the Government's intention is to attempt to encourage the Northern Mining Corporation—or whoever its successors may be—in fact to use one of these towns rather than build a temporary town at the various mine sites. It is held that there could be greater value in a large number of people in one community moving outwards to other mining

enterprises than there would be in a small transitional town which may only have a viable life of some 15 to 20 years.

I repeat that it is certainly not intended in any way that the present railway or the towns which it serves will be disadvantaged by this proposition; I agree with the comment of the Leader of the Opposition that, in fact, this should enhance the use of that railway and the use of the towns in the general area.

A question was asked as to why the shires of both Greenough and Chapman Valley were mentioned when it would appear that any future port is likely to be built to the north of Geraldton. The reason for mentioning both shires in the Bill is to give maximum latitude to the company and to the Government in looking at a possible port site in the area. It is agreed that there are some good points for the establishment of a port approximately 10 miles to the north of Geraldton, but this is in no way a final determination. Full latitude is given in the Bill so that a wide range of alternatives may be examined. The final determination as to where the port will be is, under the measure, left to the Government itself. It is one of those points in the Bill which are outside the scope of any arbitration. In other words, it will be the sole prerogative of the Government of the day to decide where the port will be. It will not rest with the company either directly or by way of negotiation although, naturally, the views of the company will be taken into account.

The actual location of the railway has naturally also not been determined but once again—as was pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition—the railway line itself is likely to be as short as possible. Certainly an effort has been made to attempt to find an easy access through to the coast. If the railway does follow any of the routes so far suggested—although they have not yet been surveyed—it is likely to be outside of existing towns.

The Leader of the Opposition asked for some clarification on two of the definitions; namely the definition of manufactured steel products and the definition of the further processing of steel into special shapes and alloys. He rightly pointed out that the definitions were much wider than those one normally encounters in such an agreement. Certainly they encompass the whole range of steel manufacturing processes.

This was done deliberately, I am informed, during discussions between the former Minister and the company so that there could be maximum advantage taken of whatever proposition may be put forward by the company or any other group with whom the company may wish to establish a consortium. Therefore, the definition is very wide indeed to allow for

maximum discussion. Of course the final determination as to what may happen still remains within the power of the Government of the day.

A question was also asked as to why a figure of 250,000 tons was put forward as being a quantity per annum to be unloaded from the new port. It was said that this figure seemed to be extremely low and possibly uneconomic. It was agreed that such a tonnage would be extremely marginal. Once again, it was put in as a minimum figure to give maximum latitude to the company in its discussions with whomsoever it may see fit in its endeavour to make this a viable venture.

I thank the Deputy Chairman (Mr. A. R. Tonkin) for the latitude I have been given on clause 1. As all speakers have recognised, this agreement is different from virtually any other agreement of its type that has come before the Parliament in that it is a real attempt to give as much latitude as possible to a company in its endeavour to establish an industry in an area in which normally great difficulties would be considered to exist in the establishment of such an industry; or it may even be considered that such an action is impossible.

The Government has seen fit to offer assistance in the terms of guaranteeing the cost of a railway line for two reasons. One is that it will allow the company to seek less contribution or less equity itself in a direct form, based on its own ability to raise the funds. The second reason is that, as a Government-controlled railway, this will allow the Government to have a major say in the use of that facility for any other major or minor mining venture in the area. If the railway were exclusively owned and operated by the company it could then dictate terms including the complete forbidding of the use of that railway. However, under the terms of the agreement it will be possible for the railway to be utilised at any time, subject to the convenience of the company, by any other company which has an interest in minerals and ores.

I think the main points that were put forward have been covered. Doubtless as we reach other clauses there will be other points which members will be interested in commenting upon.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2: Execution of Agreement authorized—

Sir CHARLES COURT: Am I to assume that we may discuss the schedule as a separate item or must we discuss it on clauses 2 and 3?

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr. A. R. Tonkin): I intend to deal with 10 clauses of the schedule at a time. This

will give members big chunks of the schedule to discuss. Does the Leader of the Opposition wish to speak to clause 2?

Sir CHARLES COURT: No

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3 put and passed.

Schedule—

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I intend to put the first 10 clauses which would take it up to page 23.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I have several points with which I wish to deal. The matters I wish to raise are to be found on pages 3, 10, 14, and 17. Page 3 is the start of the agreement. It refers to the name of the company; namely, the Northern Mining Corporation N.L. This was referred to by the Minister in presenting the Bill and it was also referred to by me in my second reading speech. However it is appropriate to comment briefly on this because although we are actually agreeing to an agreement for signature in substantially the form that is submitted to the Parliament, we must acknowledge that it could be with people as yet unknown. My thought is that it will be with people at whom we could not even guess at the present time. However, perhaps the Minister has received some further information since the Bill was introduced which would give an indication of the type of people who are interested.

I think it is important that Parliament should understand that when the agreement is finally consummated and becomes a project there could be one or more parties, as yet not known to us, who will finally enter into agreement with the Government and accept responsibility for it. I am not sure whether the Government proposes to do this by way of assignment or by way of renegotiating or amending the agreement so as to include the new names in it.

Here again, I would guess that if there were a number of substantial partners they themselves would want to be incorporated in the agreement that was eventually signed, which might involve bringing it back to Parliament to have it finally approved. Likewise, I can foresee so many variations of the agreement when it is brought to fruition that it will need further parliamentary approval. In other words, we are working on the basis that this is purely a document which will permit discussion and negotiation for capital and the necessary expertise and markets.

If I may, at the same time I will deal with one of my queries on page 10 relating to the port site. The Minister has answered my query in respect of the two shares which were mentioned, and I take it the reason for the inclusion is that they wanted flexibility. In other words, the port site could be north or south of

Geraldton, although the site favoured at the moment appears to be about 10 miles north of Geraldton.

Mr. Taylor: Yes.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The next item I refer to is steel. I raised this in the course of the second reading and the Minister has partly, but not fully, answered my queries. My main purpose in raising the matter was to invite the attention of the Government and its advisers to the fact that the definitions "steel" and "tertiary processing" seem to be in conflict. At the moment it might not appear to be very important because there is a long way to go before the final propositions are considered. However, I point out that the definition "steel" reads—

"steel" means steel in the form of steel billets or manufactured steel products;

In the trade one normally regards a billet as being one of the very early forms of semi-finished steel. It is virtually crude steel ready for eventual melting down again and conversion into other forms and products. But when we come to manufactured steel products we are talking about things such as ploughshares, spades, saucepans, motorcar bodies, and a thousand and one things which are made out of steel.

I will be interested to know why the definition was made so wide and with such a disparity. It is not just a question of allowing elasticity in the definition of steel, because this is not elasticity. It is going from one extreme to the other. If it referred to billets, slabs, blooms, and plates, they would be in the same family—a semi-finished steel class—but beyond that we get into RSJs and merchant bar steel, and even they are not manufactured steel products. It is not until we come to actual usable goods that we talk about manufactured steel products; for instance, a railway track or a small article made out of steel, and so on.

