

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, the 17th June, 1969

The **SPEAKER** (Mr. Guthrie) took the Chair at 11 a.m., and read prayers.

BILLS (40): ASSENT

Messages from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

1. Plant Diseases Act Amendment Bill.
2. Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Act Amendment Bill, 1969.
3. Brands Act Amendment Bill.
4. Reserves Act Amendment Bill.
5. State Housing Act Amendment Bill, 1969.
6. The West Australian Trustee Executor and Agency Company Limited Act Amendment Bill.
7. Exotic Stock Diseases (Eradication Fund) Bill.
8. Cattle Industry Compensation Act Amendment Bill.
9. Poultry Industry (Trust Fund) Act Amendment Bill.
10. Banana Industry Compensation Trust Fund Act Amendment Bill.
11. Mining Act Amendment Bill, 1969.
12. Inspection of Machinery Act Amendment Bill.
13. Mines and Machinery Inspection Act Repeal Bill.
14. Trade Descriptions and False Advertisements Act Amendment Bill.
15. Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act Amendment Bill (No. 2), 1969.
16. Alumina Refinery (Mitchell Plateau) Agreement Bill.
17. Lake Lefroy Salt Industry Agreement Bill.
18. Police Act Amendment Bill, 1969.
19. Air Navigation Act Amendment Bill.
20. Judges' Salaries and Pensions Act Amendment Bill.
21. Acts Amendment (Superannuation) Bill.
22. Transfer of Land Act Amendment Bill.
23. Land Act Amendment Bill, 1969.
24. Stock Diseases (Regulations) Act Amendment Bill.
25. Town Planning and Development Act Amendment Bill.
26. Property Law Bill.
27. Stock Jobbing (Application) Bill.
28. Strata Titles Act Amendment Bill.
29. Local Government Act Amendment Bill, 1969.

30. Coal Mine Workers (Pensions) Act Amendment Bill.
31. Traffic Act Amendment Bill, 1969.
32. Solicitor-General Bill.
33. Agent General Act Amendment Bill.
34. Land Agents Act Amendment Bill.
35. Northern Developments Pty. Limited Agreement Bill.
36. Pig Industry Compensation Act Amendment Bill.
37. Co-operative and Provident Societies Act Amendment Bill.
38. Noxious Weeds Act Amendment Bill.
39. Lake Lefroy (Coolgardie-Esperance Wharf) Railway Bill.
40. University of Western Australia Act Amendment Bill.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

Tabling of Report

THE SPEAKER: I have here for tabling the report of the Standing Orders Committee of the Legislative Assembly. For the benefit of members, I would explain that this is a small procedural matter on which no action will be required this session. It is purely to overcome a difficulty which has arisen in the numbering of Acts, and is as a result of a joint meeting of the Standing Orders Committees of the two Houses. Next session action will be originated in another place and we will no doubt in due course receive a message on the matter.

QUESTIONS (18): ON NOTICE

HIGH SCHOOLS

Playing Fields, and Student Transport

1. Mr. DUNN asked the Minister for Education:
 - (1) How many high schools are in the State?
 - (2) What are their names?
 - (3) How long has each been established?
 - (4) Which of these schools has a playing field suitable for use to cover the sports played as curricula subjects?
 - (5) What amount has been expended on the construction and preparation of each ground?
 - (6) How many and which high schools are obliged to send students to other than high school grounds in order to play sport?
 - (7) As the students or the school are obliged to pay the cost of such transport, does he regard this as equitable treatment?
 - (8) If he does not consider this equitable treatment, will he make available to the schools without

playing fields allowances to cover transport costs incurred because of the lack of suitable playing fields?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

- (1) 49 (including senior high schools).
(2) and (3)—

Senior High Schools		High Schools	
School	Date of Estab-lish-ment as a High School	School	Date of Estab-lish-ment as a High School
Albany	1924	Balratta	1967
Applecross	1959	Bridgetown	1962
Armadale	1955	Cannington	1965
Belmont	1957	Carnarvon	1960
Bentley	1960	Como	1960
Binnbury	1923	Eastern Hills	1962
Busselton	1958	Esperance	1966
Churchlands	1962	Harvey Agricultural	1962
City Beach	1966	Kalamunda	1962
Coile	1946	Kewdale	1965
Cyril Jackson	1962	Kwinana	1959
Eastern Goldfields	1915	Margaret River	1962
Geraldton	1939	Mount Barker	1962
Governor Stirling	1946	Newton Moore	1966
Hamilton	1962	Rossmoyne	1968
Hampton	1966	South Fremantle	1967
Hollywood	1958		
John Curtin	1956		
John Forrest	1961		
Kalamann	1959		
Kent Street	1940		
Manjimup	1958		
Melville	1960		
Merredin	1958		
Mirrabeeka	1965		
Mount Lawley	1955		
Narrogin Agricultural	1955		
Northam	1922		
Perth Modern	1911		
Pinjarra	1961		
Scarborough	1959		
Swanbourne	1961		
Tuart Hill	1957		

- (4) All schools listed, except the following, have their own playing fields:—

(i) Eastern Goldfields High School.

(ii) Governor Stirling—
No school oval, but a hockey field and several bitumen courts.

(iii) Mt. Barker—
No school oval—only tennis and basketball courts.

(iv) Como—
School oval is grassed and several bitumen courts will possibly be ready for use in the late summer of 1969.

- (5) Amount unknown because work is done generally as part of the initial construction contract.

- (6) to (8) Because of the large numbers of students to be catered for, it is impossible to provide all high schools with sufficient sporting facilities to meet all their needs. It is therefore necessary for most high schools to make use of public sports grounds at certain times.

High schools which make extensive use of other grounds are—

Governor Stirling.
Eastern Goldfields.
Bunbury.
Perth Modern.
Tuart Hill.

MAIN ROADS FUNDS

Charges and Expenditure

2. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Works:

- (1) Is the full amount of loan repayments chargeable against "road construction" or only the principal repayment as applied under the previous arrangements?
(2) Is the amount expended on roads and plant from loan capital funds to be taken into account when arriving at a "base expenditure" figure?
(3) Will the balance (if any) of unspent Central Road Trust Funds at the 30th June, 1969, be retained by the shires for expenditure during 1969-70 as is the case with Government grant moneys which must be spent and recouped before the 31st October, 1969, in accordance with the statutory requirements of the Commonwealth Aid Roads Act?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) No. Loan repayments are not acceptable as road expenditure in the new Commonwealth legislation. It is proposed, however, that interest on future loans raised for road purposes will be considered as road expenditure under the matching arrangements.
(2) Yes.
(3) The sums being paid to local authorities from the Central Road Trust Fund are in fact identified as grants in the State legislation. In the terms of the current Commonwealth Aid Roads Act grants made to local authorities are deemed to have been expended on roads and the clause relating to the expenditure of these funds within a statutory period does not apply.

OMBUDSMAN

Legislation for Appointment

3. Mr. FLETCHER asked the Acting Premier:

- (1) Is he aware that Tasmanian Premier Bethune is reported to have stated—*The West Australian*, 2nd June—that legislation can be expected for the appointment of an ombudsman during the 1969 Budget session?

- (2) Can he state whether any legislation for like purpose can be anticipated in this State during the session pending?
- (3) If not this session, is any legislation likely prior to the next State general election?

Mr. NALDER replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) and (3) Government policy in this matter has been made known on a number of occasions. It is unlikely that any such legislation will be introduced by the Government.

ROADS

Canning Electorate: Upgrading

4. Mr. BATEMAN asked the Minister for Housing:

In view of the joint venture by the Housing Commission and the Canning Shire Council to upgrade Marrawa Way in Maniana, will he advise how many streets will be upgraded to the same standard as Marrawa Way in the 1969-70 financial year?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

The Housing Commission has been approached by the Canning Shire Council to continue the experiment carried out in Marrawa Way. The request is still under consideration by the commission.

SCHOOL SITE

Langford-Canning Vale

5. Mr. BATEMAN asked the Minister for Education:

- (1) Can he advise if an area has been set aside for a school site in the suburb of Langford, Canning Vale area?
- (2) If "Yes," where is it located?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

- (1) and (2) Discussions are taking place with the State Housing Commission but no finality has been reached.

CANNINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Resiting

6. Mr. BATEMAN asked the Minister for Education:

- (1) Now that the land on which the Cannington Primary School stands is to be developed by Jones Lang and Wootton as a regional shopping centre, what arrangements have been made to build a primary school in or around this area?

- (2) What is the exact location and when will it be built and ready for use?
- (3) When will the existing school be demolished to enable the developers to start on the shopping centre?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

- (1) Tenders will shortly be called.
- (2) Adjacent to Cannington High School on Wharf Street north of Pattie Street and anticipated to open in February, 1970.
- (3) After the new school is ready for occupation.

OVERWAY

Albany Highway, Cannington

7. Mr. BATEMAN asked the Minister for Traffic:

In view of the proposed new regional shopping centre to be built adjoining Boans Waverley, Albany Highway, Cannington, and the effect it will have on the already existing traffic hazard in this area, will he reconsider building an overway across Albany Highway for the protection of the pedestrians?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

Provided there was an established warrant for such a facility, the Main Roads Department would give consideration to a request from the local authority for financial assistance to construct a pedestrian overway in Albany Highway, Cannington.

BETTING

Payment of 3c Tax

8. Mr. HARMAN asked the Minister for Police:

- (1) Does he know if it is the practice for some T.A.B. agents to pay the 3c betting tax on large bets laid by punters hoping thus to attract their regular custom whereas such service is not provided to punters placing small bets?
- (2) If "Yes," is this practice condoned by the T.A.B.?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Answered by (1).

NATIVES

Exclusion from Drive-in Theatre, Gnowangerup

9. Mr. HARMAN asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

- (1) Are aborigines excluded from the drive-in theatre at Gnowangerup?

- (2) For how long has this practice persisted?
- (3) What action has the Government taken in the past and what action is intended in the future to ensure this discrimination ceases as soon as possible?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

- (1) Aborigines in vehicles are permitted to enter the drive-in theatre at Gnowangerup provided they do not occupy the very limited number of chairs. Aborigines without vehicles are not permitted to enter.
- (2) I understand that the boys from the farm training school were originally permitted to enter under the provisions as in (1), but by tacit consent they subsequently occupied chairs.
The school has now been reminded that the original strictures must be adhered to.
These continue to apply to other aborigines.
- (3) Officers of the Department of Native Welfare have on a number of occasions asked the management to relax the restrictions but without success. Such approaches will continue.

HOME UNITS AND FLATS

Metropolitan Area

10. Mr. HARMAN asked the Acting Premier:

- (1) Is his Government aware that there are a considerable number of vacant home units for sale in the metropolitan area and that great difficulty is being experienced in selling such units?
- (2) If so, what is the approximate number for sale?
- (3) Has the Government any information to indicate whether the large number of flats approved to date and/or in the course of erection bears any significance to the demand by people for such type of accommodation?
- (4) If not, does the Government intend to consider some form of research so as statistical indicators can be maintained to assist the Government to form policy towards house, home unit, and flat construction?

Mr. NALDER replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) The number of home units currently offered for sale is not known.
- (3) Yes. The building rate of flats is considered to be adequate to meet current demand.

- (4) These matters are watched closely by research officers of the Treasury and the State Housing Commission and are the subject of periodic confidential reports to the Government.

UNIVERSITY LAND

Daglish: Water Service

11. Mr. MENSAROS asked the Acting Premier:

Will he obtain from the University the answers to the following questions:—

- (1) Is it a fact that, in recent auction sales of building lots from the University endowment land in Daglish, the University or its agents have—
 - (a) advertised that electricity, gas and sewerage services are available;
 - (b) made no mention of the lack of availability of water connection?
- (2) Is it a fact that water will only be connected to most of the recently sold Northmore Street and Clubb Avenue blocks on the purchaser making a cash contribution to the Metropolitan Water Board, as no main runs along these blocks?
- (3) If the answer to (1) (a), (1) (b) and (2) is "Yes," is not the statement concerning the availability of sewerage in fact incorrect and misleading inasmuch as a sewerage main without available water is ineffectual?
- (4) Why does not the University (being a public body of undoubted status) make the facts concerning water and sewerage services plain to intending purchasers?

Mr. NALDER replied:

- (1) (a) Yes.
 - (b) No. The Government auctioneer in his opening address emphasised that there were no water mains in these two streets and that purchasers would be required to make their own arrangements with the board.
- (2) This subdivision is 10 years old and when all the lots in Cunningham Terrace, Jersey, and Currie Streets were sold at previous auctions as far back as 1963 the purchasers apparently had no difficulty in obtaining water.
- (3) and (4) Answered above.

ABORIGINAL AND HISTORIC RELICS

Legislation to Preserve

12. Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

- (1) Is he aware that Act No. 33 of 1965, South Australia, provides for "preservation of aboriginal and historic relics"?
- (2) In view of the importance of the preservation of Western Australian natives' historic relics and places of meetings for various purposes, will he have a similar Act prepared for parliamentary approval?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) This is now under consideration.

BRIDGE

Swan Street, Guildford

13. Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Works:

- (1) Under the terms of new main road trust moneys, could the building of a new bridge over the Swan River connecting Swan Street, Guildford, be proceeded with?
- (2) Alternatively, can Swan Street, Guildford, be formed and made to relieve traffic on Victoria Street, Guildford, now used extensively owing to closure of Market Street crossing, Guildford?

Mr. COURT (for Mr. Ross Hutchinson) replied:

- (1) No decision has been made with respect to the overall road pattern in the Guildford-Bassendean area, and therefore a site for a further bridge crossing of the Swan River has not been established. It is considered that such a bridge crossing is not warranted at the present time having regard to other needs throughout the metropolitan area.
- (2) It is considered that Swan Street should be the feeder to this area, and with this end in view the intersection of Swan Street and West Swan Road will shortly be channelised.

WOOD CHIP INDUSTRY

Time Limit on Establishment

14. Mr. H. D. EVANS asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) Following his reply to a similar question on the 1st May last, has the Government yet placed a time limit on the firm negotiating to establish a wood chip industry in the south-west of the State?

- (2) If so, what length of time will the Government allow for the establishment of such an industry?

Mr. COURT replied:

- (1) and (2) It is proposed that the agreement, when signed, for the establishment of a wood chip industry will provide for the first export of wood chips from Bunbury within three years of the commencement date.

For all practical purposes "commencement date" will be when the company has negotiated sales contracts, export licence, and finance to the satisfaction of the Government. The agreement will limit the time in which the company can make the required submissions in respect of these matters.

EFFLUENT PONDS: KWINANA

Kerosene Lane Area

15. Mr. TAYLOR asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

With regard to the Western Mining (nickel) refinery, Kwinana, effluent ponds in the Kerosene Lane area—

- (1) Is it anticipated that cyanide in any form will be present in the residue?
- (2) Is he satisfied that no noxious or harmful chemicals will be included in the residue?
- (3) Is he aware that local residents claim that underground waters from the area of the proposed effluent ponds drain towards and into Lake Coolooncup (White Lake) which is a national park vested in the local authority?
- (4) Is he satisfied that the underground water resources beneath the ponds will not be contaminated by the effluent?
- (5) Is he aware that local residents utilise the underground waters for agricultural and domestic purposes?
- (6) If, despite precautions, pollution does occur, will the Government and/or the company give guarantees to fully compensate those local residents who may be affected?
- (7) What is the anticipated period of use of the ponds before they are filled?

Mr. COURT replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) The effluent will contain minor quantities of free ammonia and ammonium sulphate plus trace

quantities of nickel and copper salts in solution. With the method of disposal proposed by the company, the effluent will be neither noxious nor harmful. The disposal area is to be properly and permanently fenced by the company.

- (3) I have heard of such claims.
- (4) It is proposed that the effluent areas will be sealed with an impervious clay lining. The water-holding properties of the lining will be inspected before discharge of effluent will be permitted.

Under these conditions the effluent should not enter or contaminate underground waters. The method of disposal of effluent has been decided upon and approved by the Public Health Department, Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Board, Government Chemical Laboratories, Lands and Surveys Department and Town Planning Department in conjunction with the corporation.

- (5) I understand this is the position.

- (6) The honourable member's attention is directed to clause 7 sub-clauses (4) and (6) of the Nickel Refinery (Western Mining Corporation Ltd.) agreement which states *inter alia*—

"the depositing of residues . . . shall be carried out by the Corporation as directed from time to time by the Minister and in such manner as not to cause any nuisance or undue inconvenience to third parties or cause air or underground water pollution . . ."

"The Corporation will ensure that the residues discharged . . . will not contain any material which may be or become or cause a nuisance or be or become dangerous or injurious to public health."

- (7) Ten years at least.

Mandogalup

16. Mr. TAYLOR asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

With regard to the Western Aluminium refinery, Kwinana, proposed effluent ponds at Mandogalup—

- (1) What area is it proposed to utilise for this purpose?
- (2) What is the anticipated surface area of the deposits when filling is complete?

- (3) What is the anticipated period of use of the ponds before they are filled?
- (4) What will be the anticipated maximum height of the earth wall being constructed to hold the ponds?
- (5) Is he aware that some of the agricultural land in use in the area is relatively low lying?
- (6) Is he satisfied that the ponds and associated earth works as located will not act as an impediment to drainage in the area, either—
 (a) locally; or
 (b) in relation to the south draining Cockburn lakes system, to the north of Mandogalup?
- (7) If as a result of the establishment of the ponds and their earthworks flooding of land does occur, will the Government and/or the company adequately compensate those residents so affected?

Mr. COURT replied:

- (1) Two areas will be involved, both within the vicinity of the Mandogalup townsite.

The first area is mainly north of Hope Valley Road which will be diverted at the expense of the company.

The second area lies mainly between Hope Valley Road and Thomas Road.

If the honourable member wishes, I can make available a map showing the exact location of the two areas.

- (2) The two sites are subject to survey, but are approximately 500 acres and 1,000 acres respectively.
- (3) The first area will be in use for 12 years. The life of the larger, second, area depends on the level of filling finally approved.
- (4) Eighty feet, approximately.
- (5) Yes.
- (6) (a) and (b) and (7) Arrangements have been made for draining any watershed created by the filled area.

It is pointed out that the installations to be made will be as a result of expert engineering advice from both the Government and the private engineering consulting firms.

The company has always co-operated with the Government in the past and I have no doubt that should any problem arise in

the future this co-operation will continue quite apart from any legal obligations in the matter.

17. Mr. TAYLOR asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

With regard to the Western Aluminium refinery, Kwinana, proposed effluent ponds at Mandogalup—

- (1) Is he aware that local agriculturalists, including market gardeners, utilise the underground waters of the area?
- (2) Is he satisfied that no pollution of the underground waters will take place as a result of the establishment of the ponds?
- (3) Is he satisfied that no damage will occur to adjacent vegetation, particularly market vegetables, as a result of vapours carried from the surface of the ponds by wind?
- (4) If there is loss of productivity or damage to local properties, either because of pollution of underground water supplies or by wind blown vapours, will the Government and/or the company give guarantees to fully compensate those so affected?

Mr. COURT replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) to (4) The question of—

- (i) possible pollution of underground waters; and
- (ii) possible damage to vegetation and market vegetables as the result of vapours from the surface of the ponds

has received attention and precautions are being taken to prevent these occurrences.

As a result of the attention being given to these matters, it does not appear that any problems will arise.

The position will be kept under supervision by the Government, although I have no doubt the company itself would want to avoid any adverse result.

GOVERNMENT CIRCULAR No. 17/67

Application to Fremantle Port Authority

18. Mr. TAYLOR asked the Acting Premier:

Further to answers given on the 1st April, 1969, with regard to the subject matter of Circular to Permanent Heads, No. 17/67 of the

14th September, 1967, issued by the Public Service Commissioner's office—

(1) Will he confirm—

- (a) that under certain conditions 15 days extra sick leave per annum is allowed ex-service employees with entitlements provided they are salaried officers;
- (b) his advice that those ex-service employees with entitlements who do not receive this concession are "all staff other than salaried officers";
- (c) that in reply to my previous questions he advised that the reason that "all staff other than salaried officers" do not also receive this concession is that they are "staff other than salaried officers"?

(2) Does he agree that the Government thus recognises two classes of ex-servicemen with entitlements, and that this recognition is based on occupation and status rather than war service and need?

(3) Would he further agree that the concession assists those ex-service employees in the higher income brackets who are possibly least in need of it and precludes those ex-servicemen on the lower income brackets who are possibly most in need?

(4) In view of the fact that the present directive discriminates against one section of Government employees, that any application for the concession is safeguarded by the need to produce a doctor's certificate and that the number of ex-servicemen likely to require the concession would be quite small and also those most in need, would he agree to review the position with the aim of extending the concession to all Government and semi-government ex-service employees irrespective of position or income?

Mr. NALDER replied:

(1) (a) Yes.

(b) Yes.

(c) Yes.

(2) to (4) There are differing conditions of sick leave for war caused disabilities as between some

salaried and wages staff, as indicated in replies to earlier questions. This is a matter which is receiving consideration at present.

MAIN ROADS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Ministerial Statement

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe—Minister for Works) [11.20 a.m.]: I seek your approval, Mr. Speaker, and the approval of the House to make a statement about the Main Roads Act Amendment Bill which will come before the House in the normal course of events.

The **SPEAKER**: Does the House give the Minister leave to make the statement? As there is no dissentient voice, the Minister may proceed.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I should like to thank the House for its tolerance in permitting me to make this statement.

Mr. Tonkin: It is not going to be another second reading speech, is it?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I will certainly try not to make a second reading speech. My purpose is purely to explain in so far as I am able and as briefly as possible what has happened in the interregnum between the previous period of this session of Parliament and the present time in order that all members may be properly apprised of the position before the commencement of further debate.

It will be remembered that this legislation was deferred and the present sitting brought about because of difficulties which were expressed by both Opposition and Government members in regard to a complete understanding of the legislation.

Mr. Tonkin: Opposition members did not express any difficulty in the House. I should say that possibly Government members expressed doubts, although the Opposition members were not aware of any opposition from Government members.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I do not want to argue.

Mr. Tonkin: There is nothing to argue about. It is a fact. Have a look at the relevant *Hansard* and see if any member on the other side of the House made a speech on the legislation.

Mr. O'Connor: Did not the Leader of the Opposition request an explanation?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I do recall hearing the Leader of the Opposition say something to this effect during the debate on the Bill. During the period between the two sittings meetings have been held and a great deal of information has been disseminated among local authorities and, in latter days, members of Parliament in order to try to bring them up to date with some of the events that have taken place.

It is proposed to amend the legislation in the way set out on the addendum to the notice paper, together with a further amendment, in order that it may be put in a better form and consequently better able to cover what the Government feels are the needs of the State.

In the first place, instead of having the 5 per cent. compounding table described in the Bill, it is proposed that there shall be a matching 5 per cent. flat with 5 per cent. rises and a 2 per cent. escalation table, which percentage will be free money not needing to be matched.