Following on from that, I come to the definition "tertiary processing". The point I was trying to get across during my second reading speech was that here again we have allowed a range of choice which does not seem to contain a lot of logic. The definition reads—

"tertiary processing" means the production of pig iron by blast furnace smelting—

That is one item. The definition continues—

—the production of steel by any means whatsoever—

That could be direct reduction through an electric furnace or by taking pig iron and converting it into steel. The definition continues—

—and the further processing of steel into special shapes and alloys;

I am intrigued as to why these things were included in this way under the one heading of "tertiary processing". I think we must assume that people, being normal human beings, would select the commitment of lowest value or lowest liability. In that regard, one would select the production of pig iron by blast furnace smelting because that would be the lowest form of production.

I am still intrigued as to why the definition includes the further two items of much more sophistication. There does not seem to be any tie-up between those items and the provisions in the agreement. At the moment it is of no great consequence because there is a long way to go, but a moment of truth will come in the matter when people are submitting proposals to the Government, and I can foresee considerable difficulty in respect of steel and tertiary processing.

Mr. Taylor: Do you consider they are in a sense contradictory?

Sir CHARLES COURT: They are. Take the definition of steel. We go right from raw steel in billets—with not even a reference to steel blooms, slabs, and plates—straight into manufactured steel products. They are not a family group of items which are closely related at the one stage of processing. Manufactured products are entirely different from billets, blooms, slabs, and plates.

Mr. May: Even allowing that there is a vast difference between the two, where do you envisage the difficulty arising?

Sir CHARLES COURT: I foresee great difficulty when it comes to interpretation because when the agreement is being implemented people will start to look at the small print. Under the definition of "steel" we could have the situation where the company does not make steel at all. If I were acting for the company and looking at this in five years' time—and we could be dealing with different people at that time, a new manager, a new secretary, and so on—I could take up the piece of paper and start reading it without today's background knowledge. In relation to manufactured steel products, I could say, "We will set up an industry to make some products out of steel in Geraldton", and claim that is steel without actually making steel. That could be done under this definition.

I suggest that between now and the passage of the Bill in another place it would be advisable for the Minister to have a look at it. I am not raising this matter by way of criticism. I hope the Minister realises I am trying to be helpful. However, the person who drafted the definitions did not understand a great deal about the steel industry. It is a complex industry. Some people may think billets are semi-finished steel, whereas there may be a dozen ranges of semi-finished steel

as distinct from steel products. If the Minister thinks we can be helpful, we are prepared to confer on this issue before the Bill goes to another place. I can visualise problems for the company in interpreting this definition because I have tried to relate the definitions of "steel" and "tertiary processing" back to the body of the agreement but there seems to have been some technical misunderstanding in the agreement itself in regard to steel industry as it is practised.

Mr. Taylor: They are almost mutually inclusive?

Sir CHARLES COURT: They appear to be, and they appear to be contradictory in some respects. I will make some further comments later, if I may. The Minister might want to comment at this point.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Leader of the Opposition, of course, was quite right to mention the Northern Mining Corporation N.L. The future of the enterprise may not rest with this particular group, and I am mindful of this. The Leader of the Opposition asked whether any late information was to hand. I am able to say that I received a letter yesterday from the company dated the 17th September. Without divulging the full contents of the letter, I can tell him that the company notes the Opposition's support in the earlier *Hansard* report. The letter says the company is to begin discussions in Europe about the 24th of this month. A representative will then go to Japan, hopefully looking for long-term contracts. The indication is if the company is successful the representative will return with co-venturers. I am sure, as is the Leader of the Opposition, that when something more finite is determined—that is, when partners are found, the amount of available capital is sorted out, and the proposition itself is examined fully—it will be necessary to draft a completely new agreement. This will incorporate more specific details to assist both the Government and the company concerned.

The Leader of the Opposition is again quite correct in regard to the port site. It is to be within the Shires of Chapman Valley and Greenough. This will allow maximum latitude in the selection of the port. I might add that the consensus of present opinion appears to be that the port will be within 10 miles to the north of Geraldton. If this is so it is expected that most of the port work force will be resident in Geraldton or one of the nearby towns.

With reference to the definitions of "steel" and "tertiary processing", this matter was raised during the second reading debate. I took it up with the officers of the department who were partly responsible for the preparation of the measure. I will quote their words, although upon reading them I agree that the Leader of the Opposition has a point that there ap-

pears to be some conflict between the two. The officers concerned made the following comments—

The definition of steel to include the words, "or manufactured steel products" has been stated in this way so that it is clear that there is no limitation on the extent to which the company can proceed.

One can perhaps follow that comment to a point. However, in relation to the definition of "tertiary processing" the officers said—

... "and further processing of steel into special shapes and alloys" indicates that the company may, if it so wishes, proceed to this stage of development.

Thus, the intent in both these definitions was to broaden the scope of activity.

These were the official reasons given by the draftsmen of the actual clauses. However, I will take the opportunity afforded me by the previous speaker and again investigate the matter. Perhaps this time I can involve the Crown Law Department to see whether we can tidy it up a little.

Sir CHARLES COURT: My next queries relate to pages 14 and 17 which are correlated. Paragraph (e) of clause 5 on page 14 has a marginal note "Reports". The other provision to which I wish to refer is subclause (3) on page 17. Once the agreement is signed, the company has five years to undertake the necessary preliminary work. Members will note it is not a question of five years from the promulgation of the Bill—it is five years from the signing of the agreement. Clause 5 sets out the rights of occupancy of mining areas, and this is also covered in other clauses. Paragraph (e) reads as follows—

(e) The Company shall during the term of the rights of occupancy furnish to both the Minister and the Minister for Mines an annual report on all operations carried out in the mining areas by or on behalf of the Company.

Clause 6 deals with investigations and studies, and subclause (3) reads as follows—

(3) The Company shall collaborate with and keep the State fully informed by quarterly reports as to the progress and results of the Company's operations under subclauses (1) and (2) of this Clause. The Company shall as and when the Minister may reasonably require furnish the Minister with copies of all appropriate reports received by it from consultants in connection with the matters referred to in this Clause and with copies of all relevant findings made and reports prepared by the Company.

This is the query I wish to raise: Under the provisions of paragraph (e) of clause 5 the company must make a report. It also must

make a report under the provisions of sub-clause (3) of clause 6. Let us say that the reports indicate to the Minister that inadequate work is being done, or the work being done is of a nature which the Government and its advisers do not think is appropriate to achieve the desired result. Can the Minister inform us what provision exists for the Government to challenge the company's performance and, if necessary, to take some action to make the company either smarten itself up or to perform the work in a more effective way? I know this problem exists in most agreements, but a provision is usually included to give the Government some rights when a company is not performing consistently.

I cannot find any provision in the Bill or in the agreement which says that the company must spend a certain amount of money in a certain time on its exploration programme. Commitments to do certain work are spelt out, but I do not believe they are measured in terms of money or other performance.

I will consolidate my question in regard to the reports. In the first case the company must report to the Minister for Mines and the Minister administering the Bill. In the second case the company must report, only to the Minister administering the Bill. What redress is there if the Ministers concerned are not satisfied with the reports?

Mr. TAYLOR: I take the point made by the Leader of the Opposition. First of all, clause 5 (e) requires reports in connection with the rights of occupancy of mining areas. Clause 6 (3) primarily refers to the planning for the operation of the port and the rail route. However, that is not the question. The question is what right has the Government if the company falls behind in its obligations?

The Leader of the Opposition said he was unable to find any provision in the agreement which would permit the Government to take some action against the company. I may show my ignorance here, but my recollection is to the contrary. I believe that the Bill contains a provision whereby the Government may, in default, penalise the company, although not necessarily in a monetary sense.