I do not wish to go on to give a lengthy description but at the same time I do not wish to say too little. I hope members will see the difficulty with which I am faced. Another difficulty connected with this concerns local authorities which had some problem over matching proposals. At present the Bill provides for an escalation of 5 per cent. cumulative on the base grant.

The fact that I would have ministerial discretion—which is written into the legislation—did not completely satisfy local authorities. Consequently it is proposed by the amendments that a local authority whose expenditure from its own resources is not less than the total of the base grant and further grants—that is, the matching requirements—shall be deemed to have satisfied the matching requirements.

I point out that the effect of this amendment would be that about 60 local authorities will qualify for the matching grants without increasing the expenditure from their own resources above the present level. This would continue to apply until such time as the total of the base grant equals or exceeds the level of expenditure from local government resources.

Further, since the Commonwealth legislation was introduced, one or two points have arisen which, in themselves, do not make amendment to our legislation absolutely necessary, but it would improve the legislation to incorporate them.

One of them is a concession, because the Commonwealth legislation indicates that some concession has been given to the States in that expenditure in excess of that required for matching purposes in any one year may be carried forward to subsequent years. It seems only logical, therefore, that in our own legislation this concession should be carried over to our own local authorities.

Many local authorities incur a large expenditure in one year when they raise funds for particular purposes and, in fact, the high peaks of expenditure tend to limit their ability to raise further loans. Consequently, any expenditure which is well in excess of the matching requirements may be carried over to subsequent years.

This amendment would remove a major point of dissension, because the local authorities said that the present provision in the Bill would penalise those authorities which were doing a good job from their own resources.

Another point which arises from the Commonwealth legislation is that it is now possible to include interest on loans raised for road purposes. This will now be recognised as expenditure on roads for the purpose of matching moneys.

As members will see, some minor amendments which concern definitions and terminology appear on the notice paper. These are largely consequential.

One series of amendments seeks to remove from our legislation the reference to classes of roads; namely, classes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. Any member who cares to refer to the Commonwealth Act will see that these classes are not referred to. The Government was led to believe that such classes would be included in the Commonwealth legislation; but, instead, general terms have been used. Consequently, classes one and two become "rural arterial roads"; classes three, four, and five become "other rural roads"; and classes six and seven become "urban arterial and subarterial roads."

Each of these categories will be defined by the Commonwealth Minister and I have written to him asking for an early definition of the roads. However, whilst the Government is waiting for the Federal Minister's reply, the Commissioner of Main Roads intends to allow the local authorities to spend largely as they wish. When we know the definition, then I will be able to use, on the recommendation of the Commissioner of Main Roads, my ministerial discretion which is written into our legislation to give further flexibility to local authorities in the spending of State and Commonwealth funds.

A further proposed amendment will provide that local authorities shall be paid \$4 for each vehicle licensed up to the first 1,000 vehicles, and then \$3 thereafter. The Bill at present provides that \$3 will be paid to the local authorities for all vehicles licensed.

Another amendment which has been placed in front of members—probably this morning—is to alter the base grants which are to be found in the schedule to the Bill. Formerly the base grants represented the payment made from the Central Road Trust Fund to local authorities in the present financial year. It has been represented by local authorities that this would bear unfairly on some authorities because of the system of accepting payments for vehicle licenses, and so it is proposed to amend the schedule to the Bill.

The amendment will provide for the base grant to be averaged over the last two financial years, in order to give a

truer picture. This amendment will mean that an additional \$80,000 will be added to the total of the base grants and, as a result, some 55 local authorities will receive additional sums. Those sums are reflected in the amendment to be submitted.

That sums up the amendments. I know the situation is one which is rather unusual, and I thank members for their tolerance and understanding.

MAIN ROADS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 29th April.

MR. JONES (Collie) [11.33 a.m.]: Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the remarks of the Minister for Works and, irrespective of the amendments to be made to the original Bill, I would like to indicate from this side of the House that it is our intention to oppose this measure thoroughly. Although amendments have been proposed, we consider that they will give little relief to local authorities, especially country shires in the northern and southern parts of the State. During my remarks I will indicate why we consider that the Bill should be rejected and, no doubt, support will come later from other sections of the House.

This Bill is to amend the Commonwealth main roads proposals and related matters. As has already been explained by my leader, the legislation will change completely the formula by which moneys are to be paid from the Commonwealth Aid Roads Fund and, in fact, it alters the whole formula on a national basis.

Since the Bill was first introduced in this House, it would be true to say—and I doubt whether members on the other side of the House will disagree with the statement—that the Government has met with strong opposition from a number of quarters. It would also be true to say that local authorities, especially country shires, strongly resent this legislation, and in fact it is quite clear to all of us that the Government has been pressurised from a number of quarters into suggesting certain amendments which were outlined earlier this morning by the Minister for Works.

However, in our view, the proposed amendments will give little relief to the situation. Although the Albany shire has indicated in the Press that some relief will be forthcoming to that shire from the amendments, it will be conceded generally that on an overall basis very little relief will be given to most local authorities in Western Australia.

In this morning's issue of *The West Australian* it was reported that a further amendment was agreed upon at a meeting between the coalition parties yesterday,

and the report also mentioned that Parliament would reassemble today to deal with legislation which was postponed early last month after Country Party opposition. However, you will note Mr. Acting Speaker (Mr. Mitchell), there is no reference at all to the move made by this side of the House wherein my leader requested an adjournment of the debate on this Bill in order that local authorities and others associated with the measure would have an opportunity to study it further so that they would have a greater appreciation of the new formula, and of the financial effect it would have on local authorities throughout the State.

If we take our minds back to last month and look at what occurred we will see that, in fact, pressure was applied from this side of the House. On the 29th April my leader suggested to the Premier that for various reasons the debate on the Bill should be adjourned. He indicated quite clearly that if the request for an adjournment was not agreed to it was the intention of members on this side strongly to oppose the measure in its present form.

So it will be seen that although the Press has said that the Country Party was responsible for the postponement of the debate on the Bill, I think credit must be given to the Opposition for our activity and for our foresight in recommending to the Government that the debate should be adjourned for the reasons outlined in my leader's speech.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: The Leader of the Opposition said that you did not do this.

Mr. JONES: The Minister has had his time. I have three-quarters of an hour at my disposal and I suggest that the Minister, when replying to the debate, will have ample opportunity to reply to my views. So I would respectfully ask him not to interrupt. I did not interrupt him during his second reading speech nor during his statement this morning.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I will. I know you will forgive me for saying that, though.

Mr. JONES: I have been asked by country shire associations and local authorities to state in this House, and therefore have recorded in *Hansard*, what actually transpired, and what would have happened had the Opposition not forced the Government into adjourning the debate on this Bill on the 29th April. If no adjournment had taken place the position would have been even more complex than it is today. I make this statement after having conferred with local authorities, because I doubt very much whether any of them yet understands the measure. I doubt further whether many members in this House have a true appreciation of what the Bill provides.

Several members interjected.

Mr. JONES: I think that is the situation, and time will tell whether it is or not. For the sake of the record, I think it preferable that I indicate what would have happened had the adjournment not taken place. Members will recall that when the Bill was first introduced by the Minister the amendments now foreshadowed were not in the mind of the Government, and it is fair and honest to say that these amendments were only suggested following consultation with and direct pressure from, in the main, the country shires of Western Australia.

Had the adjournment not taken place the position would have been that the local authorities would have had very little opportunity to consider the Bill; because it will be recalled that in regard to this matter the first meeting of the South-West Shire Councils' Association was held in Bunbury on the 14th April, 1969. At that meeting it was reported that the executive had met the Minister in charge of main roads and officers of the Main Roads Department, and the Bill was outlined to the executive. The executive was then given exactly 20 minutes in which to consider the proposed alterations.

So the position was that if the adjournment of the debate had not been granted when the Bill was last before the House these amendments would not have been recommended to Parliament and the position would have been that the executive of the South-West Shire Councils' Association would have had exactly 20 minutes to consider this important measure. This was the state of affairs that existed, and no doubt members on the other side of the House who attended the meeting in Bunbury will support me when I say that this was the report given to the local authorities by the president of that organisation.

I will not weary the House by mentioning what went on subsequently, because it is well known that meetings have been held in certain parts of the State mainly for the purpose of considering the principles contained in the legislation itself and to ascertain how the majority of shires in Western Australia viewed this legislation.

A formula which set out certain principles and indicated to the local authorities the effect of the legislation was circulated among them by Mr. Aitken, the Commissioner of Main Roads. One of the main points which was exercising the minds of the members of the various local authorities is to be found in the second-last page of this report or formula. It reads as follows:—

The principal points of these proposals are as follows:—

- (a) No local authority will receive less under this scheme than they received in 1968-69, and where their needs are such

that they are prepared to make a corresponding effort, they will receive 5 per cent. more each year.

It has been suggested, and made quite clear in the reports from local authorities, that such is not the case with the majority of shires in the south-west of the State, and for the information of members I will table these reports at a later stage.

If we look at the legislation that is now contemplated, following certain suggestions that flowed from this House in relation to the adjournment of the debate, it will be seen that the Minister has decided to make certain amendments to the original Bill and has followed the formula brought down by the Commonwealth Government itself. I will now quote from the document that was presented to the country shires at a meeting held in the Perth Town Hall, the relevant quotation being on page 2, which is as follows:—

I have previously stated that expenditure by local authorities on interest on loans raised for road works would not qualify as road expenditure for the purposes of the matching arrangements.

However, the new Commonwealth Aid Roads Bill currently before the Commonwealth Parliament allows the States to count interest as part of expenditure on road works. I am now therefore happy to be able to follow a similar line of action in extending the same concession to local authorities.

So it will clearly be seen that if the adjournment of the debate had not been taken the amendments now before the House would not have been suggested and our legislation would not follow along the lines of the Commonwealth measure. One of the proposals now contained in the Bill is that there shall be an automatic 2 per cent. increase in the allocations each year. However, if we look at the legislation proposed in New South Wales it will be seen that the Western Australian Government is not as generous as that in New South Wales, because in that State a 5 per cent. automatic increase is contemplated by Premier Askin. To keep the record straight I quote the following from *The Australian* dated the 15th March, 1969:—

We got the Lion's Share, says Askin.

When Mr. Askin arrived in Sydney from Canberra yesterday he said: "Country roads are not being neglected under the new arrangement.

They will receive their 1968-69 allocation, with an increase of 5 per cent. on an accumulative basis for each of the years covered by the new agreement.

If experience shows that this is not enough we will supplement the application from our own State resources.

In the past 18 months the New South Wales Government, as well as local government bodies, has spent approximately \$750,000 on the roads.

In preparing the case for a better deal for New South Wales our officers were sent all over Australia to get exact knowledge of conditions.

Proof that these tactics paid off is the fact that New South Wales received the lion's share in the cut-up in Canberra—an 82 per cent. improvement on the old agreement, compared with 73.2 per cent. for Victoria."

That portion of the report is quite clear, and other portions which deal with the merits of the issue also show quite clearly that so far as Premier Askin was concerned the escalation should be 5 per cent., which is totally different from the 2 per cent. proposed in the measure now before the House. It is true that, as a result of the amendments now suggested, and which will be dealt with later during the debate on this Bill, some local authorities in the country have gained. In a report published in *The Albany Advertiser* on Tuesday, the 20th May, 1969, I notice that the Albany Council will now receive \$46,000 under the new arrangement. Therefore, irrespective of what is thought by those who opposed the postponement of this Bill to allow local authorities, members of Parliament, and others associated with the legislation to consider it, it can now be seen that some shires will benefit slightly from the new legislation.

Prior to the meeting held in the Perth Town Hall on Tuesday, the 27th May, it is interesting to learn that the representatives of the various shires met and submitted amendments to the Bill. These amendments were discussed by local authorities on a State-wide basis and then submitted to the Minister for Works at the meeting held in the Perth Town Hall. The executive of the country shires association met the Minister and his officers on Wednesday, the 28th May, 1969, but agreement could not be reached on the proposed amendments to the original Bill. The amendments that were accepted were published in the Press and they have been outlined this morning by the Minister, and it is not my intention to refer to them at this stage.

On behalf of the shires in my electorate, however, I wish to point out that, following the meeting of the executive of the South-West Shire Councils' Association with the Minister for Works and his departmental officers, there was no consultation with the representatives of the country shires, and as a result the country shires are wondering what happened at that meeting, because following the meeting held in the Perth Town Hall a number of suggested alterations were made. The

executive of the South-West Shire Councils' Association met the Minister, but the country shires are still awaiting a reply to learn the outcome of that meeting. So it will be seen that, for the reasons I have outlined, there is still a great deal of misunderstanding in relation to this measure generally.

Turning to the Bill itself, I would like to refer briefly to some portions of the legislation and the remarks that were made by the Minister when he introduced it. It is then my intention to indicate quite clearly how the majority of shires in this State view the amending legislation. It has been stated already that the formula has been completely changed. The State will receive \$200,000,000 in the next five years, which is 50 per cent. more than the previous grant, but the question I would like to ask is: What does this mean to the country shires?

I think the intention is quite clear, but there is much concern among the country shires as to the actual effect of the legislation itself. The Shires Association in New South Wales is far from happy with the proposal, although it has been explained that increased sums of money have been made available to the New South Wales Government.

It will be seen from a report from which I will quote in a moment that the position is not satisfactory so far as the local authorities in New South Wales generally are concerned. Already the Government in New South Wales has announced big changes that are to be made to its highways and expressways, and this has been met with resentment by the President of the New South Wales Shires Association.

I will now indicate how that association sees the effect of this measure in New South Wales itself. Before doing so, however, I would like to refer to a statement made by my leader in the House on Tuesday, the 29th April, 1969, while he was speaking to this Bill. I propose to do this, because I feel the matter is very important and will have direct application to the other quotation I will make in a moment. My leader was quoting an article from *The West Australian* of the 15th March, which stated—

When Mr. Askin arrived in Sydney from Canberra yesterday he said, "Country roads are not being neglected under the new arrangement."

In considering that statement we must also have regard for the way in which the shires in New South Wales view this type of legislation, or the changes in the formula generally; because it has been announced in New South Wales that very large work programmes will be carried out on the main road arteries of that State. I say that because the March, 1969, issue of the *Public Works & Local Government Engineering Bulletin* outlines the vast

alterations to the expressways, and to Princes Highway from Sydney to Wollongong. It also outlines other factors.

Let us see, however, how the President of the New South Wales Shires Association views this measure. It is quite clear he is not happy with the formula in that State and this will be apparent from the report I propose to quote, which reads—

The N.S.W. Shires Association was disappointed with the disproportionately small increase in Commonwealth aid for rural roads, according to the President, Councillor L. P. Connellan. They apparently expected an overall increased allocation of \$130 million over the five-year period. This represented an increase of 31% compared with an overall Australian increase of 60% and a N.S.W. increase of 81%. The proposed allocation was \$110 million, but the final allocation for country main roads shows a reduction of about \$28 million. Councillor Connellan has said that "in view of this grave reduction in funds, the Shires Association must ask if the State Government will be prepared to make up the balance from State revenue."

This is also the concern of the country shires in Western Australia. They ask whether this legislation will result in a similar position as it relates to country shires and country roads generally.

No doubt when he replies to the debate the Minister will have an opportunity to make clear the views of the Government on this matter. We have the situation, however, where in a short space of time the New South Wales Shires Association is already very concerned at the expenditure that will be applied to country roads as compared with that which will be allocated to arterial roads in the city itself.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You said earlier they were being treated very well.

Mr. JONES: I did not say that at all. I quoted a report which indicated they were not happy with the position as outlined in the documents to which I have referred.

It will be seen, however, that there is discontent in other parts of Australia, even though the provisions contemplated on a State level are far better than the Government is prepared to introduce in this State. I say that because the escalation of 2 per cent. is not as great as that of 5 per cent., which has been accepted and which will be introduced by the Premier of New South Wales.

Mr. Bertram: Escalation or inflation?

Mr. JONES: Irrespective of the views of members on this side of the House, or of the views of members on the Government side, we must ask ourselves how the majority of shires in Western Australia

view this legislation; how do they see the new measure; how do they feel it will affect their respective shires? These are very important issues.

From my observations, and from the talks I have had with representatives of numerous local authorities since the measure was first introduced, I have come to the conclusion that not one shire in the south-west applauds this piece of legislation. There are innumerable examples of discontent among shires, not only in the south-west portions of the State, but also in the northern parts of the State. If any member knows of any local authority in Western Australia which applauds this legislation I would like to hear him say so, because I am convinced that this is just not the case.

Mr. Burt: I can tell you of one.

Mr. JONES: We will be glad to hear any contribution in this direction which the honourable member would like to make, and I will look forward with interest to hearing the views of other members on that side of the House, particularly in view of the letters that have been received from the local authorities.

I am alarmed to hear that the member for Murchison-Eyre knows of perhaps one or two shires which are happy with the measure before the House. I say this because I have not been able to find one such shire in the south-west of the State; I have not found one that is happy with the legislation.

Mr. Court: I think you will be disappointed when the Minister replies and tells you of some.

Mr. JONES: Having indicated the position as I see it, and having considered the amendments made in New South Wales and also the matter of the adjournment, it is now my intention to indicate to Parliament how the local authorities in my electorate view this legislation.

It will be appreciated that at times members on the other side of the House think that we, the members of the Opposition, oppose measures merely as a matter of principle. After I have quoted the report that has been handed to me with the request that I make the position of the shires quite clear, it will readily be seen that it is not only the members on this side of the House who are concerned about the measure but that this feeling of discontent is to be found among the shires, generally, throughout Western Australia.

For the record I would indicate that in my electorate there are four shires—the Collie Shire, the West Arthur Shire, the Upper Blackwood Shire (now known as the Boyup Brook Shire), and the Donnybrook Shire.

Since the Bill was introduced all these shires have requested me to attend meetings of their shire councils in the hope that I might be able to explain the complexities of the measure before us. There are very few shire clerks, and very few members of the shires in question, who completely understand the true meaning of the Bill and its effect on the shire concerned. I have no doubt that members on this side of the House and those on the other side also are experiencing this difficulty.

I would like to report on the position as seen in Collie, following a long meeting with the local authority and following advice that has been forwarded to me in a written form requesting me to oppose strongly this piece of legislation when it is dealt with in the House. Firstly, I refer to a letter addressed to the Minister for Works and dated the 12th May. It reads as follows:—

Dear Sir,

re Proposed Act to Amend Main Roads Act

At its last meeting the Collie Shire Council passed a resolution that I write to you pointing out in the strongest terms that because of the provisions in the proposed bill requiring all Local Authorities to match the 5 per cent. increased grant, in Collie's case \$4,500, that this Shire and other South West Shires have been rating on, or close to previous maximum rates under Section 548, because of this, and because the bill makes no provision other than a Ministerial Dispensation, no legislative provision has been made for those Shires who have met their rating responsibilities in the past.

Council hopes that the Minister will use his discretionary powers to alleviate the burden on such Shires.

Yours faithfully,

P. McNab,
Shire Clerk.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: That is ancient history; and you know it is.

Mr. JONES: That is not ancient history. I will now quote from *The Collie Mail* of Thursday last. It contains a report made available to the Press by the shire. The report was not made available by myself as member for the district, but by the shire itself, because it was concerned about the effect of this legislation on the shire. The newspaper report states—

Road grants legislation to be presented to Parliament this month was the beginning of the end of complete local autonomy according to shire president R. Pike.

The tragedy was that most local government leaders did not know what was going on, he said at a shire council meeting last week.

They had argued strongly about whether they should be allowed to retain \$3 or \$4 from every licence, but this had little to do with the real issues.

To begin with, traffic administration cost shires between 11 and 14 per cent. of their licence fees. Consequently, shires should retain between 11 and 14 per cent. of each licence.

While \$3 or \$4 might be a satisfactory lure now it would be most unsatisfactory in five years' time if costs continued to rise as expected.

However, even that was not the worst of it, according to Cr. Pike.

I will not weary the House by quoting further, except to point out that in the opinion of the Collie Shire the shires are becoming collection agencies for the Government.

Mr. Dunn: What was the date of that report?

Mr. JONES: The 12th June. This newspaper is available in the newspaper files of this Parliament. The submission of the Collie Shire which it has asked me to have recorded, in its opposition to this measure, reads as follows:—

A comparison between the revenue from licence fees and Central Road Trust Fund payments to my Council for 1968-69 and receipts which may be expected for the next financial year is as follows:

For 1968-69	\$
License Fees (base year)	66,802
Central Road Trust Fund	40,218
Total 1968-69	107,020
For 1969-70	
Base Grant	90,319
Allowance for licenses	14,419
Plus 2% of \$90,319	1,806
	106,544
Plus 5% of \$90,319	4,515
Total 1969-70	110,059

Of course, if it is able to match the 5 per cent. requirement then a further \$4,515 will be available. I would point out that Collie is one of those shires which is actually dormant; it has had a heavy roads programme; and it will be impossible for that shire, without imposing a very heavy increase in rates, to meet the 5 per cent. requirement. I think the same position will be found to exist in a number of local authorities in Western Australia. The submission concludes—

By ignoring the 5 per cent. increase the figures show that anticipated

receipts for 1969/70 will be \$476 less than for the present year. This could be worse off if the allowance for license collections is less than the estimated figure.

In addition, the Collie Shire has asked me to inform the House of, and to suggest that the Minister have a special look at, the situation of the Collie Shire and other shires placed in similar circumstances.

The Collie Shire is rating at the maximum level, so it will be very difficult indeed for that shire to increase rates in order that another 5 per cent. additional benefit flows to it.

Another point on which we would like clarification is: When will these payments become available? I find there is no mention in the Bill of when the first payments will be made. The Collie Shire has asked me to raise this question, in view of the fact that rate collections will not become available to it until some time in September. We would like clarification on the point as to when it can be anticipated that payments will flow to the local authorities under the provisions of this Bill.

A further point raised by the Collie Shire is that it considers that revenue from license fees is probably the revenue of the local authority. Of course, we on this side of the House fully support this contention. We consider that revenue from license fees is the rightful revenue of the local authority. I notice some member opposite is laughing, but I would point out to him that what I am putting forward is the considered view of the shires generally. Whether it is the view of the honourable member to whom I have made reference I do not know. However, it is the considered view of most local authorities in Western Australia that revenue from license fees rightfully belongs to the shire concerned.

Mr. Tonkin: It is much easier to laugh than to speak.

Mr. JONES: We will, no doubt, hear from the honourable member who has been interjecting during my speech. I will listen with a great deal of interest to his views.

Mr. Court: What is the view of the Labor Party on this point?

Mr. JONES: Another very important point is the level of the license fees. Under this legislation we could find that within five years there would be an increase in license fees. Such increase will not benefit the local authorities one iota. There is no mention in the Bill that the local authorities will gain anything from an increase in license fees if, due to rising costs, the proposed collection fees prove to be inadequate.

It is clearly set out in the Bill that the local authorities will receive \$4 for each vehicle registered, up to the first 1,000 vehicles, and then \$3 for each vehicle thereafter. If, for example, the license fees payable in the next five-year period are increased, such increase will not be of any benefit to the local authorities. As I see the situation, it will not benefit them one iota. That is why the local authorities are putting forward the point that the Bill should contain some provision whereby any increase in license fees should be related to their revenue. It is understandable why the local authorities are putting this point of view forward.

Mr. O'Connor: I thought it was your policy to have one authority to handle the registration of vehicles.

Mr. JONES: We are not discussing that point at this stage, and time will not permit me to deal with it.

Mr. Jamieson: That policy has nothing to do with the financial aspect of the Bill.

Mr. Tonkin: The Minister for Transport had better read the Labor policy speech again.

Mr. JONES: The Collie Shire is also concerned about the question of traffic administration. At the moment this shire finds itself in a dormant position, in comparison with the other shires in the south-west of the State which find it easier to obtain the necessary revenue to meet the 5 per cent. matching requirement. It is quite easy for a shire which is on the move to impose additional rates; but in the case of the Collie Shire, which has a heavy roads programme, and which is imposing rates at the maximum level permitted under the Act, it is not so easy. I ask: How can the Collie Shire increase its revenue to meet the 5 per cent. matching requirement? This is one of the shires in this category that the Minister should have a look at.

There are several of them in the south-west. The member for Warren mentioned the plight of Nannup. If a survey is made it will be found that quite a number of local authorities are in this position due to the fact that there has been a general decline in population in a number of towns in the south-west over recent years. I think records will show that with the exception of the Shires of Dardanup, Busselton, Capel, and Bunbury there has been a reduction in the population of all towns in the south-west of this State over recent years.

So it can clearly be seen that those shires will experience difficulty in trying to raise the additional 5 per cent. in order to obtain the matching money. This is something the Minister should have a look at.

In Collie the maximum amount of revenue is being obtained and any extra revenue which has to be raised will be at

the expense of the people of that town. I do not think this is something that the Government wishes to do; but in actual fact, this is something that cannot be overcome unless the Minister is prepared to have another look at the position of the shires in this category.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member has another five minutes.

Mr. JONES: It can be seen that the position is also bad as far as the Boyup Brook Shire Council is concerned and it has asked me to make its position clear. At a special meeting of this council, held on the 3rd June, the following motion was carried:—

That this Council considers that the suggested proposals by the State Government for the payment of funds from the State's Pool for Funds, for roadworks to country local authorities is unacceptable to this Shire. Our Members of Parliament should ensure that vehicle license revenue remains the lawful revenue of local authorities, be so written into the appropriate Acts, and further more, be equitably matched from Commonwealth Road Grants.

The correspondence from the council goes on to set out the loss which it considers the Boyup Brook Shire would experience over the five-year period. This loss amounts to \$44,900. The views of this shire were made quite clear in the *Blackwood Times* of the 11th June, under the heading, "Shire protests on road grant plan."

The Donnybrook Shire Council has also asked me to indicate its views to Parliament in the following terms:—

Re Commonwealth Aid Road Funds

In reply to your letter of the 5th instant, regarding the proposed Bill and Amendments thereto, I desire to advise that it is difficult to determine the overall effect the new formula will have on Councils finances.

Whilst it appears that Council will receive slightly more under the new proposals than the amount this year, the funds will have considerably more strings attached and have different application. One point of particular concern to my Council is that the new proposals will allow interest on loans to be a charge against the funds, whereas the present formula permits repayment of loan principal. The difference between principal and interest payments applicable to such loans for the year 1969/70, will amount to approximately \$7,290, therefore this amount will have to be provided from other revenue, taking this together with matching requirements could place a serious strain on rating resources.

With regard to traffic license revenue Council is opposed to the Government's ruling that funds from this source belong to the State, under the proposed formula the Government will certainly benefit from the expansion in license fees over the next five years.

What the Donnybrook Shire Council had to say about this legislation is quite clear.

I will now quote what the Shire of West Arthur has to say, because it ventilates views similar to those of the Donnybrook Shire Council. I quote from a letter written to me on the 10th June, which reads as follows:—

I advise that my Council does not agree with the Government's proposal to amend the Traffic Act and thereby make license fees, received by Local Authorities outside the Metropolitan area, part of State revenue.

It is apparent that the license fees have to be paid over to the Main Roads Trust Account for the five year period but surely it is not necessary to introduce a bill that is intended to permanently remove Shire Councils right to vehicle license fees.

Your assistance in seeing that vehicle license fees remain the lawful revenue of Shires would be appreciated.

Unfortunately, my time is running out because of the great number of interjections that have been made while I have been speaking.

From the letters I have read from the four shires that my electorate embraces, it can be seen that they all wish that the principle of revenue from license fees remaining the rightful revenue of the local authority concerned should be retained. It is quite clear from the views expressed by the Donnybrook Shire Council—irrespective of what members on the other side of the House might think—that shire councils are not clear as to what this legislation really means. In a report to me from the Shire Clerk of the Donnybrook Shire Council it is apparent that his council is not happy with the situation, and is not perfectly clear as to what the legislation means. I think that is the general opinion being expressed throughout Western Australia.

In conclusion, I wish to say that although the Government has compromised to a minor extent, it is true for me to state that local authorities generally are not happy with the legislation; and this unhappiness has been expressed in the documents from which I have quoted this morning.

For the reasons I have stated, and because of the complexity of this amending legislation, it is the intention of members on this side of the House to express our opposition during the debate.

Mr. Tonkin: Hasn't the Government got a point of view?

Mr. Craig: You have been given the Government's point of view.

Mr. Tonkin: I thought the Country Party members were going to have something to say.

MR. LAPHAM (Karrinyup) [12.17 p.m.]: The Opposition does not wish—

Mr. Tonkin: It is an entirely new Bill and nothing has been said on the Government side.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: They are not in coalition with you.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Karrinyup will continue.

Mr. LAPHAM: This is most complex legislation which has been brought down in a hurried manner. It is true, of course, that the adjournment has given members an opportunity to have a further look at it, but proposed amendments to the Bill have been brought down rather hurriedly and there has not been a great deal of time in which to fully comprehend what effect those amendments will have on the Bill.

As a matter of fact, last night I was in consultation with the shire council in my electorate and up to that time it had not received a copy of the amendments and was not aware of what was likely to happen. Therefore I was asked to raise that shire's objection to the Bill being passed in its present form. The shire council was most concerned about the attitude of the Government in altering the former arrangement for shires to receive license fees—an arrangement which has operated over the years. The former arrangement also included a matching grant from the Commonwealth.

I am speaking of the Wanneroo Shire Council which has budgeted and planned on the basis that the former arrangement would continue forever and anon. As a consequence of this legislation that shire council is most perturbed that there is to be an alteration which will deprive it of a considerable amount of revenue.

The Wanneroo Shire Council is in a rather difficult position, as is the case with other outer fringe shires. Local authorities in the metropolitan area have benefited by the population explosion that has taken place.

If one looks at the amount of grant those shires will receive, one will see that it is far in excess of what would have been the case even if the population explosion had not taken place. Those shires which are now on the outer fringe of the metropolitan area are due to reap the benefit of an increase in population; and this is especially so in the case of the Wanneroo Shire Council because of the land development schemes that are taking place in the area, and the planning of subdivisions which is now going on. It can be expected that there will be a terrific increase in

population within the area of that shire and, in consequence, in the number of vehicles that will have to be licensed.

Unfortunately, however, with this new arrangement into which the Government proposes to enter, the shire will be deprived of the benefit that would otherwise accrue to it as a result of the license fees payable by the increased number of vehicles, and as a result of the Commonwealth matching funds.

The shire recently wrote to me, stating—

This Council is still deeply concerned with the proposed Act with amendments for the distribution of Traffic fees. Although it would appear that the passing of this Bill is inevitable it is felt that there is a deep injustice in a system of distribution which benefits areas which have expanded considerably in the past, yet does not give Authorities with future expansion any opportunity to increase in relationship to its expansion.

For this reason on behalf of my Council, I ask again that this Bill not be passed without the following amendment.

"That no Local Authority which licenses its own vehicles will receive less in any year from the Main Roads Trust Account than it remits from fees collected."

This amendment is designed to allow Local Authorities some benefit from increased numbers of vehicles, and also to benefit Shires, should a substantial increase in fees be made by the Government.

At the present moment the Wanneroo Shire is on a very small base grant and all it will get, even with the amendment, is a 2 per cent. increase each year. Admittedly there is a 5 per cent. increase for matching money, but the increase in the grant will be only 2 per cent., and that would hardly cover the current inflationary trend. Therefore, if we pass this legislation we will absolutely deprive this shire of its opportunity to expand, and we will place it in a very difficult position.

It is true that in a proposed amendment are the words—

- (a) a grant, payable annually, to every local authority, being the sum obtained by increasing the base grant,—
 - (i) as set out, in each case, in the Second Schedule hereto; or
 - (ii) as from time to time determined by the Minister.

It is possible, therefore, that the Minister will have a look at the position of this shire and other shires in a similar position; but there is no guarantee that he will. He

could even decrease the grant if he so desired. In fact he could almost do as he pleased.

I believe the Wanneroo Shire will be in an extremely difficult position and will experience problems in carrying on, especially in view of the increased activity which will naturally flow from the current expansion in Hamersley, Sorrento, Marmion, and Mullaloo. In view of all the associated problems, I believe that the Wanneroo Shire is deserving of a special case review. This legislation will not give that shire any relief and if passed in its present form will place the Wanneroo Shire in an extremely difficult position.

Mr. Lewis: What was the date of that letter?

Mr. LAPHAM: The 5th June; but, as I mentioned, I was with members of the shire council last night and they have not varied their opinion. It should be obvious to all members that this shire, which must meet such terrific expansion in the near future, must have money. It has already rated its people as high as it possibly can and cannot therefore expect any more from that source. As I said earlier, the shire has budgeted for this expansion and it has committed itself as high as possible from loan funds. However, it did expect to receive the increased license fees, and it considered that this would overcome its problems.

As we all know, if this legislation is passed, those expected license fees will not be available to the shire and therefore it will have a lower revenue but will be expected to perform an increased amount of work involving an increased expenditure.

I find it difficult to understand why such a terrific deviation in principle has been made from the present system to the proposed system. The license fees are a source of revenue which the local authorities, and especially those in the country, have always considered theirs by right. To take this revenue from them, almost overnight, and without a great degree of explanation, is not, in my opinion, a very good policy. I admit the Government is perhaps in some difficulty and must therefore get this legislation through quickly; but, at the same time, if the Government could put itself in the position of the shires, it would realise they have very little knowledge of what is going on. The shires have almost no knowledge of the proposed amendments, so it is hardly possible that they could agree to them.

Another aspect of this measure is the fact that the authorities which have already experienced an increase in population, and as a consequence have a very good figure for a base grant, have a tremendous advantage over those shires whose population will, in the future, increase. These will be doing work all over the outer metropolitan area as expansion

occurs. To my way of thinking it is most unfair that those shires which will have an expansion problem will be disadvantaged as a consequence of this legislation. Therefore, I believe that second thoughts should be given to the problem concerning the outer fringe shires and some effort made to ensure that a more practical base grant is established so that those shires will receive the license fees and matching money which they anticipated would accrue to them as a natural right.

I do feel that the Minister should give this matter some special consideration to see that sufficient funds are made available so that there will be a possibility of some fair operation by the shires. At the present moment the position is hopeless, and if nothing is done the shires will face serious financial difficulties.

MR. T. D. EVANS (Kalgoorlie) [12.31 p.m.]: This measure has certainly created a great deal of interest. The time which has elapsed since the introduction of the Bill has enabled members on both sides, and other persons concerned, to become more enlightened than they were when the measure was first brought before this Chamber.

First of all, I would like, personally, to thank the Minister for his courtesy in forwarding by post only last week a resume of the amendments he proposed to move. A study of the amendments together with, and against, the original Bill clearly indicates that, in effect, the finished product which the Government hopes will leave this Chamber will be a completely new measure.

I am sure the Minister was of this opinion this morning because he found it necessary—he felt it desirable—to make a somewhat lengthy address of explanation to this Chamber. In effect, it was a second reading speech in which the Minister endeavoured to explain to the House the essence of the proposed legislation which it is intended should be passed by this House. The Minister has already made his second reading speech—in March—and he will again have the right of reply at the conclusion of this debate. In making his explanation this morning the Minister has deprived the Leader of the Opposition, and other speakers who spoke in March, of any such right of reply.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: The statement was to give the information officially in the House. Surely to goodness this is understood. I had already given the information to members in letter form. You started off quite well.

Mr. T. D. EVANS: On many other occasions legislation has been adjourned and Ministers have come forward with amendments which have been placed on the notice paper. On no other occasion, in my experience, has it been necessary for a Minister to give an explanation before

the debate resumed, as was the case this morning. Let it be understood that I am not blaming the Minister for making the explanation; what I am saying is the Minister found it necessary to do so because the amendments which are now before the House will, in effect, mean that if the legislation passes this Chamber it will be a completely different measure, in principle, from the Bill when it was first introduced.

Mr. Graham: I think the Minister explained the measure, but no other Minister understands it.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I would say it is an improved measure, not a different measure.

Mr. T. D. EVANS: I am glad the Minister concedes the fact that the Bill, as it was introduced, was capable of being improved. The improvement was certainly needed.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: No legislation is perfect; that is what I say.

Mr. T. D. EVANS: This measure with its complex provisions has one quite clear consequence which, perhaps, has not yet been commented upon in this debate. At the last State general elections the Labor Party, in accordance with its policy and through the mouth of its leader, had the courage to announce to the electors the party's intention—when it was returned to Government—to unify traffic control throughout Western Australia and place it in the hands of the Police Department.

We know of the backing and filling that has gone on—so obviously—in the Government ranks over the proposition that traffic control should be uniform throughout Western Australia. The Government, because it is a coalition Government, has obviously found great difficulty in facing up to the situation. I believe that many of the Ministers—and many of the Government supporters themselves—believe that traffic control should be uniform.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: No, the coalition Government improved the measure. This is what you are missing.

Mr. Tonkin: The coalition Government approved the original Bill.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I said, "improved," not "approved."

Mr. Tonkin: When the Bill came here originally it was approved by the coalition.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. T. D. EVANS: May I also join in the debate? As I was saying, I believe the Government—or some members of the Government—believes that traffic control should be uniform, and yet it has not had the courage to do anything in a practical manner about bringing uniformity into operation. What the Government has done, in effect, has been to strangle—by a time process—those local authorities which desire to retain traffic control.

The effect of this legislation will be that, in a short time, the country local authorities, one after another, will find they can no longer administer traffic control as an economic proposition without imposing an extra burden upon their rate-payers, and upon those persons who may not necessarily have or use motor vehicles at all.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Downright nonsense!

Mr. T. D. EVANS: That will be the effect of this legislation.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: That is absolute nonsense!

Mr. T. D. EVANS: The Minister would be an expert to judge absolute nonsense. He has now had time to review his own legislation and he has come to the conclusion that it was obviously a piece of nonsense as it was first introduced. The Minister has attempted to try to improve the measure.

I say again that one effect of this legislation will be that local authorities, one after another, will reluctantly hand over traffic control to the Police Department. The Government has not had the courage to legislate to provide for uniform traffic control.

If the Government was of the opinion that this piece of legislation was capable, and indeed in need, of amendment, review, and time cooling, why was it that the Bill was introduced in the dying hours of the autumn session; and, such being the case, why was the debate allowed to be resumed by the Leader of the Opposition? It is obvious the Government was trying to play a two-card trick on the people of Western Australia and the local authorities in general. It is true the Government was experiencing difficulty with certain members of its coalition and was playing a waiting game. The Government wanted to wait in order to see the attitude of the Opposition.

Had the Opposition been sufficiently indiscreet to go along with the Government and support the measure, where would the Government have been then in its gesture to local authorities when it said, "We know this legislation is capable of being amended. It is capable of improvement and this is what we have sought to do." This was a confidence trick of the highest order.

I do not wish to traverse the ground that has already been covered by other members, but I do wish to reiterate that it is my desire, in company with other members, to strongly oppose this measure. In fact, in the event of the passing of the second reading, I would strongly advocate that a suitable amendment be written into the legislation so that the local authorities will be able to receive from the matching fund an amount of money which is not less than the amount

they would normally have received from the collection of license fees and which is rightfully theirs under the present legislation.

MR. DAVIES (Victoria Park) [12.43 p.m.]: Probably this is the most confusing and amusing day I have ever spent in the Parliament.

Mr. Cash: That depends on circumstances.

Mr. DAVIES: I appeal to interjectors, as I have appealed on previous occasions, to speak up loudly. I do not mind interjections if they are not mumbled. I have to make this appeal occasionally.

At this stage we should review what has happened so far with this legislation. Members will recall it was brought down, as has already been stated, in the dying hours of the autumn session, much to the concern of some members of the coalition Government. When the debate was resumed after one week, the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Warren, and the member for Gascoyne spoke. However, no member of the coalition—that is, the Liberal Party and the Country Party—rose to speak. It was quite clear that the Government was waiting to assess the Opposition's attitude before it took any further action. In fact, I was told this personally by some members of the front benches.

The matter had been discussed at a party meeting on the afternoon the debate was resumed, but the question was left in order to see what the Opposition would do. Three members on this side of the House spoke on that afternoon and the Opposition made its position quite clear. A further meeting of the coalition parties was held in the evening and it was decided that the suggestion made by the Leader of the Opposition to adjourn the debate so that the measure could be given lengthy consideration was, indeed, a sound one. I am sure the Government must have breathed a sigh of relief at being given this extension of time.

At that stage the Premier spoke. He did not speak at very great length, but merely indicated that he was pleased to have the matter held over for a special session. As the member for Kalgoorlie has already mentioned, the Premier said—to use his own words—"If the Government could at least control the traffic, a lot of problems would disappear."

Subsequently, I understand, a meeting was held—this was recently—in the Perth Town Hall where representatives of the various shires put their views to the Government and certain decisions were arrived at. The suggestions seemed to be something of a compromise and most of us expected that the position would right itself from that point.

However, it appears the shires concerned were not wholly satisfied with the results of that meeting; in fact, many of them were completely dissatisfied. I understand that some of the shires have not yet been advised officially of the decisions taken at the meeting or of their implications. Indeed, they are as much in the dark as are members on this side of the House, at least.

Members of the Opposition were hoping that the position would have been made clear by now and that the Government would have had the courtesy to explain the amendments to the House. The Minister for Works was given the opportunity to make a statement, but I felt rather sorry for him because he was confined in what he could say. However, he is not the only member of the Government or of the Cabinet. Surely to goodness there is someone amongst the Liberal and Country Party Ministers who understands the position, who is concerned about it, and who could explain the amendments to me, at least, because I do not understand them.

My interest centres round the local shires and I would say that the metropolitan shires seem to be quite happy with what is proposed. Indeed, it appears they could be embarrassed in some directions because of the specific provisions surrounding the granting of money. I do not know whether this is a fact or whether it is only the idea of some of the persons concerned, but it has been suggested that this could be the case.

Can someone on the Government side of the House explain the new provisions to me? I have to confess I took the Minister's speech home last night for the purpose of reading it, but it sent me to sleep. This is not because it was boring, but because it was a little difficult to understand at 1 a.m. when I got round to it. I am certainly no better informed today, but I came to the Parliament in the fond hope that someone would explain the lengthy amendments which are proposed.

The Bill itself is rather long as it contains 12 pages, and the amendments listed on the notice paper are considerable. Surely members on the other side of the House must agree that they need some attention. On top of that, alterations to the schedule have been given to us.

Members of the Opposition imagined that by now somebody would have stated whether the coalition parties were quite happy with the Bill as it exists, or whether they intended to press for some further amendments. The Opposition has explained its attitude this morning through three speakers; namely, the member for Colliie, the member for Kar-rinyup, and the member for Kalgoorlie.

The Government knows the stand being taken by the Opposition. If the coalition parties consider the Bill is satisfactory and if it is to be passed because the Government has the numbers, would somebody please tell us so that we may know what we are supposed to do?

The Opposition is dissatisfied with the Bill and I imagine that the Country Party is still dissatisfied, because its State executive was reported in *The West Australian* of the 11th June as saying that Country Party pressure was to go on the Government. Has the pressure been put on the Government? Is it now being withdrawn? Or does the Country Party feel that a suitable agreement has been reached and there is no need for further pressure?

As I have said, many aspects of the Bill have confused me and I hoped that at least one speaker on the Government side would have been sufficiently courteous to explain to Parliament just what the amendments mean. I understand a series of meetings of the coalition parties have been held and members of those parties have an advantage over members on this side of the House inasmuch as the position has, no doubt, been explained to them at some length. I consider it is a discourtesy on the part of the Government not to explain to the Parliament at large, and indeed to the State, just what is proposed.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: May I interrupt you? When replying to the debate I will, of course, go over all the amendments again, and you will then have the opportunity to determine which way you want to vote.

Mr. Tonkin: Doesn't the Minister realise that when he replies he cannot introduce new matter?

Mr. DAVIES: I would imagine there are some anomalies there, but this seems to emphasise the point that the Minister for Works is the only person who understands this Bill. I have to compliment him if he does, because I have spoken to so many people who do not understand it.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: If you had studied the Bill you would understand it all right. You are much more intellectual than you give yourself credit for.

Mr. DAVIES: There are some things I would like to know. Has any approach been made to the Commonwealth Government for some variation in the conditions which apply because of this State's peculiar position? This is one of the things which concern me a little. Have we been told that this is the amount and these are the conditions? I believe some officers went to Canberra. Are the amendments which have now come forward the result of their deliberations; or are we to be left as much in the dark as we have been in the past?

I appeal only for somebody on the Government side to get up to explain the amendments to us, and to tell us what the

Government members think of the changes. If agreement has been reached between the coalition parties, then I think we are wasting our time, and I must oppose the Bill in its present form.

Sitting suspended from 12.53 to 2.15 p.m.

MR. BRADY (Swan) [2.15 p.m.]: This Bill has caused great concern amongst the various shire councils throughout the State, including those in my own electorate, as will be evidenced from some telegrams and letters I will quote to the House very shortly. The concern has been brought about as the result of the problems which confront the shire councils, which problems have been created by this legislation, even in its amended form.

There are many aspects of the Bill which have not been referred to in debate until today, and I now wish to refer to them, because I feel members have overlooked the fact that the problems the Government is experiencing stem from a conference the Premier attended last year, following which it was announced that the grants of money to be made available to this State for roads were to be reduced substantially compared with the grants received previously from Commonwealth sources.

Since the holding of that conference it would seem that the State's financial position has worsened, and the change in attitude towards main roads funds and traffic funds seems to flow from the loss of revenue from the Commonwealth Government. Members know that Western Australia is no longer a claimant State as a consequence of our supposedly affluent financial position, and I believe the State has made a rod for its own back in view of the way the Commonwealth is now treating the State in regard to finance generally.

No doubt the Premiers of the Eastern States are rubbing their hands together with glee because of the extra money they will now receive from the Commonwealth as a result of Western Australia having its main roads funds drastically reduced. It is unfortunate, however, that the people who are now obliged to face up to the problems arising from the State's financial difficulties are those who should not be called upon to face up to this responsibility to the same degree as others in this State.