Sir Charles Court: I believe you have redress if the company does not make the reports, but if it makes the reports and they are unsatisfactory, I cannot see what the Government can do about it for five years.

Mr. TAYLOR: I think the Leader of the Opposition has a point. The company has five years to get to this particular stage before any of the penal provisions would apply. However, I will have to examine this a little more closely before the third reading stage.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Clause 20 of the schedule, on page 32, deals with railways.

This is the clause under which the company shall submit to the Minister for approval the proposed route of the railway. The member for Murchison-Eyre and myself have raised the query about the route of the railway. No plan has been tabled, and this is understood because at this stage the route has not been defined. Has the Minister any information he can make available, particularly in view of the queries being received by the member for Murchison-Eyre and myself, which would give some indication of the proposed route?

I also appreciate that when one looks at plan "A" one finds there is quite a large distance between Robinson Range, Mt. Gould, and the Weld Range; and presumably these would have to be linked by either a road transport operation to a main line, or by branch lines to the deposits. Is the Minister able to give an indication of the route without committing the Government to the final route, because I presume eventually the matter concerning the route will be brought back to Parliament?

Mr. TAYLOR: I am unable to give any indication whatsoever of the appropriate route. This matter was discussed with the officers a day or so ago, but there has been no indication other than a schematic presentation which the department attempted as a general exercise on a map.

Mr. O'Connor: Is that the plan prepared some years back?

Mr. TAYLOR: It may well be. It is a plan I sighted within the department but I have been informed it is strictly only a projection made by an engineer looking at a map and attempting to draw lines upon it. Certainly there is nothing to indicate the final route from the company's point of view.

Sir CHARLES COURT: My next query is the question of whether any change has occurred in the thinking of the Government since the Bill was introduced regarding the operation of the existing line. From what the Minister said earlier, I gather the intention is that the existing line will be retained and will continue in operation.

Mr. TAYLOR: There will be no change at all. The existing railway will remain in operation as at present.

Sir CHARLES COURT: My last query is in regard to clause 35 on pages 55 and 56. The clause refers to an integrated iron and steel industry, a proposal for which the company will submit to the Government. This relates to a query I raised during the second reading debate and to which the Minister replied in part. At that time I asked why the figure of 250 000 tonnes had been selected, because such a plant would be uneconomic by present standards. There must be a reason why the company and the Government

have inserted that figure, particularly when we bear in mind that all of the parties would know that 250 000 tonnes would be an uneconomic proposition. I know it is a minimum figure, but there are circumstances in which one would undertake an uneconomic operation to avoid a larger commitment. I am intrigued about the reason for the selection of the figure because, in colloquial language, it is "neither Arthur nor Martha". It is not normal to select a minimum figure which one would regard as uneconomic as the base point.

I do not question the last part of sub-clause (1) on page 56 which says, "or for joining with an existing or proposed iron and steel making venture . . ." because I subscribe to that; and the Minister will find that most projects in our north will eventually meet their commitments through a joining together of companies so that they may operate at the required economies of scale.

Mr. TAYLOR: I must ask the Leader of the Opposition to wait until the third reading for an answer to his query. I understand from discussions with officers—and the Leader of the Opposition made this point during the second reading debate—in regard to the 125 000 tonnes that there was no question of its being "neither Arthur nor Martha"; it was one or the other; it was considered to be a minimum viable figure. Not being an expert in these matters I took the figures as being an expression of the minimum amount which would be economical. However, I will certainly check the point as to whether the figure is economical.

As the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, it may be that in some joint venture with a group of companies operating a mill for mutual benefit the company itself, by putting up a proportion of the capital, may be able to produce that amount as its share of a year's production. That is, a year's production will be the larger amount, but the company will meet its obligations by producing that quantity under its own name. If that is the case I think it should be spelt out more clearly than it is; but I put that forward only as a possibility. I will check to find out why on the one hand I am told that it is an economical proposition, and on the other hand I am told in this place that it is uneconomical.

Mr. MAY: The Leader of the Opposition mentioned the occupancy rights and the action the Government may take if the company does not adhere to the conditions in the terms of the rights of occupancy. If he refers to pages 14 and 15 he will find that while it is stated on page 14 that the company shall, during the term of the rights of occupancy, furnish to both the Minister and the Minister for Mines an annual report on all opera-

tions carried out in the mining areas by or on behalf of the company, at the top of page 15 it is stated that the rights of occupancy shall forthwith cease and determine on the happening of certain events. One of the events is—

. . . upon the Company making default in the due performance or observance of any of the other of the terms and conditions upon and subject to which the rights of occupancy were granted and failing to comply with a notice from the State specifying such default and calling upon the Company to remedy the same within a period of fourteen days of the service of such notice.

I wonder whether that is the situation about which the Leader of the Opposition inquired. It seems to cover the position that if the company does not adhere to the rights of occupancy the Government has the power to bring the company to order.

Sir CHARLES COURT: The point made by the Minister for Mines only partly meets the situation. I have read clause 5, and I realise that it gives the Government the right of cancellation; but it refers specifically only to such things as non-payment of rental fees and the failure to lodge a report. If the company does not lodge a report the Minister may cancel the rights of occupancy.

Mr. May: It says "due performance of the rights of occupancy".

Sir CHARLES COURT: Yes, but the rights are set out in this clause, and not in a mining lease.

Mr. May: Yes, but all the conditions are spelt out in the rights of occupancy, and those rights must be complied with under this clause.

Sir CHARLES COURT: That is the point I am making. I am seeking information as to whether a temporary reserve will be issued under section 276 of the Mining Act. If it spells out that the company will do so much drilling and so much geological and metallurgical testing, etc., it is a different matter because the company will be covered by those provisions.

Mr. May: Each of the temporary reserves that we mentioned earlier is covered by rights of occupancy. We hold those rights and the conditions are spelt out.

Sir CHARLES COURT: If the Minister can assure me that the temporary reserves will have the rights of occupancy spelt out regarding the amount of geological and survey work, etc., the company must do, that will be all right so far as the mining area is concerned; and it confines my query to the other point I raised regarding the other work the company must do, such as civil engineering, transport, market, and finance studies.

Mr. May: I will check on that for you.

Sir CHARLES COURT: If the company is not going to meet these requirements, provided it makes a quarterly report it would appear the Minister has no redress. It may send a report to him stating, "We are having a good time in Tokyo chasing finance and markets" and that would conform to the agreement.

Mr. May: I will make a check on that for you.

Schedule put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 13th September.

MR. NALDER (Katanning) (9.32 p.m.): I see no reason to delay the House in speaking at length on this measure. As the Minister said the other evening, the State Electricity Commission Act has to be brought up to date and therefore I agree entirely with the proposals contained in the Bill. I think it is accepted by all members that from time to time legislation has to be amended in order to make the Act conform with present-day conditions, and this is the purpose of this amendment.

Those who introduced the original legislation did so during times and under conditions that were entirely different from those existing at present. There is no doubt that remuneration rates are increasing rapidly at the moment. Rates of pay which appeared to be reasonable only a short time ago are now found to be inadequate to meet existing conditions.