For many years this State has had three arms of government; namely, the Commonwealth Government, the State Government, and local government. For its democratic guidance to administration, local government must depend, almost entirely, on local volunteer labour and, in the main, it has performed excellent work. For many years the funds required for the construction and maintenance of roads were made available by the Public Works Department. Subsequently, the Main Roads Department

was created and certain moneys were made available to that department from Commonwealth sources, from license fees, and from other avenues. The situation has progressively developed until the Main Roads Department has become quite a large concern.

It is also a fact that, side by side with the Main Roads Department, the local governing bodies have been built up quite substantially. However, the irony of the situation that has now been created is that under the provisions of the Bill we are now debating, the rights of local government are virtually being removed and put into the hands of a subsidiary which, in the first instance, was an offshoot of the Public Works Department. That subsidiary is the Main Roads Department; and it would seem that if this trend is to continue, the policy of decentralisation advocated by the Country Party—by the Government, in fact—is a complete myth, because nothing can be more centralised than the activities which will arise in connection with the finance to be received throughout the State and from the Commonwealth source in the main as a result of the amendments before the House.

As I see the position, and as I have said before, the Premier and the Government have brought their financial difficulties on their own heads by their allegedly affluent financial position and as a result of their breaking away from the Grants Commission.

It is rather ironical that, in spite of all this activity, this State had to go back to the Commonwealth in order to obtain extra money for housing projects, and so on. In the meantime we have this Bill before us, and, to say the least, it is quite a substantial change from the legislation which the Minister presented to the House some time ago.

I daresay the Minister could probably quite rightly claim that this legislation is an improvement on the original Bill and, possibly, we could not disprove this claim. The point is, however, that the legislation is still not necessary, particularly as the local shires and the country shires see the position.

These shire councils feel that their main activities and responsibilities are being taken from them, particularly when they are told in the terms of the Bill—or it is certainly implied—that they must now spend on major roads half the money received from traffic fees and from the central Government. It is also necessary for the shire councils to confer and keep in touch with the Main Roads Department in regard to their activities in this respect.

There is no doubt that this will cause administrative difficulties as the matter relates to local government bodies, because quite a lot of necessary administrative work must be done to ensure that the demands of the Main Roads Department

are met. In turn a great deal of additional administrative activity must be created in the Main Roads Department to check to see that the shire councils are doing what they should in the spending of this money.

A little later I propose to have something to say on a more parochial note in regard to the spending, by the Main Roads Department, of this money on one or two projects in my own electorate. The fact remains that the more we look at these amendments the more we realise how this important third arm of Government is to have its rights reduced. We will find that the activities of local government will be mainly centralised in the Main Roads Department.

Accordingly, it can be understood why the shire councils are not very happy about the overall position. While the Minister may point out that, in addition to receiving the base money, the shire councils will now receive 2 per cent. in unmatched money and 5 per cent. in matching money, making a total each year of a flat rate of 7 per cent., this in fact does not equal the percentage by which traffic fees are being increased each year. It seems, therefore, that more money will be paid into the central main roads fund than has been the case in the past.

Had the legislation been passed in the form in which the Minister first introduced it to the House, members would see how much more money would be received. We find, however, that in the meantime the figure has been changed from 5 per cent. to 7 per cent.

The whole thing boils down to the fact that the Government finds itself in a cleft stick financially as a result of its activities and the ramifications in the Main Roads Department and, in order to help hold the reins for that department until something better eventuates, the present Bill has been brought before the House, even though the country shire councils and the metropolitan shire councils will suffer as a result of its introduction.

It is bad enough for the shire councils to have to suffer financially under the terms of the Bill, but, as I have said before, salt is rubbed into the wound of the financial position for both the ratepayers and the shire councils, particularly when we consider that a tax is already imposed in the metropolitan area under the Metropolitan Region Improvement Scheme.

In a report which was placed before the Bassendean Shire Council, the shire clerk of that council pointed out that in some cases the tax to the residents is higher than the normal rates paid to the council. This is an extraordinary position; it is a dastardly position, if I might be permitted to use that expression, for the metropolitan ratepayers to have to pay this tax, whether they be in Armadale, Byford, Welshpool, or in my own electorate

which consists of Bassendean, Swan-Guildford, Midland, and part of Mundaring. These people are already paying an extra tax, and they will be cheated—and I use the word advisedly—out of certain moneys that were normally available to them under the old system for use in connection with the base grants.

As I understand the position, under the old system a base grant was made available, but on top of that a distribution of about 75 per cent. of the moneys received from licenses was made to the shires and the town councils. As the amount increased each year, the shires and town councils could anticipate extra revenue to be used for road works and local government undertakings generally. However, under the new system all that will go overboard.

As I pointed out before, it is estimated the revenue from this source is increasing at the rate of 10 per cent. per annum. Even if the matching money to the extent of 5 per cent., as well as 2 per cent. for non-matching money, can be made available, these shires will lose financially, when we consider the revenue they received under the old system.

In my opinion the local authorities should retain all the vehicle license fees they receive, because in the main they will have to bear the costs of local government undertakings and road-building, as well as of the provision of roads which in the past the Main Roads Department financed from its funds, but which in future will have to be financed by the local authorities from the moneys they receive.

The shires are very upset. I have seen more activity and concern expressed by the shires recently than I have for many years. I have been in Parliament for 20 years, and in that time I have not known the shires to be more active than they are at present, because of the measure that is before the House. As a member of Parliament, until the last month or six weeks my main worry was to obtain housing for the unfortunate constituents who did not have houses, but at the moment the problem of the local authorities supersedes housing and the other matters of my electorate.

Last evening I received a telegram from one of the shires in my electorate. I shall read it out in full to satisfy some members who have been interjecting all morning in this debate as to the date or time when something was said, as though those utterances had been made a month ago or since the amendments were proposed by the Minister. A telegram was sent to me at 4.45 p.m. yesterday by a shire council in my area, and I am therefore reading it out to the House within 24 hours of its despatch. The telegram reads as follows:—

Mr. J. Brady Parliament House Perth Council vigorously protests against the present form of Main

Roads and Traffic Amendment Acts and pitiful concessions currently before Parliament Stop This legislation will require Swan Guildford rates increase 100% in 1969-70 if shires present road construction programme to be maintained Stop Council intends to issue an explanatory note with increased rates indicating increase entirely due to legislative amendments Shire Clerk.

One can understand the feelings of this shire council when it caused this telegram to be sent to me and to a number of other members of Parliament. Just imagine the Swan-Guildford Shire—one of the most spread out shires in the metropolitan area—having to increase its rates by 100 per cent.!

I refer to a report which appeared in *The Swan Express* of the 5th June, but I shall not read it in full because it would take up too much time. The report states—

At the last meeting of the Swan-Guildford Shire Council, Cr. Georgeff really "went to town" on his interpretation of the above matter which will come before Parliament in June, but which has since been the subject of some promised modification.

He was referring to the traffic fees and road funds allocations. The report continued—

One of the worst features is that Councils have to spend 50 per cent. of the money received from this source on the construction of six and seven roads (generally speaking, these are "blue" roads in the metropolitan area).

I understand from the remarks of the Minister this morning that the correct definition of these roads is as laid down in the Commonwealth legislation.

Councillor Georgeff was concerned that this money has to be spent on what might be called major trunk roads, when in the past this was the responsibility of the Main Roads Department. It is contended that if the shire councils are to keep up their rate of road construction they will have to increase their rates by 100 per cent. I am quite certain that the Swan-Guildford Shire and its ratepayers are not prepared to agree to that.

Further on in the newspaper report to which I have just made reference the following appears:—

Essentially it will mean that work on local roads will have to be very seriously curtailed or that rates will have to be increased by a large percentage, or that there will have to be a compromise between these two extremes.

We can see from this how the Swan-Guildford Shire feels about the proposals in the legislation, and it has let me know

its feelings in no uncertain terms. I understand it has also sent to other members of Parliament who represent that district the telegram which I have read out.

In *The Swan Express* of the 29th May there is a full page report of the discussions which took place at a meeting of the Bassendean Shire Council to deal with this matter. Here again I am tempted to read the whole report in case it is said later that I did not read it all, but I know that you, Mr. Speaker, do not encourage the reading of newspaper reports at length.

Mr. Craig: We do not mind.

Mr. BRADY: The Minister for Traffic says he does not mind. I hope that as the member representing part of the Swan-Guildford Shire district he will tell us how he sees the position; because I imagine his ears are burning as a consequence of the remarks which have been made by this shire council.

Mr. Craig: I will give my views to the shire. Do not worry about that.

Mr. BRADY: I would prefer the Minister to give his views to the House rather than to the shire, because we would like to know the views of Government members on this piece of legislation. The report in *The Swan Express* of the 29th May mentioned the interpretation of the legislation by the shire clerk (Mr. C. McCreed). It states—

It is obvious that Mr. McCreed has made an exhaustive study of the Measure referred to, a Measure which is already causing concern in Local Government Authorities.

Further on the report states—

Under the new arrangement, therefore, if the Council wishes to continue the policy of progressive improvements to local roads at a similar rate to previous years, it will be necessary to increase the rates by \$36,000 representing an increase of 31.3 per cent.

This is one of the shires in the metropolitan area which received the least amount of money from the Government under the base grant system, plus increases. This shire has to stand up to the percentage cut which it will receive, along with the more wealthy and financial shires, both in the metropolitan area and outside the metropolitan area. The report goes on to say—

Also, to spend the additional \$36,000 on major roads it will be necessary to purchase more equipment next year, or to work the existing plant longer hours on overtime or shift work conditions. Works on the major roads could be let on a contract basis, but because of the comparatively small amount involved, it is unlikely that competitive tenders would be received from the large earth moving firms, so that costs may be comparatively high, resulting in a wastage of funds.

So on the one hand the shire council is faced with having to spend 50 per cent. of the money it receives on major trunk roads, formerly the responsibility of the Main Roads Department. If the shire desires to keep up the equivalent amount of construction that is going on in this area, it will have to overwork its plant and overwork its staff, or let the work out on contract at uneconomic rates and conditions. Here again it is a case of tweedledum and tweedledee. As far as the shire is concerned, it is in the net whichever way it goes in connection with this system of finance. Another part of the report states—

The Council is not compelled to increase rates to make more road funds available. It could be decided simply to reduce expenditure on local roads by \$36,000 per annum.

This, of course, would be disastrous and contrary to the present attitude of the Council to step up expenditure on roads, footpaths and drainage. It is obvious, therefore, that even the present rate of improvements to local roads cannot be maintained unless rates are increased by a minimum of 31.3 per cent.

I know the area of the Bassendean Shire Council reasonably well and there is no question about it that in recent times there has been quite a lot of activity in that area. This is so for the following reason: quite a deal of subdivisional activities are taking place—no doubt under the legitimate town planning schemes that are being arranged and encouraged by the Government—and as a consequence many people are going into the eastern suburbs to obtain cheaper land because they cannot afford to buy it in the western suburbs.

This, in turn, has made it necessary to carry out land subdivisions in areas not previously opened up, and the onus is on the shires, in conjunction with the subdividers in many cases, to provide extra roads, footpaths, and so on. If this work is to continue, the rates will have to be increased by 31 per cent.

Another reference in this report by the shire clerk is as follows:—

A Metropolitan Improvement Tax is already levied on property owners by the Government for improvements planned in the Region Scheme.

I made reference to that when I commenced speaking, and did so rather heatedly because I referred to this aspect last year when other Bills were going through the House. These people are going to pay threefold in regard to activities under local government. I feel the Government has taken the shires for a ride and, as I said before, in my opinion it all stems

from the bad deal which the Premier made at the conference held in Canberra just before Christmas.

In fact, it would not surprise me to learn that the rumours which were confronting us a few months ago, namely that the Minister for Industrial Development and the North-West was likely to retire from the Government, might have been in connection with this particular matter; because it must have been pretty heart-breaking for that Minister to learn what had happened at the meeting attended by the Premier in Canberra when finances which are needed so badly were lost to the State.

This has happened at a time when the Minister for Industrial Development is working overtime and doing his utmost to build up the State both industrially and commercially. So maybe this was part of the confrontation that was taking place at the time. The Minister may have felt that there was some need—for want of a better term—for a better Government and a better stand on the financial side to be taken by the person representing the people of this State at a Federal conference.

I quote further from this report—

In future, it will be necessary for the Council to submit proposals for approval of the Hon. Minister in regard to half the expenditure of road grants.

At best, therefore, we can hope for double the administration work and only a small delay in obtaining decisions.

But from previous experience it could be reasonable to assume that voluminous files will be created with proposals, counter proposals, questions and answers, with much more administrative work created both at local level and central government level.

So the Bassendean Shire Council envisages a great deal more administrative work on its own part and on the part of the Main Roads Department in endeavouring to comply with the provisions of the Bill.

As I said earlier, it would appear a great deal of responsibility is being taken away from local government and given to the Main Roads Department. To quote further from the newspaper—

Apart from the important financial considerations, the trend to centralise administration procedure is a matter worthy of consideration.

Obviously, central government should exercise some interest and control over local government units and it is a difficult problem to assess accurately what degree of control should be exercised.

In the early days of the Colony and the State, the Governor and Minister for Works exercised complete control of the local road boards, municipalities or town trusts. Specific allocations for road works were made through the Public Works Department. Later the local councils or boards were given greater autonomy and until recently, collected traffic fees and had the major share of property taxes.

The Main Roads Department was set up as an offshoot of the Public Works Department to look after major roads and they have acted as a useful guide and technical adviser of State and Local Government activity in roadworks.

This system has worked well over the years and any proposed changes should be examined carefully.

Here is the important part—

The amendments to legislation proposed will revert to some degree to the old Colonial days with the Minister for Works having the final say on behalf of the expenditure of roadworks carried out by local councils, instead of the Councils acting as autonomous bodies influenced by the—

The SPEAKER: Order! Are these the remarks of the town clerk or the views of the newspaper?

Mr. BRADY: I am quoting the exact remarks of the town clerk reporting to the council.

The SPEAKER: You give an assurance they are not the views of the newspaper?

Mr. Craig: Duly audited and found correct.

Mr. BRADY: The Minister has said, "duly audited and found correct," but I feel he should have second thoughts in regard to this matter, because the Swan-Guildford Shire Council has made it clear that it is not happy about the legislation and it has sent telegrams to all members. Probably the Minister himself has received a telegram.

I can understand the shire feeling this way, because this is the actual position: years ago councils collected all the license fees from carts and road vehicles, none of which went to the Main Roads Department. The councils did all the work and it was a local decision by local councillors as to how road money was to be spent.

However, now we have the motor vehicle, and the Main Roads Department and the Central Road Trust Fund have been set up, and the Government is using the motor vehicle as a means of obtaining taxes, in addition to taxing the people under the Metropolitan Region Scheme. So, as I said before, the taxpayers in the

various shires I represent are getting it in the neck from all directions. Consequently, I felt I had a duty to indicate, first of all, how the shires felt in regard to this matter and, secondly, the trend in regard to local government generally.

I did mention parochial matters—that I, as the member for Swan, am not happy about the way the Main Roads Department is spending the money it is allocated. Over the last six months I have referred to some activities in my electorate. The town planning scheme envisaged a main or major road through Swan Street, Guildford, and, to my way of thinking, it was the responsibility of the Main Roads Department to carry out this work and build a bridge over the Swan River. However, for some reason or other this work has been continually shelved, although it is part of the town planning scheme as presented to members of this House. In recent months the Railways Department, in conjunction with two other departments, has closed an important level crossing at Guildford and directed all the traffic along a very narrow road, which in my opinion is one of the most hazardous roads in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Under what clause is this?

Mr. BRADY: It concerns the activities of the Main Roads Department, which department will, under the centralising of all the vehicular funds into a fund in Perth—and only 7 per cent. of this will be channelled back to the local authorities—receive a great deal more money than it is at present entitled to receive.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: If you think—

Mr. BRADY: In my opinion—I wish the Minister would wait until I am finished—the Main Roads Department should build the bridge over the Swan River at Swan Street, and build up the trunk roads instead of, as at the moment, making dogs-hind-leg major trunk roads in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: If you—

Mr. BRADY: If the Minister does not understand what I mean when I refer to dog's-hind-leg roads, I will take him on a half-mile road trip through Guildford. We leave the Guildford Grammar School, come down to the police station at Guildford and turn left. We then go over a railway level crossing and turn right. We go down a bit further to a garage opposite the Guildford Hotel and then turn left. All this traffic should be going straight to Perth along Swan Street which leads from the Guildford Grammar School to Bassen-dean, over a bridge across the Swan. If the Main Roads Department was alive and with it, it would be spending money on these projects instead of wasting it on a lot of its present projects.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: If you think—

Mr. BRADY: So, as I said, apart altogether from what the shires feel, I believe the department is not with it, and I would be prepared to prove that statement by referring to other matters if the Speaker would permit me to do so. However, I know he would not. Nevertheless, I have had some very bad experiences in connection with overways and bridges upon which the Main Roads Department has frowned, but which it is now erecting. I have advocated these for 10 years.

I could proceed at length, but I know other speakers desire to participate in the debate. I think I have made the point that the shires in my electorate are not happy. To rub salt into the wound, I found on reading this morning's paper, that two of the shires in my electorate are to be amalgamated. This is not going to help them to digest this particular legislation. It looks to me as though one of those shires will lose its identity altogether.

On behalf of the shires I represent, I register a strong protest. I believe the shires have been double-crossed and cheated under this new formula. As I understand it, the shires in the other States do not have to put up with the financial difficulties to the same extent as the shires in Western Australia have to. Therefore I voice my protest and hope that at the appropriate stage of the proceedings, a suitable amendment will be moved to indicate to the shires that we are sympathetic to them in connection with their activities, and that we are mindful of the work they are doing.

My last remarks are these: When the Minister this morning explained why he wanted to make a statement, he gave the impression that because of the protests by Government and Opposition members he had had a look at the matter and was submitting amendments. The fact remains that no member on the Government side of the House took the opportunity when it was available earlier to protest against this matter. Therefore I do not know what the Minister meant when he referred to members of the Government, unless he decided that the wires he had received from various shires meant that the country shires were going to protest on behalf of their particular areas.

The speakers in the debate last time were the Minister who introduced the Bill, and the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Gascoyne, and the member for Warren, who opposed it. The Premier, Mr. Brand—now Sir David Brand—then spoke and asked the member for Wellington to move for the adjournment. No-one on that side of the House—from either the Liberal Party or the Country Party—made any attempt to oppose this measure. If the Bill had gone through in its original form, it

would have been the greatest sellout for local government in the history of Western Australia. Therefore, I am very pleased, and the shires should be pleased, that the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Warren, and the member for Gascoyne were able to prove to the Premier and the Government that that was the position and that the debate was adjourned.

I hope that even now the Bill will be drastically amended so that the shires will receive the revenue which it was originally intended they should receive.

MR. JAMIESON (Belmont) [2.57 p.m.]: In the first instance I would like to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the Liberal Party members present have now completely abrogated the undertaking of the Premier, and, of course, the gliders have gone along with them. I say that advisedly, having read the Premier's own words, which are very interesting indeed. On pages 3486 and 3487 of *Hansard* is to be seen what he had to say which was, in part—

I think it must be clearly understood that whilst we have this system there will always be problems when new agreements have been arranged between the Commonwealth and the State. So when I sit down, I propose that the debate be adjourned and we return some time in June for the express purpose of discussing this legislation. I would like it to be clearly understood that the time which is being provided is to enable local authorities to properly understand the aims and the objectives of this legislation and the reason why this has to be done. I give no undertaking that we will accept any sweeping amendments. It will be up to the Opposition to justify any amendments it puts forward.

In contradistinction to the Premier's statement, a considerable number of amendments are to be moved by the Minister. As a matter of fact, if they are all agreed to, we will not be able to recognise the original Bill. So much for the Premier's assurance; and what has been done behind his back since is anyone's guess.

Not having heard from even one member of the Country Party during the present debate, we can only assume that the rumblings heard up and down the corridors had some frightening effect on the remaining members of the Liberal Party and caused them to coalesce with some particular ideas, not that there is anything particularly wrong with that. We know that for a long time the Country Party and Liberal Party have been at variance on many aspects of traffic control, and this has been a sore point.

Further reference to the Premier's speech on that particular occasion will indicate he knew there were difficulties in this regard. He pointed out that only in this State were these difficulties experienced because of the divided control of traffic, and it was therefore not likely that the other States would be affected.

As I see it, the worst feature of the Commonwealth having insisted upon its terms in another agreement is the increasing control—or centralism, which the member for Swan dealt with earlier—by the Commonwealth Government, which extends down the line to the State Government. Class 1 and class 2 roads do not enter into this debate because primarily they are the responsibility of the Main Roads Department. Even so, some shires may have to do certain work, or be associated with activities on those roads, and any overall planning would be—or could be—fitted in with these classifications of roads.

It is very interesting to note the line of action taken over the years in regard to Federal Aid Roads Funds since the scheme was introduced in 1931. At that time the only condition imposed was that the financial assistance provided by the Commonwealth was to be used for the purpose of construction, reconstruction, maintenance, or repair of roads. It was left to the Commonwealth Minister to employ such means as he saw fit to ensure that those conditions were fulfilled.

A further agreement introduced in 1936 did not alter the original agreement very much, and some minor conditions were imposed in 1937. In 1947 some further specific conditions were imposed and roads were defined as rural roads and other kinds of roads for which funds were specifically allocated. In 1948 there were further amendments in that regard.

In 1950 provision was made for at least 35 per cent. of the total amount paid to the State to be used for rural roads, including developmental roads and feeder roads in sparsely populated areas; and several other conditions were imposed.

There were some specific changes again in 1954, and in 1956 an agreement was drawn up for a period of five years setting out certain features. Matching money terms were introduced and have developed to the present stage. I think that demonstrates clearly that over the years the Commonwealth has more and more taken unto itself the right to determine on what the money—particularly that derived from petrol taxes and so on—should be used.

Except with regard to those roads classified 1 and 2, which are regarded as inter-regional roads, or through roads, surely the best people to determine how the money should be spent are the local authorities. If not, we may as well close down the local

authorities and let the Main Roads Department handle all road work. I am sure there would not be much agreement with that.

I am somewhat surprised that the members of the Country Party were so upset by the original proposition, because the condition that at least 50 per cent. of the allocation was to be used on certain features in their districts was an open sesame as far as the country shires were concerned. The condition covered almost anything because classes 3, 4, and 5 could cover just about any road in a rural district.

Let us have a look at class 3 roads, which are defined as connecting and distributing roads—those roads in rural areas not being class 1 or 2 whose main function is to form an avenue of communication for movement between important centres and the class 1 and 2 roads and/or key towns, and between important centres.

Of course, "important centres" is pretty hard to define in a district. I suppose an important centre could be the local hotel and another could be the local sports-ground. A road connecting those two places would be fairly important, and such a definition covers a multitude of sins.