Therefore it has been found necessary, under the provisions of this measure, to increase the remuneration paid to the chairman and the other commissioners of the State Electricity Commission. However I am not certain whether it would not be better to have the time factor removed from the legislation. I think it will be found that currently we are moving at such a pace it will be necessary to introduce an amending Bill such as this more frequently than has been done in the past. Therefore the time factor should not be included in the legislation. It should be left to the Minister who is in office from time to time to make the necessary adjustments to the remuneration paid to the commissioners of the State Electricity Commission as he deems fit. I merely put that suggestion forward for consideration.

Mr. May: The idea behind this amending Bill is for a review to be made from time to time.

Mr. NALDER: Perhaps I misunderstood the Minister when he introduced the second reading of the Bill. If what the Minister says is correct, the time limit in the existing legislation will no longer apply.

Section 22 of the principal Act, which this Bill also seeks to amend, provides that any contract in excess of \$10,000 must be approved by the Governor. The intention of the Bill is to increase that figure to \$30,000. If this further suggestion is not valid the Minister may correct me, but I believe the same principle could apply in regard to this provision. We will find that the value of money will deteriorate rapidly as the years go by. Therefore it is necessary, in view of these circumstances, for the Minister or Executive Council to have power to vary this amount from time to time as is deemed necessary. Can the Minister tell me whether it would be necessary to bring legislation similar to this to the House at some later stage to increase the amount that is now sought in the Bill?

Mr. May: This is the first time we have brought forward a measure to increase the amount provided in the original Act which was enacted in 1945.

Mr. NALDER: I agree that the amount laid down in the principal Act has applied for that period of time, but in view of the existing circumstances it may be found necessary to bring further legislation before the House to allow the figure mentioned in the Bill to be increased again, and I cannot see why the amount cannot be increased by Executive Council when considered necessary.

I agree in the main that any measure which seeks to amend our existing Statutes should be brought before the House, but I do not agree entirely with this principle in this Act. Once a principle has been established in legislation such as this, any alteration should be carried out by the Executive Council which comprises a group of responsible people who are well acquainted with the facts surrounding such a move.

Apparently, when the legislation was initiated, the legislators of the day felt that at that stage it was only right and proper that where public funds were to be spent, only Parliament should have the authority and the right to amend the legislation. However, in this case, I can see no reason why such an increase in the amount of a contract entered into by the commission should not be approved by the Executive Council. I merely put that forward as a suggestion.

It is not as though such a move would be performed in secret. As the Minister will agree, documents in regard to such an action would be tabled in the House making it possible for any member to debate such action if he considered it warranted. I think the Bill is a sensible approach to present-day conditions and I support the second reading.

MR. THOMPSON (Darling Range) [9.39 p.m.]: I rise to indicate the support of members of the Liberal Party for this Bill, and I will make one or two comments in regard to it. The first amendment seeks to provide for more frequent reviews of the remuneration paid to the chairman and other commissioners of the State Electricity Commission. To put the amendment proposed into effect makes common sense to me.

I know, as a result of questions I have asked the Minister, that an increase has been made in the salaries paid to the commissioners, but not under the provisions of the Act. The increase has been effected by granting an allowance to the commissioners because that was the only way the difficulty could be overcome. The Treasurer increased the remuneration paid to the chairman of the commission by \$500 in 1972, or rather I should say he tried to increase the remuneration but, because of the relevant section in the Act, he was unable to do so. Therefore, to overcome the difficulty an allowance was paid to the chairman and to the other commissioners.

It is common sense to do this in the way proposed in the Bill. The State Electricity commissioners do a wonderful job. The commissioners are responsible for a multi-million dollar enterprise which employs some 4,500 persons. Its assets total about \$320,000,000, and its turnover is about \$100,000,000 per year. This is big business. When one looks at the amount of money that is paid in remuneration to the commissioners, I suggest that the people of Western Australia are getting directorship of a huge enterprise on the cheap.

Mr. May: Especially in view of the long distances which some members have to travel.

Mr. THOMPSON: That is so.

Mr. Gayfer: The directors of some other enterprises provide their services just as cheaply.

Mr. THOMPSON: I am sure the Chairman of Co-operative Bulk Handling is justified in making a comment like that. For the responsibilities which they carry, the members of the State Electricity Commission do not receive very much for their services. In recent days in particular, with the great growth in the activities of the State, there has been a greater call on members of the commission.

The second amendment contained in the Bill proposes to increase the maximum amount from \$10,000 to \$30,000 which can be expended by the State Electricity Commission without the need to obtain the approval of the Governor; and this involves contracts with a performance period of three years. The limit of \$10,000 was set in 1945, and I am surprised that it has not been increased since that time, because in 1945 \$10,000 would have bought a great deal

of electrical equipment whereas in these days that amount would not be sufficient to purchase a set of brushes.

The load growth of the S.E.C. is increasing at a compounding rate of 10 per cent. per annum, and doubles about every 7½ years. This involves a great deal of expenditure, and it is feasible that many contracts up to \$30,000 will be let, so it makes sense to adjust the existing limit.

The S.E.C. is not only involved in the supply of electricity to consumers connected to the grid system, but also in some of the local authority electricity supply systems throughout the State. By virtue of the Act, the S.E.C. is the potential owner of every public generation station in Western Australia, and for that reason the commissioners have to take into account the equipment that is installed in those centres, and also to keep an eye on the type of distribution systems adopted, so that one day when the grid extends to the points not now served by it the commission will be able to link the smaller systems with the large ones. It will therefore be seen that the S.E.C. does more than supply electricity in the metropolitan area.

In an article by Don Smith dealing with the 500th meeting of the State Electricity Commission, which appeared in *The West Australian* of the 31st August, the following comment is made—

With peak loads rising dramatically each year, the commission is constantly faced with one of the biggest problems of a power supplier—unlike water, electricity cannot be stored.

That is fairly correct, although it is possible to store energy. That is what has been proposed by the Government and the S.E.C. in the research on the hydro-electric generating scheme to be established in the Darling Range.

I am interested in this project, because I believe it is one way of reaping the maximum benefit from the capital that is tied up with generating stations. With conventional stations it is necessary to provide a great deal of capacity, a lot of which lies idle most of the time. It is needed in peak periods only.

Under the scheme proposed by the S.E.C. the energy can be stored in the form of water being pumped by electricity, produced at the off peak load periods, to a high storage level. Then when the peak load is drawn from the system the water can be released from the high level storage through generators, and so produce electricity. By this means there will be a reduction in the capital that is tied up in generation equipment.

In his contribution to the debate the member for Katanning suggested no limit ought to be set on contracts that may be approved by the commission. As the Act has proved to be quite satisfactory up to now, and as this is the first amendment to the section in the Act relating to the

limit since 1945, I cannot see any great need to delete the provision altogether. It is true that with inflation and with the increase in the activities of the S.E.C., the length of time between now and when the limit has to be adjusted again would be much shorter. However, no problem is created, and the provision in the Act does not prevent the commission from operating. All it has to do is to obtain approval of the Government to put a scheme into effect. Although this does tie the Government to some extent, it does not inhibit the commission in the performance of its duties.

One of the projects for which I am sure approval had to be obtained was the contract for the power line to which I have made many references in the past. I have watched with interest the development that has been going on, particularly on the section of the line where clearing of land has been carried out on the eastern side of the Kalamunda area. I am very pleased, indeed, with the way in which the commission is going about its task of clearing. So far it appears to have carried this out in a sensible manner.