Class 4 refers to land access roads, which are those roads in rural areas whose main function is to provide for movements between communities, or individual properties, and roads of higher classification. If that definition does not cover just about everything outside a town we can probably go to classes 5 and 6.

Class 5 refers to special purpose roads—roads in rural areas whose main purpose is to provide almost exclusively for one activity or function; for example, a tourist road, a timber road, etc., or a road the main purpose of which is to allow for, or to stimulate, productive development of an area.

It will be seen that if classes 3, 4, and 5, were combined with classes 1 and 2, shire councils outside the metropolitan area would not have very much to be concerned about. However, let us look at the situation which exists in 50 per cent. of the metropolitan area. Not much has been said, but many shires are worried. I wonder why the Mosman Park Town Council, represented by the Minister for Works, should not be worried about this matter? I refer to class 6 roads. The Mosman Park Town Council would probably have only one such road, and that particular road was just recently constructed. Under the provisions of the agreement, 50 per cent. of the amount allocated could be spent on the golden paving of that particular road, if the council wanted to take it up.

Of course, the sensible thing would be not to have a bar of it; but this provision is supposed to encourage local authorities to provide bigger and better roads, and

more of them, out of their own funds. I suggest that the Mosman Park Council would not be interested in that section of finance which is being made available.

Referring to other shires, some have suggested that they will be forced to raise more loan money for road development work. That might be all very well for those shires which are not taking up their full loan commitments at the present time, but developing shires, such as Bayswater, Canning, and Belmont, are all on their maximum rating now. To meet the requirements of this present legislation someone will have to go without. Other than that, the shires will have to approach the Minister for Local Government and ask him to allow them to increase their loan activities.

In that case, of course, the rates paid by the local people will have to be increased. Surely it is not a fair and reasonable proposition that the local authorities should be driven into the position where they have to increase rates. The member for Swan indicated that a number of members in this Chamber, and members of another place, have received telegrams from one shire which, from my recollection of the telegrams, has indicated that its rate notices will clearly show that the increases are due entirely to the action of the Government in forcing the shire to increase the rate to meet the provisions of this new legislation. I do not think it is the right and proper function, in the disbursement of road funds, to interfere with the activities of local authorities.

We can go further and examine the second situation covered by this legislation. Out of the 50 per cent. allocated to metropolitan local authorities, half has to be applied to class 6 arterial roads. Class 6 roads are those in urban areas whose main function is to act as the principal arteries for massive through-traffic movement, or they are extensions into urban areas of class 1 or class 2 roads.

The definition of class 7, the subarterial roads, is as follows:—

Those roads in urban areas whose main function is to supplement the Class 6 roads in providing for "through" traffic movements or which distribute traffic between the Class 6 roads and local street systems.

To classify any roads as being either of those two classes requires a complicated set of circumstances to be put into operation. Firstly the Minister, doubtless with the concurrence of the Main Roads Department, has to approve. Secondly, approval has to be obtained from the Commonwealth for roads that are suitable to be classified in class 6 or class 7.

To my mind, these requirements indicate a terrific amount of additional office work in various departments, which appears to be quite unnecessary. The situation is that,

firstly, the local authority has to make out its case sufficiently well in order to put it before the Main Roads Department. The Main Roads Department then refers to the Minister who, in turn, refers to the Federal authority. The processes are continued until final approval or rejection, and in the case of the latter the processes start all over again.

One of the worst features of the allocation for these two categories is that the money is entirely limited to the construction or reconstruction of roads. Repair of the roads, which might need to be carried out, is out of the question as that must be undertaken from other finance. The Commonwealth is not very much concerned where that other finance comes from.

Another feature is that the plant and equipment that might need to be purchased has to be acquired out of the 50 per cent. allocated to the general road works of the particular local authority in the metropolitan area. I discussed this matter with local government personnel and administrators. I said, "To my mind this would cause a considerable juggling of the books." The answer was, "What makes you think that it does not occur already?" This was a rather strange admission, but it is obviously a matter of necessity for local authorities to practise activities which are not altogether honest as far as the requirements of the law are concerned.

I can see what is going to happen, because many accounted expenses will be shown against the roads in categories 6 and 7. Unless the Main Roads Department sets up a massive audit department, similar to the Government Audit Department, to check all items which are accounted for in these two categories, then of course the local government authorities will continue the practice. Personally, I do not blame them. Frankly I think it is quite wrong that they should not be able to make the purchase of plant a general charge. If a local authority has a number of roads in categories 6 and 7, then plant costs should be proportionately applicable to them. It should not be restricted to the interest on loans raised in connection with buying the plant, as that is ridiculous.

The plant will be used and members can see what the local authorities will do: namely, they will charge plant hire against the cost of the development of the road itself to an extent which is far in excess of the actual amount. To that extent, local authorities are being encouraged through the proposed legislation to be completely dishonest. I cannot go along with any proposition that has this kind of intention. Parliament should be very clear on the legislation which it passes and it should not encourage people to indulge in underhand practices. Certainly this legislation would have that effect.

The Minister says he has convinced—I think that is the word he used—the local authorities that the legislation is all right.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I did not say, "convinced."

Mr. JAMIESON: The Minister indicated that the local authorities were reasonably satisfied.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: That is right.

Mr. JAMIESON: Then perhaps the word "convinced" is not entirely out of line. What the Minister has done is to confuse the local authorities completely in the same way as he has confused members of this House and himself. When the Minister rose to explain the situation this morning, I was somewhat mindful of the fact that I have a very limited knowledge of this situation. However, after he had spoken I was infused with confidence; because, judging from what I had heard, I was convinced that the Minister knew very little more than I about the situation, even though my knowledge is slight.

I have checked with various members of local government bodies and I find that they are becoming completely confused. The reason is that they are being told one thing by the Main Roads Department, but when they check with the Local Government Department they are told something else. They are given two accounts of what they can and cannot do. Varying opinions are given even with respect to having classifications of roads changed and that sort of thing.

This situation does not encourage local governing bodies to work in the manner in which they should be encouraged to work. All that is being done is to compound the confusion brought about by the action of the Government in accepting such a proposition.

In many ways I am a centralist, and particularly on a matter which is in the platform of the Australian Labor Party and which I will deal with shortly. However, on the question of constructing roads and that sort of thing, I subscribe to the idea that if there are local government bodies established for that purpose, then surely they are the bodies which should be responsible to the local ratepayers. After all, the local ratepayers are the ones who will have to meet the loan commitments for the repayment of any loan funds raised in respect of roads, and consequently they should have the say on what roads should and should not be developed.

I consider the Commonwealth should be told this. If one State alone stood out on this, imagine the position with which the Commonwealth would be faced. It would have to grant that State an amount in lieu of what it had proposed to grant; otherwise the whole system would break

down completely. The condition in respect of traffic control in Western Australia is peculiar to this State. If the Government of the day finds the system suitable, and is not prepared to amend it, then it should stand up to the Federal Government on this issue and say, "This is our business. You give us the amount of finance and we will proceed."

After all, this is done in other fields. The finance which the Commonwealth granted Queensland in respect of certain medical benefits is used in quite a different way from that which applies in the other States. There is no reason it should not be different if the Government wants it that way. Personally, I am not too sure. I am inclined to agree with the Premier when he said that we would not have all this trouble if traffic control were completely in the hands of one authority.

To a certain extent I say that the legislation is obviously a good move; because, whether the Country Party section of the coalition likes it or not, this is the beginning of the end of traffic control by the country shires. Firstly, the country shires will not be able to afford to control it and consequently they will be pleased to get rid of it after a little experience of these proposals. Secondly, the ratepayers will not be very enthusiastic about rates being put up for the purpose of paying for traffic inspectors and other inspection requirements which have been made mandatory by amendments to Acts which have been recently passed in this Chamber.

Before very long we will see a very willing body come forward to the Government and suggest that it takes over complete control of traffic. This would end the problem that has existed and doubtless it would solve the differences of opinion that exist in the coalition. However, such a suggestion is incompatible with the present policy of the Country Party, at least.

As there seems to be some confusion on what the Australian Labor Party has in mind in this regard, to put the record right I would like to read from the *Australian Labor Party Constitution, Rules, Standing Orders and Platform*, current edition, which at page 37, under the heading, "Traffic Safety," clause 4, has this to say—

The Police Department shall be the sole authority to control traffic throughout the State, but so as not to disadvantage financially local government authorities.

I think the Country Party members had better adopt that as part of their platform, otherwise they will find they are on the outer because the Liberal Party will finish up giving them something else altogether—something less than that.

Mr. Bickerton: They have been giving them something else.

Mr. JAMIESON: Yes, that party has been giving them something else for a long time, but we do not usually mention such things in this House. If the Premier's words on this matter are to be taken as a guide, I would say that in the future the Country Party can expect far less assistance from the Liberal Party. The Premier is aiming to have his objective achieved. I think it will be achieved, and I think we on this side of the House can go along with the Liberal Party with part of this undertaking and with the Country Party on the other part of the undertaking. So it could easily be that the Country Party, rather than coalescing with the Liberal Party representatives in this House, could be coalescing with the Labor Party with regard to certain features of their objection to this legislation. But silence has reigned supreme and, no doubt, the Press will come out again and say that the Opposition was not very apt in this debate.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: That would be right.

Mr. JAMIESON: The Press will probably say the Opposition was very this or very that; but it is difficult when one is in a fight to have to do all the fighting while the other fellow lies down on the canvas. As a matter of fact, it does not draw many cheers from the crowd. However, on the side of the champions, the supporters of the Government will no doubt say what a mighty job the Government did in forcing this legislation through against such terrific opposition from the Labor Party, plus the Country Party sitting in one corner saying not a word.

Mr. Davies: Sleeping in one corner.

Mr. JAMIESON: I would credit them with being awake but having to put up with the conditions imposed by the Liberal Party. One realises that in this regard Country Party members are the complete captives of the Liberal Party, and the sooner they realise that the better it will be for all concerned. In a democracy "captive" means having to do what the majority determines. Of course, in inter-party discussions between the Liberal Party and the Country Party decisions must be reached, and they must be reached by a majority, and that majority would be the Liberal Party.

So the Country Party will do whatever the Liberal Party determines, and until its members show some fight—as is sometimes the case with their Federal counterparts—they will get nowhere. Indeed, they will be in exactly the position which was referred to by one of their former members when he said that it was very dangerous to stand between a dog and a lamp post. I reiterate those remarks because I think the Country Party could be in this position when it is in coalition.

I strongly object that there should be any interference, and that the Government was not strong enough to stand up to the situation and say, "They are our local authorities; we want to run them as we wish, and the Federal people are not going to direct them as they want to do." If the Government had made a stand, there could be some compromise; but it did not do that, and now we are faced with this legislation which goes a fair way towards achieving the constitutional ideals of the Australian Labor Party. To that extent I think the measure is deserving of some support.

However, I do not think it is good legislation. It is not good when the Premier comes out and says there will be no major amendments to the Bill, and that the Government is going to convince the people that this is the right action; and then we are faced with a special session on this issue and have major amendments put forward which alter the proposition almost to the extent of its not being recognisable to those who were originally associated with it. I suggest that, because the Government was not prepared to stand up to the Commonwealth on this issue, and through having spent unwisely moneys which are made available from various sources to the Main Roads Department, it has probably placed itself in this foolish situation.

As has been mentioned by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I refer to the provision out of main roads funds of such projects as the lookout in King's Park, land-backed wharves at tourist resorts, and all sorts of things, when the money made available to other State Governments in respect of their various Main Roads Departments has not been used for such undertakings.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: That is not so.

Mr. JAMIESON: The Minister might enlighten us, I suppose, by telling us of some lookout at Sublime Point in New South Wales provided by the New South Wales Roads and Highways Department, but I am very doubtful that he could. We are getting too far ahead of the cash situation of the Main Roads Department because of its various undertakings. That department negotiated with the Swan Brewery and paid a fantastic sum of money for air space. It probably would have cost the Government half that amount to resume the land and fight the matter out in the courts.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: What a lot of nonsense.

Mr. JAMIESON: On property costs, of course it would; and the brewery would have to prove that the property valuation was that high. This is an absurdity. We find in another case that the Main Roads Department held up the construction of

a vital arterial road while it negotiated the purchase of land which it obviously had to have.

This case was in connection with the Riverdale subway, and A. H. McDonald Sales Pty. Ltd. was held up for some six weeks while the negotiations took place. The department should have said, "We have to have this land. We will talk about it afterwards." However, the work could not proceed because of the failings of the department in this regard. It would have had the public behind it in any moves it made to speed up the work. The people concerned are entitled to their just deserts, but they are not entitled to unreasonable sums of money.

When the people from the New South Wales Roads and Highways Department were over here nosing around, the Main Roads Department assisted them in their activities. Those people are not completely blind to all that is going on in this State, and when they returned and reported to their principals, it was no wonder that a case was prepared which the Premier of this State would find hard to answer.

However, having indulged in these practices which, no doubt, have the concurrence of the Ministry, the Ministry should be in a position to back up its judgment before the Commonwealth and say, "Well, this is our determination and we are sticking to it." But, not having done that on this occasion, I feel the Ministry deserves some form of censure, and I feel that we should oppose the amending legislation which is proposed by the Government.

MR. SEWELL (Geraldton) [3.29 p.m.]: Anybody hearing the submissions made by members from this side of the House would have no doubt in his mind of the importance of the Bill before the Chamber. It just goes to show that when people—particularly people in the country areas—are in difficulties, they come to the members of the Opposition in an effort to have those difficulties remedied.

To my mind the greatest sellout that local authorities have had from any Government in my experience, in the first instance by the Commonwealth Government through the Prime Minister, and in the second instance by the State Government through our own Premier, is this Bill and its accompanying Bill—the Traffic Act Amendment Bill (No. 2), 1969—which of course, we cannot deal with at the moment.

We all know the important part local authorities play in the conduct and administration of this State. Every member has attended functions when various Ministers have made eulogistic remarks about the work performed by local councils and shires, with which I am sure we all agree because, undoubtedly, the local authorities have performed excellent work. Therefore

I do not think the time is ripe—nor will it be in the foreseeable future—to take any of their powers from them, and there is no doubt in my mind that that is the purpose of the Bill now before the House.

The member for Swan, in dealing with the powers that will be taken from local authorities, has hit the nail on the head. The member for Belmont, who dealt rather extensively with the main roads funds, has also hit the nail on the head, and I do not propose to go over the same ground. I admit, however, that the Main Roads Department in Western Australia has done a very good job. Nevertheless I do not think we should give it any more power or add to the strength it now has.

In the schedule to the Bill that was before the House some weeks ago, the amount to be allocated to local authorities was set out, and a good deal has been said on this schedule in today's debate. When I studied the schedule and compared it with the amendments proposed by the Minister, I found there were only two local authorities in the northern areas that would receive any increase as a result of this Bill; namely, the Geraldton Town Council and the Shire of Irwin. I think the Geraldton Town Council will benefit by an increase of \$201 and the Irwin Shire by \$101, so I do not think they can pat themselves on the back for the increase they will get as a result of the amendments proposed by the Minister.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You are not serious!

Mr. SEWELL: I listened to the Minister's second reading speech and also to the ministerial statement he made earlier today and, frankly, there is still some confusion in my mind, notwithstanding what the Minister has told us. Possibly there is a great deal more in what he has not told us than we are led to believe from him. However, I will not beg the question.

I am opposed to the Bill mainly because I consider the local authorities have done a good job and I will not agree to any reduction in their strength, either financially or otherwise, and I think the Main Roads Department itself has done, and is continuing to perform, excellent service in Western Australia, and I therefore believe it should be left as it is.

MR. GRAHAM (Balcatta — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [3.34 p.m.]: It may be thought that after hearing so many speakers on the Bill there is very little more to be said. I assure the House that it is not my intention to repeat, so far as I can avoid doing so, anything that has already been said. However, in a Bill as important as this one, my feeling is that it behoves not only one or two speakers to explain their points of view, but all of those who have a duty and responsibility to the people of this State. In that respect, of course, the Government has

been most remiss and when one looks for the reasons they are not very difficult to find.

The Bill before us—that is, the original Bill—has virtually been scrapped, and the amendments submitted to us by the Government have become the sum and substance of the legislation. I want to emphasise that this Bill was conceived by the Liberal-Country Party Government. It was subsequently approved by the Liberal and Country Parties; that is, the rank and file supporters of the Government. Therefore, any ills from which the Bill suffers are directly attributable to the attitude and outlook of members of the Liberal and Country Parliamentary Parties and are also a mark of the degree with which those parties are completely out of step with the thinking of local authorities, particularly those in country districts.

After its approval by the Liberal and Country Parties the Bill was introduced to Parliament. It is a remarkable state of affairs that, notwithstanding the controversial nature of the Bill, not one single word has been spoken by a Country Party member of this Parliament, whether he be a Minister or a back-bencher; and this despite the great concern that has been expressed by people in country districts.

Obviously there was something very much wrong with the original concept of the legislation, but we have heard not one word of criticism; we have had not one breath of a suggestion in this Parliament of the manner in which the Bill could be approved. This is supposed to be a deliberative Chamber. This is where decisions should be made on Bills which are presented to us. Surely if the members of this Parliament are not entitled to some explanation, then the public of this State should be! How do Country Party members, and, indeed, Liberal Party members who represent country constituencies, square up to the original Bill, which, after all is said and done, is the only matter before us at present?

What is their reaction to the protests they have received directly, or of which they have some knowledge, from people who are accepted as the leaders of communal affairs in their respective country districts? Have their parliamentary representatives chosen to ignore them, or what? What sort of iron discipline has been imposed not only on the rank and file members, but also on the Ministers of this Government, when not one of them is prepared to open his mouth on this Bill, which obviously is of some embarrassment to them?

As I have indicated, the original proposition received the blessing and approval of the members of the Liberal Party and the Country Party of this Parliament.

Subsequently, through its leader, the Opposition strongly attacked the Bill. This, of course, was a signal for the Government to take some sort of action by way of retreat. By this time local authorities were propounding their objections to the measure and so the Government ran for cover.

Additional time was given, not for the purpose of studying the Bill which had been introduced into this Parliament, I repeat, with the approval of the Liberal Party and the Country Party members, but to enable the Government to find a way to appease not only the local authorities, but a great number of its own supporters who, by this time, had become restive because of the mounting opposition and criticism which was being expressed, particularly from country centres.

Accordingly, birth was given to a whole series of new amendments, and this virtually means a new piece of legislation has now to be considered by us. The Minister was good enough to make available to all members, I understand, as early as possible—in advance of the sitting of this House—a copy of his observations on the new proposals and, subsequently, of the amendments. For that we thank him.

So far as the local authorities are concerned, what chance or opportunity have they had to discover for themselves the impact of this legislation on their fortunes? I suppose, as a consequence of this, none of us has an idea of what the local authorities think of the propositions which it would appear are bound to become law, because it is obvious to anybody with eyes to see that all those on the other side of the House have been muzzled; that they intend blindly to follow the lead that was given and the decision which was made behind locked doors at a joint party meeting.

I wonder how many local authorities have a copy of these amendments to help them decide whether they are satisfactory or not—satisfactory to them, I mean. I am not suggesting by this that we should completely abdicate our responsibility in favour of the local authorities. I do not suggest that we necessarily accept, in full, their viewpoint, but I do suggest that the local authorities are entitled to be heard; in other words, they are entitled to an opportunity to study the proposals. Who knows, they may give their full and complete blessing to the proposals if they receive copies of them.

Mr. Court: Their executive has given its unanimous support to the Minister's propositions.

Mr. GRAHAM: I would like to hear a little more about this unanimous support. I regret, first of all, that my leader has been called away to consult with the Parliamentary Draftsman on the matter of the Government's amendments; secondly, I regret that he has been able to speak once

only, in contradistinction to the Minister who will have three opportunities. My leader has, however, today been in contact with some of these bodies which are supposed to have approved unanimously, and the result, he discovers, is somewhat different; but I will leave it to the Leader of the Opposition in his own time later in the debate to tell the House at first-hand of the situation as he found it.

Mr. Court: When the Minister replies he will give the House the information which he has in his possession, and which he has used as a basis for his remarks.

Mr. GRAHAM: I will render him a service by giving him advance information of the fact that the Leader of the Opposition has checked with these bodies to ascertain the position, and my understanding of it is that it does not parallel the impression the Government is endeavouring to create.

Mr. Court: The fact is that the executive told the Minister that it approved.

Mr. H. D. Evans: The shires did not know about it; the Minister did not put them in the picture.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: What my colleague the Minister for Industrial Development says is quite true, and I do not tell lies.

Mr. GRAHAM: Not consciously, perhaps.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.3 p.m.

Mr. GRAHAM: During the brief respite from which we have just returned I had the opportunity to discuss with my leader the point with which I was dealing immediately prior to the recess. I told him that I wanted him to inform the House of the position in his own time and in his own way—which he has every intention of doing. I am thankful for the afternoon tea break which gave me the opportunity for checking with him, because it confirms what I said earlier: that the Local Government Association or the Country Shire Councils' Association—whatever the body is—is by no means enthusiastic with the new proposals; but my leader will be able to quote chapter and verse in respect of that matter.

I think it is very necessary that the record should be put straight, if there is an endeavour on the part of the Government to make us believe that the proposals which we will be considering in Committee are 100 per cent. acceptable to the representatives of the country local authorities—because they are not.

The new proposals, of which I earlier made mention, came before Parliament by way of a circular to members. Then this morning leave was granted to the Minister to give an outline of what he had in mind—and there was something unusual about this; it was not in the customary way of a fellow Minister to making an explanation or supplying additional information.

Special leave was given to the Minister to make this statement. It causes one to inquire the reason for this. Obviously the reason is that no other Minister knows anything about the subject, although I have grave doubts even about the Minister's knowledge. He is, perchance, exceedingly fortunate in that he has detailed briefs available, and he has officers on hand to give him constant advice. I am informed that a member of the Parliament House staff has been acting as a courier this afternoon, racing along every few minutes with messages to keep the Minister informed.

It is a sad commentary on Parliament that this Bill is so complicated, and its impact is so far-reaching that by default, as well as from other symptoms which we have observed, the Government members have very little knowledge of it. Such information as they have obtained they are scared to comment upon, lest it has some unfortunate political repercussions in the areas that they are supposed to represent.

Mr. Court: I would hazard a guess that of all the pieces of legislation that have been before this House this is one of which the Government supporters know most.

Mr. Jamieson: They have not been giving the Minister much support, if they do know most about this piece of legislation.

Mr. GRAHAM: We have become accustomed to the Minister for Industrial Development and to his occasional homilies. It is a most unusual spectacle for there to be lengthy debate, no matter what the subject is, without the Minister joining in, but on this occasion the Minister has remained in his seat. On other occasions invariably he has jumped up in an endeavour, very often vainly, to protect and prop up a Minister who was in bother. On this occasion the selfsame Minister is so uncertain, for fear that he will cause a little more embarrassment to his Country Party colleagues, that he chooses to do what is an exceptional thing for him; that is, to remain seated.