As a matter of fact, in the section of this power line which will cross Plesse Brook in the Bickley Valley it is not possible to detect where the clearing starts. The commission has left a belt of trees between the clearing and the scenic part of Bickley Valley. I hope the towers will be so placed that the trees will hide the bulk of them and it will not be possible to see the scar that otherwise would be visible.

With those remarks I support the Bill.

MR. MAY (Clontarf—Minister for Electricity) [9.49 p.m.]: I would like to thank the member for Katanning and the member for Darling Range for their participation in the debate on this measure. They have both indicated it is only a small measure. It is the desire of the S.E.C. to tidy up the Act from time to time to ensure that no substantial amendments need be made. This is a good move to keep the legislation up to date.

The fact is that 1945 was the last occasion when the limit in contracts was set; the amount in those days was £5,000. When the amendment was submitted to me the commission suggested an increase from the £5,000 or £10,000 to £20,000. It was the view of Cabinet that this was not a very great increase in view of the turnover of the commission.

In its wisdom it has decided to increase the amount to \$30,000 in this instance. I can recall that the Governor often indicated to me the amount of paper work which was coming forward, which he felt should not be necessary. He considered that the matter should be dealt with by either the commission or myself.

In effect, this is an upgrading of the amount, although it could be even larger. I heard on the news tonight that the Vic-

torian Government has approved the erection of a \$180,000,000-odd new power house in Victoria. Until that announcement we had been dealing with amounts as great as those dealt with by the Victorian Government, and I can envisage that shortly we may have to look at this aspect, especially with the extension of the power houses in the north and the possible integration of the other systems already operating within Western Australia.

As members are probably aware, the companies operating in the Pilbara area generate a third of the State's power, so ultimately the whole grid system could come into being and the commission will be involved in it.

The member for Darling Range referred to a hydro-electric scheme. This is a matter to which we have been giving quite a deal of consideration and it is fortuitous that we have the Fuel and Power Commission because it and the State Electricity Commission are working very closely together on this scheme; and at some future date we may be able to let the House know more about it.

Ever since the power line situation came to my notice I have insisted on a fortnightly report from the commission to advise me concerning the progress being made; that is, how many foundations have been completed, how many towers have been built, where they are being constructed, and also the position regarding clearing. I thank the honourable member for his comments concerning what the commission is doing in this regard. All in all, it is a concern which deals with a turnover of \$90,000,000 to \$100,000,000 annually and the commission is endeavouring to do its best.

The Bill contains several provisions which will be beneficial and will upgrade the Act. If any need arises to further amend the amount involved I am sure that, in view of the reception this Bill has received tonight, no opposition will be voiced to such amendment. I commend the Bill 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.

FIREARMS BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 15th August.

MR. W. G. YOUNG (Roe) [9.55 p.m.]: I rise to indicate my general support of the Bill introduced by the Minister for Housing here and by the Minister for Police in another place. I agree with the Minister's introductory remarks because it is

necessary to rewrite the legislation. Many amendments have been made over the years and this revision is very much overdue.

The Bill is being considered with a certain amount of urgency because the life of the present Parliament is rather short now and if the legislation were delayed any longer it could not be dealt with before the end of the year and then it would have to be considered by the new Parliament.

I was interested in an article in *The West Australian* of the 22nd August in which it was reported that Professor Richard Harding of the Law Faculty of the University of Western Australia and a co-researcher were being commissioned by the Criminology Research Council to do an Australia-wide survey into the ownership and availability of firearms. The article states—

Professor Harding and Professor Gordon Hawkins, of the Sydney University, will survey 62,000 people throughout Australia. About 10,000 questionnaires will be used in W.A.

Professor Harding told the council that accurate figures of gun ownership in Australia were necessary if new legislation to control firearms was to be introduced.

My reason for referring to the survey is that we have before us a Bill to enact legislation to incorporate the many amendments which have been made over the years. We will be starting with a clean sheet and yet as a result of a survey which will be completed in the near future, we may find that amendments will be required to our brand new Act. However, as the survey will not be completed until late in December it is probably wise for us to proceed with this measure and complete it during the life of this Parliament, because if we were to wait until December a new Parliament would have to deal with the matter.

I hope the Minister will make some inquiries to ascertain how the survey is progressing and, if any report is available, even at this late stage, we may be able to incorporate in our legislation some of the recommendations it may contain.

In his introductory remarks the Minister indicated that the safeguards which have been written into the Act over many years have not been affected in any way by this Bill and that we will still have complete control and authority over the issuance of firearm licenses.

At this point I would like to commend the Police Firearms Branch which conducts numerous lectures to enable some people in the community—a small number I admit—to gain a knowledge of the handling of firearms. Too many individuals have only a limited knowledge of the handling and safety devices of modern firearms and every so often we read that someone has been killed or maimed because of a lack

of knowledge of firearms generally. I do commend the branch for its efforts to instil in people a certain amount of expertise in the handling of guns.

Of course, whenever there is an accident and somebody is injured the gun is always unloaded! It is always the unloaded gun which causes the accident, and if a little extra knowledge can be passed on to people who handle guns it will be of some benefit to them. Even people with great expertise in the handling of weapons make mistakes.

The Minister referred to the case of a high-powered weapon being fired in South Perth and killing a person who was in Leederville. I can relate another case which occurred during my sojourn in the Air Force. An expert was explaining the mechanism of a Browning gun to a class of trainees. After he had explained the very sophisticated mechanism of the weapon he said, "You put this dummy cartridge in the breech, move this part back, and if this bullet were alive—" and the bullet was alive. It went straight down the passage between the group of trainees who were sitting in the classroom. That case involved a man who was an expert in the handling of firearms. The round with which he was demonstrating had been painted as a dummy but it was not, in fact, a dummy. I repeat: Any knowledge which can be passed on to the general public regarding the handling of firearms is of vital importance.

The definition of "firearm" will not be altered to any great degree and will be sufficient to cover all lethal weapons which are capable of projecting a liquid or a missile. Even a water pistol will be able to be covered, and I think the more cover we provide the better it will be for everybody.

The Minister intends to move an amendment to cover weapons which some people desire to keep in order to set up a museum of their own. The Minister stated that this is, virtually, a Committee Bill but I would like to refer briefly to some of the clauses before we go into Committee.

Clause 6 is the dragnet clause, and embraces every type of weapon. It is interesting to note that the Commissioner of Police will have power to recommend to the Governor that all the technical details of a weapon will be explained before it is agreed that it shall be licensed, or not licensed.

Paragraph (1) of clause 8 causes me some concern. A primary producer who has a gun license will be empowered to allow his employee to use weapons owned by the primary producer on his property. I consider that perhaps some greater control should be exercised in this regard. I have had fairly wide experience with these night-time expeditions which seem to be organised every now and then on farming properties when a group of young people get

together. An employee will be able to go along to his boss and request the loan of a gun so that he can go fox shooting or rabbit shooting with a group of young people.