It is a matter for wonder, having regard to the fact that criticisms and complaints have poured in from country districts, that those selfsame country districts have no voice in this House—other than those country districts which are fortunate enough to be represented by members of the Australian Labor Party. To me this is an extraordinary state of affairs, because on many occasions I recall that even the most timid of the back-benchers of the Government has welcomed the opportunity to prattle—if I might use that term, disrespectful as it might be—even if it was only for the purpose of reading a letter or telegram he had received from a local authority in his district which either supported or opposed a particular matter. However, on this occasion, when

there has virtually been turmoil in, and protests from, country districts, complete and utter silence reigns.

The electors and the representatives of the local authorities in the districts represented by the Country Party members on the other side of the House are being treated with contempt. But even overlooking the timidity of some of the backbenchers, surely one would have expected that the Leader of the Country Party at least would have explained the attitude of the Government and why it has taken certain steps, unpalatable as they may be!

Mr. Jamieson: The legislation is complicated enough now without his getting into it!

Mr. GRAHAM: Nevertheless, as leader of a party which is portion of the coalition Government, he has a duty and a responsibility; and I would have thought he would be anxious to speak on behalf of the Government, as this legislation affects the country districts.

I wonder why it is that not one member on the other side of the House is prepared, or is game enough, to express himself—pro or con—on the proposals which are before us.

A number of my colleagues have expressed themselves as being in opposition to the Bill, but they find themselves, as no doubt do very many of us, in a rather invidious position; namely, that however much the proposals in the Bill may be distasteful, there is virtually no alternative but to pass the measure in some form.

What my colleagues were endeavouring to explain was that they are opposed to the proposition as appearing and they hope and trust, as do all of us on this side of the House at least, that in Committee the measure can be improved substantially. However, in the absence of legislation of some sort to conform with the Commonwealth Government's new proposals, there could be a state of chaos; and perhaps all members would not be prepared to go to the extent suggested by the member for Belmont; that is, that we should take on the Commonwealth Government, although, being on the eve of a Federal election, no doubt, strong action at this stage could have some beneficial result, and the Commonwealth Government would not be prepared to alienate completely the affections of the electors in Western Australia.

However, this Government usually takes the easy course and we are therefore discussing something that is not likely to have any application. Notwithstanding what the Minister said earlier by way of interjection, that this Bill is easy to follow and that no doubt all members have a greater knowledge of it than perhaps of any other measure of similar length that has come before Parliament—

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Not all members.

Mr. GRAHAM: — I make the definite statement that it is especially difficult to follow and understand. No doubt there is a great deal of conflict between the Minister's advisers and the advisers to local authorities as to the impact and effect this legislation will have in regard to whether the fortunes of local authorities will be such that they will be envied in the days to come, or whether the local authorities will be faced with acute financial embarrassment.

My outstanding impression is that so far as the country local authorities are concerned, by and large they do not like the legislation and many of them will be acutely affected in the work they hope to be able to continue to do, and some will be most seriously financially embarrassed. Unfortunately I am not in the position of being able to analyse the circumstances of even one local authority, let alone the hundred or so in the country districts, but what I have said is the impression I get.

Another observation, partly touched upon by the member for Belmont, was that there appeared to be a source of satisfaction to Government supporters—and as I see it, the only satisfaction of which they have given any evidence during the course of this debate—in the fact that they thought there was something in the platform or policy of the Australian Labor Party which would seriously and prejudicially affect country local authorities when, and if, we gave effect to our platform, which has already been quoted. As it contains only a few words I will repeat it—

The Police Department shall be the sole authority to control traffic throughout the State, but so as not to disadvantage financially local governing authorities.

I underline the words, "so as not to disadvantage financially local governing authorities." There is no secret about that, because in the policy speech delivered by the Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party on the 5th March, last year, he used those words under the heading, "Traffic Control." He had earlier made some mention of the dangers on the roads and went on to say—

The logical first step is to ensure that the control of traffic is under one organisation and we propose to relieve local authorities of this responsibility and place it with the Police Department.

Because many councils are dependent upon licence fees for their existence, Labor will closely examine this aspect of its proposed change in traffic control for the purpose of ensuring that the requisite finance is available to the councils for the work they have to perform.

Therefore the titters that emanated from a cross-bench will be found to have no substance whatever. The Australian Labor

Party recognises the value and importance of local government bodies. We may have differences of opinion concerning such things as franchise, and the rest of it, but there is no escaping the fact that local authorities are an essential part of our system of government in Australia, and no Government with a proper sense of responsibility would initiate or support action which had, as its effect, the weakening of that arm of government, because of the importance—might I say the ever-increasing importance—of the work which local governing bodies are called upon to discharge. I say "ever-increasing" because there are new fields appearing practically every year into which local authorities are expected by their people to enter, these being fields not previously touched by them.

Therefore it was indeed small satisfaction to some members who seemed to derive merriment in the fostered belief that the Parliamentary Labor Party had its guns trained on the finances of local authorities. The opposite is, of course, the truth.

I am wondering, in view of the generally unsatisfactory nature of the Bill before us—that is to say, the difficulty members are experiencing in gaining a full appreciation of the measure in all its implications—whether some steps should not be taken to simplify the procedures which we have in Western Australia.

Only this afternoon I again went through the Traffic Act and the Main Roads Act, the two Statutes which are being dealt with in order to give effect to the new Commonwealth aid roads arrangement. I do not know whether I found them all, but I found there are a whole lot of funds. Surely this is not necessary, particularly when 25 per cent. goes into one account and some other figure goes out into a trust fund, and all round the place! It is almost impossible to discover exactly what is going on.

My cursory studies this afternoon revealed to me that under these two Statutes there are a Main Roads Trust Account, a Main Roads Contribution Trust Account, a Transport Co-ordination Fund, a Railway Crossing Protection Fund, a Metropolitan Traffic Trust Account, and a Central Road Trust Fund. Surely all these exercises are not necessary! Some improvement would be effected, of course, by all license money going into a central fund, with money being paid to country local authorities on a somewhat similar basis to that which applies to the metropolitan local authorities. There could be some broad franchise written into the respective Statutes without the establishment of so many different funds.

There are some requirements, I know, in order to meet what is insisted upon by the Commonwealth Government, but a whole lot of these, in my opinion, tend to confuse what would otherwise be comparatively simple Statutes; and one has to be an

accountant of pretty considerable attainment before being able to follow precisely what does go on with the accounts relating to traffic funds. So I suggest that, apart altogether from this Bill, the Government might give some consideration to that aspect.

As members would know, under the Constitution of Australia, the Commonwealth Government has power and authority to make financial grants to States, and it is able to do this in respect of any matter whatever. It is not bound only in respect of those matters where the Commonwealth itself has some legislative authority. The promoters of the Constitution no doubt felt, as they envisaged what would happen with the centralising of power, and particularly financial power, that in the very nature of things it would be inevitable that sums under various headings would be made available to the States. These grants can be made, of course, subject to certain conditions. It is in respect of this that a deplorable state of affairs has been reached, because the Commonwealth is imposing conditions which virtually mean, without any alteration of the Constitution, that the Commonwealth can dictate the manner and method in which the money shall be spent.

I know this is not something of recent vintage. It is something which has been increasing and ever-accelerating, and in the Bill, the subject of our debate this afternoon, we see further evidence of these steps. Because of the restrictions and conditions imposed by the Commonwealth the States, very largely, have no say in the matter. It is necessary for the States to give effect to what the Commonwealth lays down, otherwise the money is not available to them.

This dictation and interference is, of course, something exceedingly difficult to quit. I do not know the answer, unless perchance it comes through our political parties and our national conferences so that we might have a better and clearer definition of the responsibilities in the Federal and State spheres, as long as there are Commonwealth and State Governments. But very definitely the current situation is far from satisfactory.

Dealing with the financial situation overall, because from it stems the present situation, no State is able to resist the Commonwealth. I find, from the latest figures available, that the indebtedness of the States—and the figures I am about to quote relate to the period 1950-65—has more than trebled over that period. It has increased by some \$4,700,000,000. The indebtedness of local authorities in Australia has increased more than four times, the increase in their indebtedness being stepped up by \$630,000,000. The indebtedness of semi-government authorities has increased nearly eight times. The increase in their case is no less than \$3,940,000,000.

In other words, the indebtedness of the State Governments, local authorities, and semi-government authorities in the period 1950-65 has increased by nearly \$9,300,000,000.

During that same period the indebtedness of the Commonwealth Government has fallen to \$600,000,000—a 20 per cent. reduction. Of course the whole situation is crazy. The Commonwealth is embarrassed with finance. Indeed it is using revenue taxation money to lend to the States. The States must pay interest on that money. The Commonwealth makes revenue money available to its own instrumentalities, such as the post office; and it charges the post office interest on money which we pay as income tax. Talk about Alice in Wonderland!

That is the position; and the situation of State Governments and local authorities is so desperate that they have no alternative, virtually, but to accept the financial dictates of the Commonwealth Government. An illustration of that is, of course, the legislation at present before us.

It is a comparatively simple matter for the Commonwealth Government to make grants of some magnitude in respect of roads or any other public work or activity; but it becomes exceedingly difficult for the State Governments and, shall I say now, more particularly for the local authorities, to find matching money which the Commonwealth insists upon as a condition of the money being made available.

I emphasise the greater difficulty experienced by the local authorities because, with a whole host of circumstances, including royalties from minerals, the coffers of the State Treasury are being reasonably well attended to in comparison with those of local authorities, very many of which are in desperate straits. With the passage of this legislation their situation will be considerably worsened, according to their analysis of the legislation. I am, of course, unable to speak with any direct authority myself.

I wonder why the Commonwealth Government has chosen to be the busybody which it has proved itself to be, in the terms of the legislation, in setting down so specifically the percentage of the funds to be devoted to particular aspects of roadworks and types of roads. The member for Belmont indicated that perhaps we in Western Australia are not without blame, because in certain directions there has been irresponsibility in the manner of expenditure of moneys. But, after all, they are traffic moneys irrespective of where the bookkeeping system might say the money came from, whether from account A, account B or account C.

Mention was made of the observation lookout post in King's Park where people are able to admire the Sahara Desert

effect of what is to be the Mitchell Freeway complex. The cost of the lookout was \$38,850. Surely you, Mr. Speaker, would not agree that that is a proper expenditure of road moneys; and I hope that every time a vehicle hits a pothole the driver will give some thought to the Government which sanctioned—and it required ministerial approval—the expenditure of that \$38,850 upon a project, ostensibly with the idea of a little glamour attaching to the Government for providing a facility whereby misguided persons could stand and admire the "big thinking" of this Government.

The fact is that that money should have been spent upon roadworks and not on an embellishment such as the lookout. I suppose it was that, and other cases in Western Australia and elsewhere, which gave the Commonwealth Government justification for imposing more rigid conditions upon the funds made available under the scheme for granting moneys to the States for road purposes.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member has five more minutes.

Mr. GRAHAM: That will do me very nicely. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the intimation. Surely the Commonwealth Government should overlook acts of irresponsibility from time to time, but perhaps warn a Government that it could be penalised in the future should there be any repetition of this sort of conduct. Surely State Governments and State Parliaments are responsible bodies. We are elected in the same manner as members of the Commonwealth Parliament, and I should say that our sense of responsibility is in no way less than that of members in the Commonwealth Parliament.

After all is said and done, the roads and associated roadworks are the property of the State. In very many cases, of course, they have been vested in the local authorities. Nevertheless, they are within the ambit of State legislation and control, and the local authorities, as members are aware, have certain responsibilities placed in their hands under a special Act of Parliament. By and large, they perform their duties extremely well. Why, then, should the National Government and Parliament—so far removed in this matter—start dabbling in domestic affairs and tell us what percentage and what amount of funds should be spent on type of road A, B or C, or X, Y or Z? I consider it to be an impertinence.

The duty of the Commonwealth, surely, is to determine the sum of money to be made available over a period of years after a national, broadly-based examination of the transport requirements of the Commonwealth, and then to lay down a broad formula for the allocation of the funds and the expenditure in a general way,

leaving it to the States entirely to determine priorities 1, 2, 3 and 4 and the rest of it.

I might say, as I conclude, that some 12 months ago during the unavoidable absence of my leader I had the opportunity of attending a conference of the parliamentary leaders of the Australian Labor Party. At that gathering it was decided unanimously that what I have outlined should be the course of events. The money should be made available and then left to the States to split up into the various categories within the confines of their particular States.

Furthermore, I might say it was decided at an earlier conference of parliamentary Labor Party leaders—at which I was not present but my leader was—that all the proceeds of fuel tax should be used for road purposes. If I may, I will quote the words—there are only a few lines—as follows:—

The Commonwealth should allocate all the revenue from fuel taxes for the construction of roads and terminal and transfer points associated with road transport.

That is the policy of the Australian Labor Party. Well, Mr. Speaker, I, with my colleagues, have endeavoured to give some general impressions with regard to this whole unfortunate affair. As was pointed out earlier, we are left with no alternative; this Bill must be passed in some way, and we have endeavoured to show that it is unsatisfactory. During the Committee stage we shall endeavour to make it a more worth-while document than it is at present, notwithstanding the amendments, in the name of the Minister, on the notice paper.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe—Minister for Works) (4.37 p.m.): The remarks of the Opposition members have been very enlightening.

Mr. Tonkin: What about some remarks by the Government members?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I think members on this side of the House have listened with great interest to the remarks of the Opposition, and they have listened to those members getting themselves deeper and deeper into the political mire. Opposition members have displayed crass ignorance of this legislation, so much so that they should be ashamed of it.

Opposition members: We are ashamed of the Bill.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Opposition members should be ashamed of their ignorance. I do not know of one Opposition member who has been to the Main Roads Department to find out the merits of the legislation from that department.

Mr. Toms: It does not know the answer at all.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Has the Leader of the Opposition been down to see the Main Roads Department? Has the Deputy Leader of the Opposition been down to see the Main Roads Department?

Mr. Graham: No. You may be the spokesman but we want to hear the other side.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: It devolves upon the Opposition in any democratic Parliament to act in a responsible manner, and this Opposition has fallen down badly.

Mr. Brady: You like to act as a kindergarten teacher.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The Opposition has fallen down very badly indeed.

Mr. Jamieson: Don't tell me you put your officers in that category.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The only member of the Opposition who displayed some semblance of intelligence and appreciation of the legislation was the final speaker. He conveyed in his speech something that belied every other word spoken by the Opposition, because we learnt from the member for Collie that this measure was going to be opposed.

Every other speaker said it was going to be opposed, if not in those actual words. The whole tenor of the debate was in this direction; and yet we heard the Deputy Leader of the Opposition changing the scene. He made the picture quite clear that the Opposition is now going to support the Bill and hope for some amendments.

Mr. Graham: Not the Bill itself.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Now, what are we to believe? Opposition members had as much opportunity to study the Bill as did the members of the Government.

Mr. Graham: Why, even you are opposing the initial legislation.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: That is not so. I said earlier by interjection that no legislation was perfect.

The legislation which was first introduced included a number of provisions which allowed ministerial discretion to be used whenever it was not possible to delineate clearly what should be done in a particular instance. This would have applied. Not all of the amendments, but many of them, are proposals which would have been carried out at the discretion of the Minister.

Mr. Tonkin: Which ones?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The Leader of the Opposition will hear them shortly. As I was saying, they would have been carried out at the discretion of the Minister on the recommendation of the Commissioner of Main Roads. The base grants amendment is one and there are others

which could have been carried out similarly. I feel sorry for the newer members of the Labor Opposition.

Mr. Bertram: That is unnecessary.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: These newer members have come here and have been led by their leader into a situation whereby they believe they have to oppose the legislation. I said to my colleagues on the front bench that it would be interesting to see the position when the voices were heard at the end of the second reading debate. Fortunately, by some means or other, the Opposition has twigged that something is wrong and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has endeavoured to straighten it out.

Mr. Graham: The Minister would be interested to know that no member on this side of the House is bound by resolution to vote for or against a measure. Each one of us can please himself.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I am very interested to hear the remarks of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Graham: No vote has been taken on this Bill within our party.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: We were led to believe to the contrary, because the member for Collie said, "and the Opposition will oppose this Bill."

Mr. Graham: Is that not what we have been doing?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition concluded by saying that the Opposition would try to amend it in Committee. All the Opposition has done is to oppose the legislation. Instead of taking a responsible line in connection with this very important legislation, which is recognised by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition at least as being important, the Opposition has sought only to oppose it. What would have been the result of opposing the legislation and voting against it? A chaotic situation would have developed. Doubtless the difficulties could have been overcome, because one can always find a way around difficulties.

Nevertheless a very difficult situation would have arisen as the Commissioner of Main Roads and his department would not have been able to work effectively or efficiently in the disbursement of moneys which come to the department from State and Commonwealth sources. These are incontrovertible facts. The only person on the other side of the House who said anything about it was the Deputy Leader of the Opposition who appreciated that the legislation would have to be passed, and it will be passed.

What alternative legislation has been suggested by the Opposition? Members of the Opposition could have gone to the Main Roads Department in an attempt to discover some alternative means, perhaps, and come up with a proposal.

Mr. Jamieson: They are only civil servants.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: All the Opposition has been trying to do for the past 10 years is to put a wedge between the members of the coalition Government.

Mr. Bertram: We do not have to. It is obvious.

Mr. Jamieson: You put the wedge there.

Mr. Bertram: Country Party members are afraid to open their mouths.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: This is the traditional behaviour of the Opposition. It has tried and tried for a period of 10 years to put a wedge between the members of the coalition Government.

Mr. Brady: Tell us something about what is in the Bill.

Mr. Jamieson: The Premier did that himself.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: It is all very well for members of the Opposition to get up and thrash the Government, but when I tell them about their sore spots and inadequacies they do not like it.

Mr. Brady: Give us an interpretation of proposed new section 33A.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Some of the new members should appreciate that they do not want to be led by the nose by some of their leaders.

Mr. Graham: I want to hear all about the silence. Why did not the Country Party members speak on this measure?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The Opposition's attitude is not a disappointment to the Government because we expect it to act in this way, but it must be a disappointment to the electorate generally. Indeed the thinking public must be disappointed that the Opposition can take such an important piece of legislation and act in this way.

Mr. Tonkin: I should think that the way Government members have spoken would be a great source of satisfaction to the country shires!

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I will speak about this a little later, but, under this legislation, no shire will receive less than it has received in the past.

Mr. Tonkin: Yes they will.

Mr. Jamieson: Peddle that somewhere else.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The Leader of the Opposition will see whether the country shires believe me or him in the long run.

Mr. Jamieson: The Minister said "no shire." He did not say "country shires."

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Every shire will receive more than it received in the last financial year.

Mr. Jamieson: Under what conditions? Who is going to pay the bill?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: It is written into the Bill. The escalation clause provides for an increase from 2 per cent. to 10 per cent. in the fifth year.

Mr. Jamieson: If they can afford it.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: This gives a total of \$2,500,000.

Mr. Bertram: Is that escalation or inflation?

Mr. Graham: It would not meet inflation.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: In opposing the legislation, I believe that the Opposition was trying to create a vacuum. Consequently its opposition seems quite phoney and it must be very disappointing to the electorate by and large.

Let me say something about the executive of the Country Shire Councils' Association. Earlier I may have sounded as if I were trying to praise the Deputy Leader of the Opposition but I do not want members of the House to think I agree with all he said. He hinted that what I had said was not quite true. I will tell members what happened at the meeting and they can believe me or disbelieve me, as they see fit, because that is their prerogative. The last meeting of the Country Shire Councils' Association executive lasted all morning and into the afternoon. There was much coming and going at the meeting. We went into the room and out of the room and the representatives did likewise. The matter was discussed in the way in which democratic negotiations take place. Nevertheless, unanimous agreement was secured at the conclusion of the meeting. This is not my opinion alone; in fact, the chairman of the executive said that unanimous agreement had been reached.

Mr. H. D. Evans: Did they relinquish the principle that licenses are legitimate revenue?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: No, they did not. That is a good question, and reference was made to it in the official Press notice that was handed out. We talked about this aspect afterwards and the shires clung to the idea that the proceeds of vehicle licensing were theirs lawfully, but I said I did not believe that. The matter was left at that point. However, on the question of the amendments the shires said that they agreed to them unanimously and hoped that the Bill would be passed. I do not know of a contrary opinion expressed by five members who went away dissatisfied, or something of that kind, and of course some of them would not be completely satisfied. How can one secure 100 per cent. agreement? If agreement is reached at the Paris peace talks, whether the table is

square or round, do members think that every delegate would be completely satisfied?

Mr. Tonkin: Was any one representative completely satisfied?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Unanimous agreement was reached.

Mr. Tonkin: That is not the answer to my question.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I do not care whether or not it answers the question asked by the Leader of the Opposition. One rarely finds that everyone is completely satisfied on any one point and the Leader of the Opposition is one person who would never be completely satisfied on any point, and he is not the only one.

Without any prompting on my part, the chairman of the executive, I think it was, said that unanimous agreement had been reached and he added, "Mr. Minister, you can use that in the House."

Mr. Bickerton: He knew you had nothing else to use.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I always like a humorous interjection. That is very funny.

Mr. Bickerton: I have a couple more if you like.

Mr. Graham: When he said that, did you still have the barrel of the shotgun in the middle of their foreheads?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: In what respect?

Mr. Graham: Having been confronted with the initial proposition, what alternative was there? Anything was better than that from their point of view.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: They were satisfied that the amendments were reasonable, which was as much as they could hope for in democratic negotiations.

Mr. Graham: You are not quite as emphatic now as you were a few minutes ago.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I am completely emphatic. As a matter of fact, several of the executive stood up and said, "Mr. Minister, this is a gentleman's agreement we have reached." I said, "I trust the legislation will pass along these lines and I will give you my word that the amendments will faithfully follow the agreement we have reached here."

Mr. Tonkin: How did it come about that you subsequently made another amendment?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I will tell the Leader of the Opposition now, because he does not seem to think I will mention it later. This subsequent amendment was mentioned in discussion with members of local authorities. There were certain troubles relating to the base grant and consideration was given to the fact that under the original Bill the base grant

could be altered by the Minister; that is, where it could be proved that there was some injustice. When this matter was raised the members of the coalition Government said, "Will you make these amendments at the special session of Parliament?" and eventually I said that this would be done. Most of them expected that this would be done after the Bill was passed, but I said, "No, I will do it now, in the same way as we have dealt with other amendments. We will write it into the Bill, and so I will have to present you with a new schedule." Does that answer the question asked by the Leader of the Opposition?

In answering that question, I have momentarily lost track of what I was talking about. I think I was referring to the fact that they said it was a gentleman's agreement, and so it has proved to be. I very much doubt whether any one of them will deny what has been said, because I have tried to report faithfully to the House what was said. Others even said, "Can we help with the legislation?" I have already stated that in dealing with a Bill of this kind it is impossible to satisfy completely every local authority.