Some of the modern weapons, such as automatic shotguns and high-velocity rifles, are dangerous and they have to be handled with a fair degree of care by the person operating them. This is a matter which has always worried me, particularly as I am the father of two boys who engage in this type of occupation. An employer need not necessarily have any great knowledge of the background of his employee, but we will thrust upon the employer the responsibility to gauge the ability of the employee to handle an automatic shotgun or a high-velocity rifle. It is not fair that this responsibility should be thrust upon the employer. I consider that every person who is to handle a weapon should, in fact, be the holder of a license. He should have to front up to the licensing authority and pass the necessary test to show that he has a degree of responsibility, and also show that he does know how to handle the type of weapon for which he will be licensed.

An employee who has a license for a .22 rifle should not be able to go to his employer, when a group of youngsters are going on a shooting party, and borrow an automatic shotgun. How many times do we read about people shooting rabbits and foxes from the back of a utility, and of somebody accidentally being shot? Many of those accidents are due to inexperience in the handling of firearms. I hope the Minister will have another look at the provisions of clause 8. Perhaps we might get together so that I can suggest some amendments to tighten this particular provision to provide that a person who wishes to engage in shooting does, in fact, become the holder of a license to handle the weapon he will use. The placing of the responsibility for either allowing or refusing an employee the use of a weapon could create some friction.

Clause 15 of the Bill has been included at the request of those people who have collections of antique firearms. It has long been recognised that people do have weapons of sentimental value which are not dangerous. However, those weapons have had to be lodged at police stations and a permit obtained to get them out. The proposed amendment put forward by the Minister relates to this matter and provision will be made for antique weapons of special sentimental value to be kept in the homes of the owners.

Clause 17 specifically refers to hunting trips in the north of the State—or safari trips—and concerns the Fitzroy River area and Camballin in particular. I wonder whether this provision will set a precedent and we will find that everybody who is conducting a ghost-town safari to the eastern goldfields or the Murchison will decide that

he will call his trip a safari and make a request to the Minister for a special license to carry firearms. I am aware that the Minister said restrictions will be placed on the applications for such licenses but it will be difficult to refuse such applications if the licenses required are for specific areas. Any person will be able to front up to the licensing authority and tell a similar story, but because his safari will be going to a different area to shoot a different species his application will be refused. I think it would be reasonable for the Minister to have another look at this provision. I appreciate the situation but it seems rather hard to refuse such a license when safaris will be operating in our north.

I think a further provision should be written into the Bill so that the position does not escalate and people will not be able to take guns on hunting trips and shoot willy nilly at almost anything. I am sure that any member who drives along our country roads will realise the most common targets are the speed signs and town signs. I am concerned that this provision will allow a widening of the regulations so that persons travelling in a group can call themselves a safari and apply to the Minister for a permit to take guns with them.

I think gun clubs, collectors, and sporting shooters should be reasonably satisfied with this new legislation. Primary producers will in no way be inconvenienced in their efforts to control vermin on their properties.

With the reservations I expressed earlier, I support the measure. I hope the Minister will make a request for some of the information which the survey is gathering to be made available to him. I hope he will have due regard for any amendments which are possibly being considered as a result of the survey. It would be a pity to be forced to amend a new measure almost immediately. With those remarks, I indicate my support for the measure.

MR. BICKERTON (Pilbara—Minister for Housing) [10.11 p.m.]: I think the member for Roe has been kind to me in regard to this Bill. I studied it thoroughly when it came to this House mainly because I have always been a little anti-firearms. I consider there are far too many of them around. Even now it is much too easy to obtain a license. I can see the purpose and the necessity for certain people owning and using firearms. Without being one who is a complete pacifist I hope the day will come when it is not necessary for people to carry firearms.

Mr. Grayden: It is a method of self defence in the remote areas of Western Australia.

Mr. BICKERTON: I do not think a firearm can be classified as a weapon of self defence.

Mr. Grayden: What happens if a prospector is waylaid by half a dozen people?

Mr. BICKERTON: What happens?

Mr. Grayden: He must have a firearm or perhaps lose his life.

Mr. BICKERTON: I would prefer to see us short of one or two prospectors than to have unlimited access to firearms.

Mr. O'Connor: You cannot be serious.

Mr. Grayden: Not only prospectors need them in the Kimberley.

Mr. BICKERTON: The situation in America today is one which that country has largely brought upon itself through this argument of self defence.

Mr. Grayden: Tell that to housewives in remote areas when a murderer is roaming around.

Mr. BICKERTON: When did they ever have to use a firearm in the remote areas of Western Australia?

Sir Charles Court: There have been many situations where a woman on a farm has been saved by a firearm.

Mr. BICKERTON: The measure under discussion goes a long way towards tidying up the situation so far as firearms are concerned, but I still look forward to the day when it is not necessary for people to own firearms. Apart from what the member for South Perth has said, perhaps I am an optimist. For years I have been amazed at the number of people who derive pleasure from shooting at road signs or at any type of wildlife.

Mr. Grayden: We all agree with that.

Mr. BICKERTON: I even recall looking into a car owned by a member of Parliament; it happened to be in the car park one evening. What did I see there?—a rifle! I repeat that the measure does go some way towards tidying up matters in respect of firearms.

Mr. Coyne: Was the rifle in the car loaded?

Mr. BICKERTON: The member for Roe has said that he wishes to discuss some aspects of the Bill in the Committee stage. It would be better for me to deal individually with the matters he raises in Committee. The measure had a fairly pleasant passage through another place. I do not think I should delay the House by going any further, but I will deal with any matters which the honourable member may raise in the Committee stage.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mr. Brown) in the Chair; Mr. Bickerton (Minister for Housing) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3 put and passed.

Clause 4: Interpretation—

Mr. BICKERTON: There is an amendment to this clause, in my name, on the notice paper. I move an amendment—

Page 2, line 16—Insert immediately after the word "firearm" the words "but does not include ammunition rendered inoperative for the purpose of a Collectors item".

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 5 to 7 put and passed.

Clause 8: Exemptions from licensing requirements—

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: For the reasons I stated earlier I ask the Minister whether he would be prepared to look again at clause 8 (1) (i) The paragraph reads—

(1) No licence under this Act is required—

(i) by an employee of a primary producer who, with the permission of his employer, has in his possession in any place for the purpose of destroying vermin on any land used by the employer for the purposes of primary production a firearm belonging to the employer, or who uses that firearm for that purpose on that land;

I maintain that this provision is far too wide.

The primary producer in his own right may hold a license for two or three weapons—say, an automatic shotgun, an automatic rifle, and a high-powered rifle—and, with his permission, his employee can use any of those weapons on the property although he may have very little or no training in the handling of them. He may own a pea rifle and have a license to use it but this provision gives him permission to use the more sophisticated weapons without having a license.

Although I have not drafted an amendment, I ask the Minister to look at this provision to see whether it can be tightened up so that it is restricted to the use of a pea rifle or something like that; otherwise the employee must have a license for the weapon in his own right.

Mr. BICKERTON: I can see the point made by the member for Roe. However, as I have had no notice of an amendment, it is difficult to deal with the matter when handling a Bill for a Minister in another place.

When we compare the Bill which was introduced in the Council and the Bill which came here, it appears the original Bill was amended. This clause in the original Bill was in accordance with what the honourable member wants but the Minister in another place must have

agreed to an amendment. I will bring the matter to the notice of the Minister concerned with a view to considering an amendment at the appropriate time. I agree with what the honourable member says.