Members of the Opposition have said that the measure is complex and difficult, but it is not quite as complex and difficult as is made out by them. I will admit it is a difficult piece of legislation, and I say again that it is impossible to satisfy every local authority with a Bill of this kind. Therefore there is provision in the measure for decisions to be made with discretion by the Government on the recommendation of the Commissioner of Main Roads; and have members forgotten that every year the Main Roads Department draws up a loan programme of works for local government? This is done in conjunction with local government. Where it can be proved that certain local authorities are being confronted with difficulties, and having regard to the fact that both Commonwealth money and State money must be used, with the State money being used anywhere and the Commonwealth money only under certain conditions, the commissioner can try to overcome the problems that confront certain shires; but it is impossible to meet all contingencies by legislation.

This measure has been designed to be the best and fairest form of legislation to cover all sections of the State, not forgetting State road funds, by and large. My initial speech to the House was made carefully and on very sound advice, and after a lot of consideration, and keeping in mind that initial speech as a background it should be understood that in regard to Australia's road needs all the States got together to agree to a Commonwealth Bureau of Roads being formed to inquire into the whole aspect of Australia's road needs. Through this bureau all the States aimed at getting a greater proportion of

funds from the petrol tax imposed by the Commonwealth. This is one of the reasons we want to highlight to the Commonwealth Australia's road needs. The bureau, in its report, asked for a substantial increase in the grant for this quinquennium.

The question has been asked: When will payment be made to local authorities? The first payment to local authorities will be made in July of this year and monthly payments will be made thereafter if this legislation is passed. More money will be spent on roads in this State than ever before because we are getting more money, and more money than ever before will be spent in country areas.

Grants will be made to local authorities through the Main Roads Department programme, and the greatest proportion of grants to local authorities will be made in country areas because of their situation. Next year the grants will increase by a total of 8.2 per cent. That figure has no relation to this legislation, but it is an increase in the amount of money that will be allocated by the Main Roads Department under its programme. The overall increase of funds that will be coming from State and Commonwealth sources to the department will be only 7.6 per cent. That is the answer to the question asked by many members in regard to the amounts that will be coming in and going out from the Main Roads Department.

There was a reference to a shire which at the last moment sent telegrams to various members of Parliament. How nice of it! Still, that is its undoubted right and privilege. That shire was Swan-Guildford, which has a base grant of \$165,334. Under this legislation that amount can escalate by 7 per cent.; that is, 2 per cent. free money and 5 per cent. matched money. That will be an increase of approximately \$11,500 in the next year.

Mr. Toms: What was its loan commitments?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: To my knowledge its loan commitments are virtually nil.

Mr. Toms: It has never raised a loan.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The honourable member is apparently fully aware of the situation. A shire such as this will not be pulling its weight during the next quinquennium in regard to the Commonwealth-State road grant. This shire has not pulled its weight in accordance with its resources.

Mr. Jamieson: What about that shire which is up to its maximum?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: All local authorities are expected to raise funds from their own resources, and the great majority of shires raise money from within their own resources. This has shown that they are responsible bodies. However, the Shire of Swan-Guildford spent only \$22,139 in 1967-68. I understand the

money was raised from rate revenue. I am not sure, but I do not think the shire raised any loans. So it will need to raise more money to get the 5 per cent. matching money. I would like members to ask the officials of those local governing bodies who are doing their job to see what they think about the Shire of Swan-Guildford.

Mr. Brady: What would they have been getting had you not changed the system?

Mr. Toms: I do not think any local authority would criticise another.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: That is so, but I am driven to the position of having to tell the House some plain facts. I believe that is what the House wants.

Mr. Tonkin: How much did the Government spend from Consolidated Revenue?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: If the shire in question wants matching money it will have to increase the expenditure from its own sources.

Mr. Toms: This is where you will find trouble with a lot of local authorities.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: This shire would need to increase its expenditure by \$8,250 to get the matching money. The total it would have to raise would be \$30,390.

Mr. Craig: It said it would have to raise the rates by 100 per cent.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: That is so.

Mr. Toms: Can the Minister tell me what the position is—

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Would the honourable member let me speak; he might learn something.

Mr. Toms: I could not learn from you no matter how long you stood there.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: It is interesting to note that the shire in question has not raised loan funds for any road work that I know of. Its efforts from its own resources have been decreasing each year. The figures are as follows:—

			\$
1965-66	61,388
1966-67	47,252
1967-68	22,139

This indicates that even in its own estimation it did not want moneys for road works. This shire has one of the worst records of road expenditure in the State, and the other local authorities which are pulling their weight do not like it, because they know what must be done, basically, for the next five years.

The member for Swan is not correct when he says the Main Roads Department has forsaken some of its responsibility and allowed this shire to take over the roads over which the department formerly had control. The responsibility of the department in regard to the Swan-Guildford

Shire has not changed at all. The claim in the telegram that the council would have to raise rates by 100 per cent. is not true. This can be seen from the figures and, as was appreciated by the Minister for Traffic, the shire would have to raise an additional \$8,250, which would amount to about 6 per cent. on its figure. This amount does not have to be raised by rates revenue; the shire can raise it by loans. In the telegram in question reference is made to "pitiful concessions." I will point out that these pitiful concessions amount to over \$3,000,000. This would indicate what the particular shire understands about the position, and I am most disappointed with it.

Mr. Brady: The Swan-Guildford Shire is very competent.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: It is wrong so far as this is concerned.

Mr. Brady: Your officers must prove it is wrong. Your officers are not always right.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The member for Swan has accused the department of cheating the shire.

Mr. Brady: I know it has, and I know that license fees are escalating each year.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The member for Swan is being unfair to the Main Roads Department when he says this.

Mr. Brady: The Government is cheating by doing what it is.

Mr. Jamieson: The Government does what the administration requires of it.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Not one member of the Opposition has been to the Main Roads Department to endeavour to get to the heart of things.

Mr. Brady: They would have been told to keep their mouths shut.

Mr. Jamieson: They would have invoked the Crimes Act.

Mr. Brady: One Commonwealth member did that recently and where did he finish up?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: If the present Opposition were at any time to become the Government it would use the Main Roads Department officers.

Mr. Graham: That is so. It is the prerogative of the Government, not of the Opposition, to get its comments and criticisms of a Government Bill. Surely it is not the prerogative of the Opposition.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: A good deal has been said about the amendments; that they are difficult to understand. They are not difficult to understand. I have already said that, in essence, the amendments improve the Bill, and this has been brought about as a result of hard work between the coalition parties.

Let us be frank about these things. There are, of course, differences of opinion in all coalition Governments. There are, also, certain disadvantages in coalition Governments, but there are, nevertheless, great strengths to be derived from coalition Governments. It is certainly a very good thing that this extra time was given for further consideration of the legislation, and a great deal of work has gone into the matter in that period, and some good has come from it.

Mr. Graham: You were going to tell us something about this big silence.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Members have listened and seen how the Opposition has got further into the political mire. All the Opposition had hoped to do was to drive the old traditional wedge between the Government parties; it has been trying to do this for 10 years.

Mr. Graham: They were instructed not to speak.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: In the time available to us, amendments have been drafted which propose, firstly, that the provision to add 5 per cent. compound interest on a matching basis be deleted and that the additional grant be calculated at the rate of 7 per cent. per annum flat, this additional grant to be made in two parts.

Mr. Graham: Is this another second reading speech?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I am sorry that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition should accuse me of making another second reading speech. The House agreed earlier, without a dissentient voice, to permit me to make an explanation of these things.

Mr. Graham: You are now making another second reading speech—this is the third one. You made one in your own right, one by leave, and now another.

Mr. Court: The Opposition has complained it has not been given enough information and the Minister is trying to remedy that.

Mr. Graham: The time to do that is in the Committee stage of the Bill.

Mr. Court: The Government members have done their homework.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I am amazed at the stand taken by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I think it is important that these amendments be put together, because they will be studied by people outside, and I would appreciate it if the House could bear with me for a moment while I go through the proposed amendments briefly.

Mr. Davies: You carry on; don't take any notice of them!

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The recommendations are as follows:—

- (a) That the provision to add 5 per cent. compound on a matching basis be deleted.

That the additional grant be calculated at the rate of 7 per cent. per annum flat, this additional grant to be in two parts:

- (i) 2 per cent. per year will be automatic and unmatched.
- (ii) 5 per cent. per year to be matched in accordance with the amended matching proposals.

The first, the unmatched portion, rises in tables over five years from 2 per cent. to 4 per cent., 6 per cent., 8 per cent., and 10 per cent. The second, the matched portion, rises from 5 per cent. to 10 per cent., 15 per cent., 20 per cent., and 25 per cent. Those tables will be seen in the amendment.

The recommendations continue—

- (b) To provide that a local authority whose expenditure from its own resources in any year is not less than the total of the base grant and additional grants referred to in paragraph (a) shall be deemed to have satisfied the matching requirements.

This means that those local authorities which have done a good job of raising finance can carry forward their excess into future years without having to raise further moneys.

The recommendations continue—

- (c) That a local authority be permitted to carry over expenditure in excess of the matching requirements to the subsequent year or years.

I am afraid I joined paragraphs (b) and (c) together.

Mr. Graham: The moment you stop reading you are in difficulty. That is how much you know about the Bill.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I am trying to refer to this closely, so that I can have a record for afterwards. The next recommendation is—

- (d) New base grants be in accordance with the new schedule that is proposed as the last amendment.

The amended base grants are those arrived at by averaging the last two years when the local authority was paid from the Central Road Trust Fund. The next recommendation is—

- (e) To meet the requirements of the Commonwealth Aid Roads Act Bill some minor adjustments are required to the Main Roads Act Amendment Bill in regard to certain definitions, and to the numerical classification of roads.

In so far as the Traffic Act is concerned there is an amendment that the deduction in respect of the registration of motor vehicles outside the metropolitan traffic area shall be \$4 per vehicle for the first 1,000 vehicles, and \$3 per vehicle in excess of 1,000 vehicles; and, further, that interest on loans raised for road purposes can be included as expenditure on roads for the purposes of matching money; but that does not require an amendment to the legislation.

Those are the amendments. I doubt whether I should go on. There has not been much talk on State control of traffic, but I have various statements which have been made by members opposite as to what they would do in regard to traffic control. The member for Belmont read out the particular plank in the platform of the Australian Labor Party. I will only say this: There is no doubt that this form of legislation which is proposed will give a better deal all round than any deal that a Labor Government would give.

Perhaps the last thing I should say is that I anticipate that the traditional method of trying to drive a wedge between the coalition parties will probably be used in the Committee stage; and I have no doubt that some sort of amendment will be put up by the Opposition which will probably awaken certain responses in the ears of some Country Party members. I just want to tell the Opposition that many concessions have been given in respect of this legislation—concessions that are of no mean order. They are not pitiful concessions, as was stated in the telegram from the Swan-Guildford Shire. These concessions amount to a very substantial sum of money. It is impossible to go on trying to accede to further requests from the Opposition, which so far has proved itself to be irresponsible.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

Reference to Select Committee

MR. BICKERTON (Pilbara) [5.15 p.m.] : I move—

That the Bill be referred to a Select Committee.

It must be obvious to most members in this Chamber, from the debate that took place on this measure earlier and on this occasion, that there is a great diversity of opinion as to the wisdom of the legislation. I think it is reasonable for this Parliament to assume that the delay that occurred has brought to light many things which had not been considered previously. Therefore I consider that a Select Committee would bring to light much more additional information before this matter was settled—a matter which so vitally affects the local authorities in this State—and would ensure that a thorough investigation was carried out.

I cannot think of a better way to carry out the investigation than by the appointment of a Select Committee of this Parliament, with the object of giving due consideration to all the matters concerned, and of allowing the officials and the Ministers—if they so desire—to have some say before the Select Committee as to what the final formula should be, so far as the local authorities in this State are concerned.

Mr. Jamieson: Even some Country Party members would support that.

MR. BICKERTON: I do not accept the fact that all local authorities are happy with the formula that has been proposed; there are many which are not happy with it. I suppose, as the Minister has suggested, this will always be the case in a matter such as this; but so far as I am concerned I know of three shire councils in my electorate—I have not had any communication from the others—which are not happy with the amount of money they will lose, taking into consideration the progress that is going on in their areas and the additional registrations which must come about as a result of the increase in the number of vehicles.

I notice, for example, that the Wittenoom Shire is of the opinion that in the next year it will lose at least \$9,000 under the proposals in the Bill. I think the figure for the Port Hedland Shire is around \$16,000, taking into consideration the increase in motor vehicles in that area. The comments of the Onslow Shire, whilst it does not give any actual figures, indicate that it will lose a considerable amount of revenue should certain projects in the area be proceeded with. The Marble Bar Shire is, in many respects, very outspoken; it feels that having reached the stage where mineral developments have progressed so far as to enable it to obtain additional revenue—something it had been looking forward to for years—this formula will, to a considerable extent, have a retarding effect. I cannot accept the claim that the majority of local authorities are in favour of the proposals before us.

There is every reason for an investigation, and a thorough investigation, to be carried out. The proposals in this legislation are to apply for all time. Certainly from the attitude of the Government one can be excused for arriving at this conclusion. If that is to be the case, and if the future requirements of all local authorities are to be governed by this legislation, then it is only fair to have a thorough investigation into this matter to ensure that justice is done to the local authorities.

I think the members of this Parliament could well ease their consciences in the knowledge that something was not pushed through because of some temporary agreement by a coalition Government. They would be able to say, not only to local authorities, but also to the people

who make up the local authorities, to the ratepayers within the area, to the taxpayers if necessary, and to the people who represent the shires in this Parliament, they had a good and adequate reason for wanting a thorough investigation before they were committed.

As it is now, we have gone some part of the way by getting away from the Bill originally brought before us. This was brought about by the fact that the local authorities held a conference. The Minister has told us they were happy. I was not present so I do not know whether the Minister's statement is true or not, but I assume it is true, seeing he made the utterance, and I do not accuse him of making a false statement.

How this compromise was arrived at we do not know. We do not know what sort of pressure was put upon those people so that they would agree. We do not know whether they were told that if they did not agree the Government would stick to the original legislation. We do not know any of these things.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: There was nothing of that.

Mr. BICKERTON: Again I accept the Minister's word. However, the thought could have crossed their minds that they were faced with a *fait accompli* and if they did not come to some agreement with the Minister they would be in a worse situation than if they did. So for that reason a Select Committee on this matter would clear it up.

It is obvious from remarks already made on this Bill that there is no need for me to go into any detail in regard to what it contains or what the amendments contain. I am speaking purely on my motion that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee.

MR. TONKIN (Melville—Leader of the Opposition) [5.23 p.m.]: I think it was perfectly clear from what the Minister in charge of the Bill said that further inquiry into this matter is not only desirable but necessary. This is a complex Bill. It is a difficult Bill, despite what the Minister says; and his own Premier recognised that it was because he said, on page 3486 of *Hansard*—

It is controversial because it is a difficult piece of legislation. First of all, it was difficult to draw up, and, secondly, it was difficult to explain.

Representatives of the Cockburn Shire Council sought information about the proposals in the Bill and one of the representatives advised his shire as follows:—

I would advise that on Tuesday, 10th instant, in the company of Mr. R. W. Brown, I have conferred with Mr. J. Vance and Engineer McKenzie, of the

Main Roads Department, to acquaint myself with the principle and application of C.R.A. Grants.

I attach herewith a report of my findings, which I reproduced to the best of my understanding; I stress this point for the reason that some parts of the Commonwealth Roads Act have confused officers of the Main Roads Department.

Here is a case of an officer reporting to his shire that after having conferred with officers of the Main Roads Department—who in good faith did their best to enlighten these people—he had to say that he did not fully understand the situation because officers of the Main Roads Department were still confused.

Furthermore, we have had it stated here that no local authority is going to be disadvantaged. I have a letter from the Shire of Blackwood, dated the 10th June, stating that at a special meeting of that council held on the 3rd June, 1969, the following motion was carried:—

That this Council considers that the suggested proposals by the State Government for the payment of funds from the State's Pool for Funds, for roadworks to country local authorities is unacceptable to this Shire. Our Members of Parliament should ensure that vehicle license revenue remains the lawful revenue of local authorities, be so written into the appropriate Acts, and further more, be equitably matched from Commonwealth Road Grants.

The Shire of Wyndham-East Kimberley informed me it had made submissions to the member for the district (Mr. Ridge, M.L.A.), The Hon. F. J. S. Wise, M.L.C., and to the Minister for the North-West stating as follows:—

Under the proposed legislation for distribution of Commonwealth Aid Road Funds, this Shire and other developing Shires, particularly in the North, will be penalised.

As all vehicle license fees must be paid to the Main Roads Trust Account this Shire will lose the increase in license fees, less the difference between the base year 25% and the amount to be retained for collection of licenses. The amount of loss will increase proportionately each year. This means that this Shire, and other fast developing Shires, will be subsidising static Shires, and others to a lesser extent, with the increasing amounts received in traffic licensing fees.

The North of the State is a country of big milcages and Shires here are involved in higher plant operating and maintenance costs, higher wages, and higher fuel costs than local authorities in the South, but are not to receive a proportionately larger

amount from the funds available. Increasing registrations means more traffic and greater road usage and with restricted funds the northern Shires will be doing progressively less construction and more maintenance while at the same time providing progressively larger subsidies from vehicle registrations to those Shires which are increasing their registration fees by a very small amount or not at all. A lot of these Shires have reached the stage where the percentage of new construction is a very minor part of their yearly road programme.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall that when the original Bill, which is on the file, was brought here, it was only after the approval of both parties in the coalition.

If both parties in the coalition had not approved the provisions in that Bill, it could not have been brought here by the Government. So it has to be accepted by the Opposition that the Bill as originally drawn represented the Government's proposals, supported by both wings of the Government. Despite what attempts might now be made to show that a section of the Government was not in support of the Bill, and because of this opposition the Bill was delayed, it should never have been brought here if there was opposition on the part of members of the Government. But it was brought here.

We were given to understand by the Minister himself that it was a good Bill, because he concluded his speech by saying, "I commend the Bill to the House." There was no dissentient voice from those on the Government side to indicate that they did not support that commendation.

It was the Opposition which pointed out that insufficient time had been made available to study the provisions, and that it was unfair to the local authorities to pass the legislation. I personally said that even after a week's adjournment, which the Government conceded to me, I was not fully *au fait* with the provisions and I suggested that the Bill should be deferred until the July session or, if that meant difficulties for the Government, then a special session should be called and we would guarantee the Premier a pair so there would be no worry on that score. It was the Opposition which argued for the delay and for time for further consideration.

Now what has happened? As a result we have what is virtually a new Bill. The basic principle is still there—that is, to take from the local authorities their vehicle license fees—but the way in which they are to be given grants has been altered not once, but more than once, showing that insufficient consideration was given to the matter in the first place. We now have a situation where within the last few days officers of the Cockburn

Shire, who attended the Main Roads Department for the purpose of becoming *au fait* with the provisions, have had to say that they are still in doubt for the very reason that the officers of the Main Roads Department are not themselves in a position to state definitely what is involved in the legislation.

In those circumstances should we, as responsible members, pass the Bill as it is and let the shires find out in due course that further amendments are necessary and desirable? Why, it is already claimed on behalf of Albany that the delay and consequent amendments mean a gain to them of \$46,000 in the new road plan, and maybe, if this Bill is referred to a Select Committee, further inequalities and anomalies will be discovered and the Government will be prepared to make additional concessions.

Let me point out that the very basis of Federal aid roads money was a relationship to vehicle registrations, and the Commonwealth, in its current legislation in regard to the new formula, makes its disbursements to the States in relation to vehicle registrations; but this Bill departs completely from that so far as grants to country shires are concerned, and no satisfactory explanation has been vouchsafed to justify such a revolutionary change as is now being made in connection with the administration of this very important area of government.

It must have amazed other members, as it did me, to hear the Minister for Works suggest that we on this side should have trooped down to the Main Roads Department to discuss the Government's proposals. I can just imagine what would happen if I presented myself at the office of the Department of Industrial Development and wanted to be told the proposals in some of the iron ore agreements to be brought to Parliament!

Mr. Graham: Or at the S.E.C. concerning oil prices!

Mr. TONKIN: Just how far would I be expected to get? We are not to be caught with that chaff.

Mr. Graham: This is consumed chaff.

Mr. TONKIN: As a matter of fact, the way this Bill is being handled is a complete shambles and most unfair to the Opposition. A Bill was introduced in the first place and its provisions explained. The Leader of the Opposition then addressed himself to the provisions in that Bill. In the meantime, following a series of conferences, the Bill is to be amended extensively, but with the Leader of the Opposition having no opportunity to express his opinion on the new proposals.

However, because of our desire to hear what the new proposals are, the Minister in charge of the Bill is given what is virtually an opportunity for a second reading speech, and then, finally, the right of

reply. So, three speeches to the Minister in charge of the Bill, and one speech to the Leader of the Opposition. That is the very negation of the form of government to which we subscribe. The proper thing for the Government to have done in this situation, when it saw the necessity for drastic amendment, was to withdraw the first Bill and introduce a new Bill in the new form, and let us start *de novo*. But that was not done and so we were placed at a considerable disadvantage in connection with it and therefore we are entitled to protest, as indeed we do.

We will endeavour to afford the shires a further opportunity to present to the Government their points of difference and their dissatisfaction. It is all very well for the Minister to say that he was present at the meeting of shires, and that finally, after he had made a number of concessions to them, they expressed their satisfaction and went away happy and contented.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I did not say, "happy and contented."

Mr. TONKIN: All right. Perhaps the Minister did not say quite that, but he implied it.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: No, I didn't. I said that it is impossible to satisfy everyone completely.

Mr. TONKIN: A person can go away happy and contented, even though he is not completely satisfied.

Mr. Jamieson: It depends what you may be up to.

Mr. TONKIN: A person may go to the racecourse hoping to win \$1,000. He might win only \$500 in which case he could go away happy and contented although not completely satisfied.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition has another five minutes.

Mr. TONKIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I caused inquiries to be made of the country shire councils, the Local Government Association, and the country town councils as to whether, and to what extent, they were satisfied with the proposals now being presented to Parliament, and the answer I received was that the Government's proposals were accepted as a compromise, but that they still believed in and would fight for a situation where the license fees as an expanding source of revenue would remain the property of the councils.

That is the situation as I believe it to be. What else could it be? We start off with a Bill which is a bad one and a disadvantage to them. They discuss the matter with the Minister and, as a result of pressure from a number of quarters, the Minister makes concessions and says, "That is as far as I am prepared to go."

One could not expect them to refuse that and to say they would not have them. So, they were accepted as a compromise but the representatives went away dissatisfied and they believed they could do better. We also believe they ought to do better and that is why we are moving for a Select Committee to see if they can justify their claim for treatment different from that which the Government now proposes to give them.

Perhaps a Select Committee would afford some members that opportunity to express their viewpoint, if they have one, which they have been afraid to do during the course of this debate.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe—Minister for Works) [5.41 p.m.]: I cannot accept the proposition advanced by the Opposition for a Select Committee to inquire into this legislation. I believe it is only a device to delay the implementation of this measure which will bring benefits to the State of Western Australia.