Mr. COYNE: I think the clause is reasonable as it applies to people in the pastoral areas, where a high-powered rifle must be available at all times. If we further restrict this provision, a pastoralist would not be able to hand over a rifle to an employee in the ordinary course of his duties. The pastoralist cannot be everywhere at once and at some time he must rely upon another person to kill animals or even vermin. I think the provision is reasonable and that we should not make it unnecessarily restrictive.

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: I do not agree with the previous speaker because, even in the case of remote stations, there is a police officer in the district who can issue a license to an employee. I do not think it would be asking too much of an employer to require him to take the employee into the town to have the police officer issue a license. The licensing authority would then be able to ensure that the employee had some expertise in handling the weapon.

I have employed a lot of labour on my property, and one has no idea of the background of the employees or where they have been. One man was sent to me from an employment agency in Perth and after he had been with me for a few weeks I found he had spent several years in gaol. I think there should be some check on the use of this type of weapon by that type of person.

Mr. COYNE: Surely a pastoralist or the owner of a property would not be so irresponsible as to give a weapon to a person he did not know or in whom he did not have complete trust. The suggestion of the member for Roe would mean that pastoralists on remote properties would not be able to pass firearms on to employees. I do not think the provision should be made any more restrictive.

Mr. GRAYDEN: I agree with the member for Murchison-Eyre. As regards pastoral properties, we must take into consideration that many of them employ a large number of Aborigines. The same applies to missions, etc. When a pastoralist gives a weapon to an Aboriginal, he gives him one cartridge so that he may go out and shoot one kangaroo or something of that kind. I imagine it would be a hopeless situation if every employee had to have a license. If we want that system I think we should tear up the Bill and adopt the Victorian legislation, under which the individual is licensed, not the weapon. Here we license the weapon. If a pastoralist or farmer has a gun, he should be able to pass it on to his employee.

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: By way of a compromise, I ask the Minister to give consideration to inserting in paragraph (1) the words "in the hours of daylight". My main objection is that when these weapons are handed out the employees will go rabbit or fox shooting in the middle of the night. I would agree to the words "in the hours of daylight" being written in.

Mr. COYNE: I do not agree to that. In northern areas, one of the main reasons for using a gun is to shoot dingoes. When a dingo appears on the scene he must be destroyed quickly, whatever the time of day. I think even the words "in the hours of daylight" would restrict the provision unnecessarily.

Mr. HARTREY: Could I suggest a compromise to the two gentlemen who are fighting so hard for their respective views? I suggest the paragraph could be amended to provide that the weapon cannot be supplied except in an emergency, the proof of which shall lie upon any person charged with an offence under the legislation. In that case, if the gun is used to shoot a dingo or a charging bullock, for instance, it could be easily established that it was an emergency. This would settle the difference between the member for Roe and the member for Murchison-Eyre.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 9 to 14 put and passed.

Clause 15: Firearm Curios—

Mr. BICKERTON: I move an amendment—

Page 9, line 28—Insert after the passage "commercially;" the word "or".

Mr. RUSHTON: I wonder whether the Minister will give us an explanation for the amendment so that we are aware of his intention.

Mr. BICKERTON: The honourable member will see on the notice paper the next amendment I propose to move. It is for this reason that I wish to add the word "or". I understand the Minister in another place gave a promise to someone who was concerned about the definition of "curio". For this reason we seek to add words which will permit a certain amount of latitude to a person who wishes to keep a firearm of sentimental value which could not be considered a curio.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. BICKERTON: I move an amendment—

Page 9, lines 29 to 39—Delete paragraphs (c) and (d) and substitute the following—

(c) any other firearm, including any replica of a firearm of the kind referred to in paragraph (a) or paragraph (b) of this

subsection, which can be shown to the Commissioner to be a collector's item or of especial sentimental value to the owner.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 16 to 18 put and passed.

Clause 19: Licensing offences—

Mr. GRAYDEN: I move an amendment—

Page 14, line 20—Insert after the word "who" the word "knowingly".

Stock firms in every country town throughout the State, and sometimes there are several of them in the one town, sell ammunition to pastoralists, farmers, or people passing through the town. Under the provision in the Bill, if somebody displays a license for a firearm to the proprietor of a shop which sells firearms and ammunition, the person selling the ammunition could be found guilty of an offence if the permit were not genuine.

Members will be aware that I also seek to delete the word "knowingly" from line 21. In other words, I seek to put the onus onto the purchaser rather than the seller. Unless we do this, no employee of a stock firm or shop handling firearms and ammunition could afford to sell these items to someone not known to him. If a storekeeper does not know a person, he will not know whether or not the license he submits is genuine. The word "knowingly" is already contained in the clause.

Mr. BICKERTON: I do not understand the reason for your amendment.

Mr. GRAYDEN: I believe to transpose the word "knowingly" in this way will protect the business firms. I have received representations from stock firms and storekeepers who sell ammunition. This point is of very real consequence to these people.

Mr. BICKERTON: The member for South Perth must put a different interpretation on this subclause. I believe the present wording completely covers the point raised by the honourable member. I do not believe that the word "knowingly" after the word "who" would improve the situation at all.

Mr. RUSHTON: The submission put forward by the member for South Perth is a mystic one. However, as the Minister has already explained it will not matter whether the word "knowingly" is in one place or another, and as we have had a very amicable discussion on what may have been very contentious legislation, perhaps the Minister will agree to the amendment. In another place I believe the contentious clauses were sorted out.

Mr. Bickerton: It went off with a bang, yes.

Mr. RUSHTON: There is very little dispute in regard to this measure. The Minister acknowledges the amendment will not disturb him because he claims the result will be the same in either case. I therefore ask him: Why not agree to it?

Mr. Bickerton: What is the point in altering something to achieve the same result?

Mr. RUSHTON: The Minister has conceded that in his opinion the amendment will not make any difference. However, as this is a matter of great concern to many people I think it would be a gracious gesture on the part of the Minister to concede the point and to allay their concern.

Mr. HARTREY: I, too, ask the Minister to concede the point because the amendment makes a profound difference to the meaning of the provision. I would like to see the word "knowingly" also inserted after the word "who" in the first line of subclause (1), because there is a grave danger that an innocent person could be liable to a heavy penalty. I direct the attention of members to the definition of "possession" in the Bill. It is a wide definition, and apart from physical possession it refers to a person having and exercising access to a firearm in any place. A man could easily have or exercise access to a firearm on a station or at a pistol club without actually knowing that there were firearms on the premises. This is the widest definition of "possession" I have ever seen. In common law "possession" means exclusive possession.

The Minister seems to think that the position of the word "knowingly" in subclause (2) (a) does not make any difference; but it certainly makes a difference if it is placed after the word "who"; because then it means that any person who knowingly does any of the things mentioned commits an offence. As paragraph (a) stands at the moment it does not matter whether a person sells, delivers, or disposes of a firearm; he will be rescued from punishment if he does not know. But if he knowingly permits a person to take possession of a firearm, he will be liable to punishment. It is fundamental that we do not punish a man for committing an offence in circumstances in which he does not even know it is an offence. I do not mean that ignorance of the law is an excuse; it never has been. However, ignorance of the facts is an excuse.

Section 23 of the Criminal Code says that any person who, by an honest and reasonable mistake, believes in the existence of a certain state of affairs, is no more liable at law than if that was the true state of affairs. This Bill will override the Criminal Code; and, of course, Parliament can do that. I ask the Minister to agree to insert the word "knowingly" after the word "who" in the first lines of subclauses (1), (2), and (3).

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Brown): The member for South Perth will have to seek leave to withdraw his amendment so that we may go back to subclause (1).

Mr. GRAYDEN: I seek leave of the Committee to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. GRAYDEN: I move an amendment—

Page 14, line 10—Insert after the word "who" the word "knowingly".

Mr. BICKERTON: I will not have a bar of this. Surely to goodness the purpose of the clause is to prevent people from doing things we do not want them to do. Does the honourable member mean to tell me that a person who possesses, sells, delivers, disposes of, or purchases or otherwise acquires a firearm or ammunition would not do so knowingly? The member for South Perth is spitting straws when he says Dalgetys and Elder Smith Goldsbrough Mort are upset. Does he mean to tell me that they deal in firearms, but do not know the law relating to firearms? I do not agree to the amendment.

Mr. GRAYDEN: I have never heard such rubbish. We have had representations from numerous firms dealing in ammunition and firearms which have obtained legal advice along the lines put forward by the member for Boulder-Dundas. Those firms are extremely concerned about the clause because it will prevent them from selling ammunition throughout this vast State. Under the clause as it stands we will have the position of these firms being unable to take the risk of selling ammunition in country areas to people passing through a town, even if they present their licenses; because if the licenses are not *bona fide* the person selling the ammunition would be liable to a penalty of \$200 or imprisonment for six months, or both.

Can members imagine an employee of Elder Smith Goldsbrough Mort in Port Hedland selling ammunition under these circumstances to a person who presented a license, unless the employee knew the person? The employees could not afford to do that, because they would finish up in the Port Hedland gaol. This is a ridiculous proposition and it will completely inhibit the sale of ammunition throughout the State. In those circumstances, if the Minister is adamant notwithstanding the advice of the member for Boulder-Dundas, then I suggest that he report progress and refer the matter to the Crown Law Department in order to reassure himself.

Mr. Hutchinson: It would be wise to have the advice of the Attorney-General.

Mr. GRAYDEN: I think it would. I cannot see the Attorney-General present in the Chamber but without question I feel sure he would support the view ex-

pressed by the member for Boulder-Dundas. I am not blaming the Minister who is handling the Bill, because he is only handling it for a Minister in another place and does not understand all the implications of this provision.

Mr. COYNE: I think the Minister agreed initially that it would make no difference whether or not the word "knowingly" was inserted when the member for Boulder-Dundas pointed out the fine distinction in a better way. Therefore I think the Minister should agree to the word "knowingly" being inserted after the word "who".

Mr. RUSHTON: I wonder whether the Minister will agree to progress being reported, as has been suggested to him, so that he can have this provision clarified. He himself has conceded that it did not worry him very much to have the word in question inserted in line 20. Possibly this is not the hour for him to give us some clear reasoning why he could not agree to the proposed amendment. It is not reasonable for it to be bulldozed through now without having a clear explanation of his objection to it.

Mr. May: You are running out of ammunition.

Mr. BICKERTON: Dealing with subclause (2) to which the member for South Perth moved his amendment, it reads, "A person who sells, delivers, disposes of . . ." and then, leaving out the next part of the subclause, it reads, "or from a person not the holder of a licence or permit under this Act entitling him to possession of it, commits an offence". What is wrong with that? The word "knowingly" in line 21 relates to permitting possession to be taken of a firearm or ammunition. If a person sells, delivers, or disposes of a firearm or ammunition he commits an offence. Surely that is the purpose of the clause.

Mr. GRAYDEN: I am sure the Minister has again missed the point. The point I am trying to make is that at the moment the clause reads, "A person who sells, delivers, disposes of . . .". Let us consider those words for the moment. Immediately the owner of a store sells, delivers, or disposes of a firearm or ammunition he would be guilty of committing an offence. The second portion of the amendment provides that he also commits an offence if he knowingly purchases or acquires a firearm or ammunition. The owner of that store would already be guilty of an offence if he sells, delivers, or disposes of a firearm or ammunition.

This is the reason that individuals who handle ammunition and firearms throughout the State are so upset. It will affect all electorates and all members of Parliament. It will affect every person in Western Australia who buys or sells ammunition. Every person who holds a gun license

of any kind who attempts to buy ammunition at a country store will be unable to do so. In other words his gun license will be useless to him.

Mr. Bickerton: A good idea.

Mr. GRAYDEN: If the Minister is of that opinion he should consider abolishing gun licenses, because such licenses will be useless to the holders of them. It is imperative that the Committee pass the amendment that I originally moved.

Progress

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

House adjourned at 10.57 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, the 20th September, 1973

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

On motion by Mr. T. D. Evans (Attorney-General) leave of absence for six weeks granted to Mr. Bryce (Ascot) on the ground of urgent private business.

On motion by Mr. I. W. Manning, leave of absence for one month granted to Sir David Brand (Greenough) on the ground of ill-health.

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr. T. D. Evans (Minister Assisting the Treasurer), and read a first time.

BILLS (2): THIRD READING

1. Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance Surcharge) Act Amendment Bill.

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr. J. T. Tonkin (Treasurer), and transmitted to the Council.

2. State Electricity Commission Act Amendment Bill.

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

FIREARMS BILL

In Committee

Resumed from the 19th September. The Chairman of Committees (Mr. Bateman) in the Chair; Mr. Bickerton (Minister for Housing) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 19: Licensing offences—

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on the clause to which the member for South Perth (Mr. Grayden) had moved the following amendment—

Page 14, line 10—Insert after the word "who" the word "knowingly".

Sir CHARLES COURT: In view of the situation under our Standing Orders in respect of the member for South Perth being unable to speak again to the amendment and, in view of the circumstances under which progress was reported last evening, I rise to ask the Minister whether he has given further consideration to this matter.

Last night he was extremely emphatic that he would not agree to the proposition put forward by the member for South Perth even though one of his own colleagues was strongly in favour of it. Now that the Minister has had a chance to confer with Crown Law he may have changed his mind. Alternatively, he may have conferred with the Attorney-General and achieved the same result.

Would the Minister be good enough to advise the Committee what his opinion is this morning before we go to a vote on the inclusion of the word "knowingly" as is proposed?

Mr. BICKERTON: I have not changed my mind since last night. The advice I have had is that the clause should remain as it is. There is a purpose for this.

Mr. O'Connor: Who gave the advice?

Mr. BICKERTON: I looked at the clause myself. I cannot see any good reason for changing my mind.

Mr. COYNE: I think the Minister is being rather stubborn. The member for Boulder-Dundas indicated quite clearly what the difference would be with the inclusion of the word "knowingly" in the clause immediately after the word "who". The clause would then read, in part—

Any person who knowingly possesses, sells, delivers or disposes of, or purchases or otherwise acquires any firearm, or ammunition . . .

To have the word "sells" covered by the word "knowingly" is excellent reasoning which must be obvious to all.

The member for Boulder-Dundas pointed out quite clearly—and it must be obvious to the Minister—that the inclusion of the word "knowingly" would make the implications of the provision greater. I think the Minister should change his mind and agree to the amendment.

Mr. O'CONNOR: I thought the member for South Perth made out a very good case last night. He was supported by the member for Boulder-Dundas. It was obvious then that the Minister did not