It should be remembered that at the beginning of the new financial year the old pattern of a central road trust fund, and moneys being paid from that fund, ceases. If nothing is done to correct the situation then certainly a difficult financial position will be created, to say the least.

It seems that the Opposition is pursuing its attempt to try to create this vacuum; trying to create a situation where there will be discord within the departments and Government affairs to perhaps highlight what the Opposition feels to be Government inadequacies. Well, we cannot fall for that trick so this motion should be opposed.

The member for Pilbara spoke about the impossibility of satisfying everybody completely, and he tended to agree with me. Even the Leader of the Opposition has just mentioned the fellow going to the races. The same thing applies to parliamentary salaries. We rarely see members leaving the Chamber satisfied after an increase in parliamentary salaries.

Mr. Bickerton: We had the equivalent of a Select Committee on that matter.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON: There was dissatisfaction with certain features of this measure but by a democratic means we have arrived at the final amendments as presented to this House. Negotiations took place around a table; there was continual hard work and talking; and this was done in the best way possible. The time has been used properly by the Government and I very much doubt whether the time has been used properly by the Opposition.

MR. H. D. EVANS (Warren) [5.44 p.m.]: The desirability of referring this amending Bill to a Select Committee should not be dismissed lightly. The reasons for so

doing could actually transcend the State level and bring the matter into the field of the Commonwealth.

I have no doubt that during the course of the debate members have noticed the broad analogy that exists between the treatment by the Commonwealth of the States and the treatment of local government by this State. If we look at the origin of the Commonwealth grant we find that the word "grant" is a misnomer.

In the first instance, the petrol tax collection could not be undertaken by the States for constitutional reasons, so it fell upon the Commonwealth to collect this excise, or fuel tax, and the Commonwealth had only the legal right, not the moral right, to retain more than that portion of the tax which covered the administration of its activities.

However, in the course of time, the Commonwealth has seen fit to view the petrol tax as a revenue right and, accordingly, has channelled a considerable amount of it into the General Revenue Fund. To say that funds are a Commonwealth grant is a misnomer. They are, in effect, the right of the States.

In the past 10 years something like \$1,930,000,000 has been collected by the Commonwealth Government by way of customs and excise duties on petrol. A sum of \$1,331,422,000 has been returned to the States under the Commonwealth Aid Roads Act. The disparity is very considerable. In addition, there is a sales tax figure which amounts to \$1,103,000,000; but it would be very hard to debate whether the States had any legitimate claim to this money. However, from its inception, the petrol tax has been the prerogative of the States. This is something the Opposition has recognised and is prepared to remedy, as my deputy leader pointed out.

The increase which will come about in the next quinquennium is of interest. In the last five years \$1,147,000,000 was collected from motor spirit. A sum of \$750,000,000 was distributed to the States, and \$397,000,000 was channelled into general revenue. The Bureau of Roads estimates an increase of 5 per cent. over the next five years. I noticed that Senator Cant quoted Mr. Fairbairn, the Minister for National Development, as consistently considering the figure of 8 per cent. to 9 per cent.

Senator Cant contented himself with the 8 per cent. increase and he has shown that in the next five years the Commonwealth will collect \$459,000,000 more than it will distribute. Even if we take the 5 per cent. considered by the Bureau of Roads we find that there will be an increase of \$314,000,000, and yet the States are still starved for road funds. We have the spectacle of country shires having to increase their rates and of further burdens being imposed upon them.

On the other side of the particular analogy to which I have referred we find that the State, too, will be the recipient of a substantial natural increase. The Main Roads Department will receive, in addition to the road maintenance tax, increased revenue as a natural consequence of the increased number of licensed vehicles, as distinct from any monetary increase that may be provided for in the interim.

It is interesting to note that the taxes on the operation of motor vehicles—the tax on licenses, the road maintenance tax, and the like—in 1965-66 amounted to \$12,425,000. In 1966-67 the figure was \$16,556,000, and in 1967-68 it was \$18,086,000. This revenue will increase in the next quinquennium.

As a matter of fact, the Country Shire Councils' Association, expecting an increase of 5 per cent. in license revenue, estimated that \$42,000,000 would be collected in that five years, of which \$3,500,000 would be distributed to the shires.

Mr. Bickerton: Good reason for a Select Committee.

Mr. H. D. EVANS: That is the point I am endeavouring to make.

Mr. Bertram: You have made it.

Mr. H. D. EVANS: There is a further point and to this end I would draw the attention of members to an article which appeared in *The West Australian* of the 11th June, entitled, "Pressure Could Go On Government."

In it, the President of the Country Party made a rather succinct observation. He pointed out that matching proposals had been included in the State legislation because of a Bureau of Roads survey which showed that Western Australia's road expenditure from local authority funds was only \$8 per head compared with \$19 per head and \$17 per head in New South Wales and Victoria respectively. He went on to point out that the expenditure in the metropolitan area was \$5 per head while in the South-West Land Division it was \$24 per head. This is the *per capita* amount of road expenditure.

This is a further reason for a closer study to be made of the Bill, as these issues are of a very broad nature. The Minister indicated that unanimous agreement had been reached with the executive of the Country Shire Councils' Association. I am not prepared to enter into a dispute on his comment, but I must stress one point; namely, the shires have always accepted the principle that license revenue is their right. They still hold to this view. I feel quite sure they have not changed their minds about what is virtually the crux of the situation. To deny them this right relegates them to the role of tax

agents; they become a collecting agent on behalf of the Government. For these three reasons I support the motion for the appointment of a Select Committee.

MR. DAVIES (Victoria Park) [5.53 p.m.]: What a pity the Government has not taken the opportunity to put this matter before a Select Committee. We appreciate the Government's position. Canberra has given the State a certain amount of money and the Government has to distribute this as fairly as possible. This is a tremendous problem.

It would be quite unfair to say that the matter has not been given careful consideration by members on this side of the House. If the Minister had read the speech made by the member for Warren in the earlier period of this session of Parliament, or reread the speech made by the Leader of the Opposition, he would have found out that a considerable amount of thought had been put into the matter and that good opinions were expressed. Obviously the Minister is not concerned with what members on this side of the House have to say. The Government is concerned with keeping unity within its own parties. The Minister has denied that a considerable amount of dissatisfaction was expressed when the Bill was first brought down. However, it was for this reason that substantial amendments have been proposed, despite what the Premier indicated.

The attitude of the Opposition was not to put a wedge between the Liberal Party and the Country Party. The Minister has said that this is an important piece of legislation and members on this side of the House wanted to know what members on the other side thought of the measure. We know what the Minister thinks, but what about the private members? Do they have nothing to say on the proposals? Surely they feel like getting to their feet and saying, "We would like the opportunity to say that although this is not wholly what we would like, we support it with some reservation"; or "It is wholly what we like"; or "We do not like it at all."

Excepting the occasion when the Premier took the opportunity to adjourn the measure until a special sitting of Parliament, we have heard only one speaker from the Government side of the House on what has been described as the most important piece of legislation in two sittings of Parliament.

Is it fair to say that the Opposition is only concerned with knocking the legislation? We are trying to put forward the views of some people who have come to us and we are now seeking the opportunity, on their behalf, to have the matter properly decided.

The Minister has accused us of indifference. He said that not one member from

this side of the House had been to the Main Roads Department. The Minister is wrong, for there was at least one member who went to that department, spent some time there, and came away with an opinion which was exactly the same as that expressed in a letter read by the Leader of the Opposition; namely, the Main Roads Department was confused on the matter.

Let me remind the Minister that when I passed him and the Commissioner of Main Roads in the corridor upstairs, I suggested that it might be a good idea if the commissioner came and spoke to us. The Minister agreed. In fact, he said, "Yes, that is a good idea." I thought the Minister had taken the hint and that he would make the offer, but he did not do so. He is as much to blame as I or anybody else that the commissioner did not address the members of the Labor Caucus.

It is useless trying to overcome the difficulties which exist by this kind of attitude. Our task is to ensure that the views of the people concerned are properly put before the Parliament. Many of those people have come to us, but their views have been ignored by the Government. The Opposition has been accused of adopting the wrong approach; of not putting up alternative suggestions; and even of not saying what is wrong with the Bill.

Obviously, the only idea which is exercising the mind of the Minister is that the Opposition is trying to put a wedge between the Country Party and the Liberal Party. We do not have to try to do that, because it is there and has been there for a long time. Members have only to listen to a few of the corridor speeches to know that statement is perfectly true.

The Minister has said that the Bill, as it appears in a substantially amended form, has the complete agreement of the executive of the Country Shire Councils' Association. Who make up the executive of the Country Shire Councils' Association? Can the Minister tell me the number of people involved, because I do not know?

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: There are over 20 members.

Mr. DAVIES: Is it alleged that these 20 members are representative of all the shires?

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Yes.

Mr. DAVIES: I suggested that although the executive may have agreed, many of the shires themselves still do not know what has been agreed to. It seems to have been kept secret by the members of the executive. I should imagine that the various shires are not bound to agree to

what the executive agrees. Surely to goodness they are allowed to express themselves freely! If they feel that the executive has made an incorrect decision, then they should have an opportunity to put forward their own point of view.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Many of them did this. They wrote to me and to the Commissioner of Main Roads. Many letters have been sent back to them.

Mr. DAVIES: Have any further amendments been made following on the views which they expressed?

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Yes.

Mr. DAVIES: I think this emphasises all the more the need for a Select Committee. If the Minister has received some correspondence, and if letters are still going backwards and forwards, let us have the matter thrashed out by a Select Committee. If there is satisfaction that the Bill, as it stands now, provides for a fair and equitable distribution of the funds, then the sittings of a Select Committee would last for only a few days at the most, and certainly a satisfactory decision would have been arrived at to cover the distribution of funds over the next five years.

This is the only way the matter could be fairly decided. It is not a device to delay the Bill, as the Minister said. We are going to receive the money and it does not matter when we receive it. The Minister knows, as well as I do, that Canberra has offered an amount of \$200,000,000-odd over the next five years, which represents an increase of 50 per cent., or something like that, over the amount received in the last five years. Canberra is not going to say, "You are not going to receive it because you have not amended your legislation." Instead, Canberra will say, "You will receive it when you amend your legislation." I am sure the State as a whole would not stop because of the attitude of Canberra or the threats which have been made. In any event, I consider this is a threat which the Minister has made in an effort to induce members of the House to vote his way.

I am sure that much dissatisfaction still exists. I do not deny that the Government has attempted to overcome difficulties which have been aired, and I am still amazed—I almost cannot believe it, although I know it is a fact—that only one member of the Government other than the Premier has spoken on this important piece of legislation.

I am sure there are other members opposite who could have given us the benefit of their experience, even if they support the Bill wholeheartedly or with reservations. The members of the Opposition who have country shire councils in their electorates have taken the matter to those authorities and have brought back the views of the councils and presented

them to this House. Surely to goodness the same thing must have happened with regard to members of the Country Party and members of the Liberal Party who have country shire councils in their electorates. Those members must have spoken to their various local authorities, and should have views to put forward.

If their shire councils are satisfied, members opposite can get up and tell us that they are satisfied; that we on this side are completely wrong; that we are wasting the time of the House; and that there is no need for a Select Committee because the Bill as it stands now is completely acceptable. But not having heard the views of those shire councils which members opposite represent, there is only one other thing we can do, and that is to appoint a Select Committee which will give an opportunity to representatives of the local authorities themselves to come and tell us their views if the properly elected persons fail to do so. I support the motion.

Point of Order

Mr. BICKERTON: Mr. Speaker—

The SPEAKER: The member for Pilbara has no right of reply.

Mr. BICKERTON: May I seek some guidance from you, Sir, on this matter?

The SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr. BICKERTON: I respectfully submit that this is a substantive motion. In our Standing Orders we have a definition of a substantive motion and it says—

"Substantive Motion" is a self-contained proposal submitted for the approval of the House and drafted in such a way as to be capable of expressing a decision of the House.

I submit, Sir, that this is a motion which is based in such a way as to express a decision of the House, and therefore it would be a substantive motion. It comes within the time limits under the normal times of debate for a substantive motion and, in that case, Sir, the mover has the right of reply. Am I correct?

The SPEAKER: No; It is not a self-contained proposal. It is a procedural motion, and so it does not get to first base.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

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

Ayes—20

Mr. Bateman	Mr. Lapham
Mr. Bertram	Mr. May
Mr. Bickerton	Mr. McIver
Mr. Brady	Mr. Molr
Mr. H. D. Evans	Mr. Norton
Mr. T. D. Evans	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Graham	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Harman	Mr. Toms
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Jones	Mr. Davies

(Teller)

Noes—24

Mr. Burt	Mr. Mensaros
Mr. Cash	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Court	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Craig	Mr. O'Connor
Mr. Dunn	Mr. O'Neill
Mr. Gayfer	Mr. Ridge
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Ruaciman
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Rushton
Mr. Kitney	Mr. Stewart
Mr. Lewis	Mr. Williams
Mr. W. A. Manning	Mr. Young
Mr. McPharlin	Mr. I. W. Manning (Teller)

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr. Hall	Mr. David Brand
Mr. Fletcher	Mr. Bovell
Mr. Burke	Dr. Henn

Question thus negatived.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr. W. A. Manning) in the Chair; Mr. Ross Hutchinson (Minister for Works) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1 put and passed.

Clause 2: Commencement—

Mr. TONKIN: It was our desire to offer an opportunity to have further inquiries made into this Bill before it became law, but having failed in that we now think it is a reasonable proposition for it to continue in existence for one year only. During that time local authorities will have experience of the Government's proposals. In the light of previous experience it is reasonable to assume that the Government might be prepared to make further concessions. During the 12 months' period some local authorities may be able to point out to the Government the inequalities of the legislation and show that they are being treated unfairly as compared with other shires. The Government would not be embarrassed, because the legislation would be on the Statute book and this would enable it to operate under the provisions of the measure.

In the meantime valuable experience would be gained on how the provisions would operate; and, if they were satisfactory, as the Government would lead us to believe, then in 12 months' time there would be no difficulty in re-enacting the legislation. Therefore, I move an amendment—

Page 2, line 2—Insert after the word "sixty-nine" the words "and shall remain in force for the period of twelve months and no longer".

As I have pointed out, the addition of those words would not present any difficulties to the Government. The legislation would be brought into operation and the local authorities could ascertain whether they are satisfied; whether some of them are barking up the wrong tree and have no basis for their complaints, as the Government would have us believe. The amendment will let them appreciate that they are all better off than they would

have been, and the various points can be presented to the Government. Also, in the meantime, the officers of the Main Roads Department can learn more about the provisions in the legislation and be in a better position to advise local authorities that are looking for the information they cannot get at present.

There is no satisfactory substitute for experience. One can have all the ideas and theories in the world as to how something should operate, but when it is put into practice the theories do not always work out. To some extent this is experimental legislation. The Government has stated that it has had to present what is almost a new Bill, so there is considerable ground for improvement. We submit that 12 months' experience of the operation of this new law will be invaluable as a guide to the Government and the various local authorities, and nobody will be disadvantaged. In 12 months' time, if everything has worked out according to plan, it will be simple for the Government to come back here and say, "This legislation has operated successfully and has the approval of all the shires," or to say, "In the light of our experience we acknowledge that certain improvements are desirable. We are prepared to make these." The Government could then introduce an amending Bill to tidy up the whole matter. I cannot see any possible argument against this course, but I can see quite a lot in favour of it.

That is why we think this course is in the best interests of everybody. It would overcome the fears of people who, for no reason at all, are apprehensive of their financial commitments. It would also enable us to see what additional taxation has to be loaded onto taxpayers in the country who are already being taxed more heavily than ever before in the State's history.

That information can be gained by experience, and satisfactory amendments can be made if proved desirable, but if experience shows there is nothing wrong with the legislation, and it does all the Minister has endeavoured to convince us it will do, what problem would be presented to the Government if it agreed to the amendment? Argument for the re-enactment of the legislation would, I assume, be very strong if the shires were completely satisfied after their experience under this legislation. However, if the Government declines to provide this experimental period, it shows it is scared of what might happen if opportunity is granted to amend this legislation in the light of experience.

We will accept no responsibility if the opportunity is not afforded for further discussion on this legislation in 12 months' time.

I repeat that there is nothing unreasonable in our proposal. The Government could not, in a single particular, indicate how it will be disadvantaged. The whole scheme

can go ahead and operate, and because of that situation surely there is no valid reason for opposing my amendment.

Sitting suspended from 6.17 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The Government cannot agree to the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition. The Bill is prepared for a five-year period, to cover the next quinquennium, and it is essential that there be forward planning for road matters throughout the State. It would be silly to limit the legislation to one year and bring it up for review after that period. There is no necessity for the amendment. Should the Government think that amendments are necessary in due course, then these will be introduced in the normal manner.

Mr. JAMIESON: I am amazed and disappointed at the attitude of the Minister. If the Opposition has made the gaffe which the Minister suggests it has then surely this would save the Liberal Party money, because there would be no necessity for it to spend any money at the next election. It shows how much the Minister understands the position, and further indicates a lack of knowledge on his part and on the part of his advisers. His advisers have not been free from guilt in the statements they have made which, when checked, have not been in accord with fact. The legislation should be reviewed again next year and if everything has worked out satisfactorily there will be no reason at all why it cannot continue.

Mr. NORTON: I support the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition, because I feel it is worth while. The Minister said this is a five-year Bill and that it is necessary to plan ahead. We agree with that. We are not altering the nature of the Bill, to which the Minister himself proposes to move certain amendments; we merely ask that the legislation be brought up for review after 12 months.

In view of the lack of communication in the Gascoyne area, it is very difficult to transmit information to the various shire councils in that region. When the Bill was introduced the Government sent what was virtually a précis to each of the shires; no copy of the legislation was sent and the shires had no idea what the Bill contained until I forwarded them a copy.

The Minister supplied me with a copy of his proposed amendments, for which I thank him. I immediately had these copied and sent to the five shire councils in question. The Carnarvon Shire Council will receive its copy tonight; the Shark Bay and Exmouth Shire Councils will receive their copies tomorrow; but the Shires of Upper Gascoyne and Murchison will not receive their copies until Friday. So it is virtually impossible for me to receive any comment from these shires in sufficient time to put their points of view.

Mr. TONKIN: I foreshadowed that the Government would find the greatest difficulty in advancing a single argument against my proposal. The Minister attempted to give one and said the Government had to plan five years ahead and because of this it could not agree to the proposal. The Minister, however, did not attempt to show how my amendment would in any way prevent the Government from planning for the full period. The Government has a majority, or it would not be the Government, and if it were in a position in 12 months to show the legislation had worked as it claims it should, the Government would not have the slightest difficulty in having this legislation re-enacted, and there could not possibly be any interruption to the five-year period.

The Minister must think we are in the kindergarten stage if he expects us to accept the argument he advanced as to why the proposal cannot be accepted. My amendment in no way inhibits the department. It could still plan for a full period of five years and proceed on the assumption that the legislation will be re-enacted.

What the Government is afraid to do is to trust the Assembly to have another look at the legislation in 12 months' time in the light of the experience that will be gained during the period of its operation; and it is not prepared to grant the local authorities a 12 months' period in which to discover just how the legislation will operate. The Government will not run that risk; it wants to have the legislation enacted now with no guarantee that amendments will subsequently be made.

I hazard a guess that none will be made, because no opportunity will be presented to us. The Government will not take that risk; so the only reason the Government has for not agreeing to the amendment has not been advanced, but it is that the Government has doubts as to the actual operation of this Bill when it becomes an Act. The Government knows that in the meantime opposition will be raised by the shires; that they will substantiate their point of view by actual experience and will present the Government with such argument as to show that this legislation should not have been passed in the form in which it will be passed. That is a risk the Government is not prepared to take.

The Minister failed completely to advance one logical argument as to why the proposition from this side of the House should not be accepted. The argument he advanced has no validity whatever, because it does not affect the situation; so we must assume that the Government will not agree to this amendment, because it is not prepared to allow the shires and the councils to have a 12 months' period in which to gain experience, and to express their approval or otherwise. It wants to

avoid that, whereas we on this side of the House want to provide the opportunity to the local authorities.

We cannot influence the result. The experience will be what it will be under the provisions of the Bill, and if the shires benefit and are satisfied they will not be able to show otherwise; but if, as we anticipate, they are adversely affected and are obliged to impose additional taxation on people who are already overburdened with taxation then they will be in a position to say so. Of course, the Government would be faced with a very awkward situation if in 12 months' time it had to bring the legislation back for re-enactment. That is the only reason the Government can have for not being prepared to accept this proposal.

We have done our best to afford this opportunity to the country shires which want a further chance to appreciate what is involved in the legislation. I have already quoted sufficient to indicate that good as the officers of the Main Roads Department are—and I give them full credit for their ability and for the marvellous job they have done in this State over the years—they are still not completely aware of all the implications of the new Commonwealth proposals, and of how these will affect the local authorities.

Instead of getting on the telephone to the Commonwealth and finding out which roads are which and into which categories the roads fall, the Minister has written a letter about the matter. Of course, it makes a difference to the application of the provisions of this legislation as to which categories certain roads fall into. So, even at this stage full information is not available.

Surely that is a very good reason for setting a period—and it is a 12 months' period—to enable the matter to be dealt with in the ordinary way after this period of experimentation has been provided; but the Government says that will interfere with its 5-year planning, so it has to have authority to go ahead for the five years. It did not occur to the Minister that if as a result of experience he is prepared to bring in a Bill in 12 months' time to effect amendments those amendments will be contrary to the 5-year planning period. If there is a necessity to plan five years ahead, and this period cannot be interrupted, how will the Minister be able to bring in a Bill in 12 months' time if amendments are necessary? It is a little difficult to square up his argument.

The CHAIRMAN: The honourable member's time has expired.

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

Ayes—20

Mr. Bateman	Mr. Lapham
Mr. Bertram	Mr. May
Mr. Bickerton	Mr. McIver
Mr. Brady	Mr. Moir
Mr. H. D. Evans	Mr. Norton
Mr. T. D. Evans	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Fletcher	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Harman	Mr. Toms
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Jones	Mr. Davies

(Teller)

Noes—23

Mr. Burt	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Cash	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Court	Mr. O'Connor
Mr. Craig	Mr. O'Neill
Mr. Dunn	Mr. Ridge
Mr. Gayfer	Mr. Runciman
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Rushton
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Stewart
Mr. Kitney	Mr. Williams
Mr. Lewis	Mr. Young
Mr. McPharlin	Mr. I. W. Manning
Mr. Mensaros	(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr. Hall	Sir David Brand
Mr. Graham	Mr. Bovell
Mr. Burke	Dr. Henn

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3 put and passed.

Clause 4: Section 6 amended—

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move an amendment—

Page 2, lines 21 to 28—Delete all words and symbols and substitute the following passage:—

(d) the maintenance of roads and the provision and maintenance of street lights and traffic lights.

This clause is one dealing with the interpretation of "road construction" and includes certain items which define "road construction" apart from its general meaning. This clause was originally written on advice we had from the Commonwealth Bureau of Roads that "road construction" would include these items. However, when the Commonwealth Bill was produced "road construction" did not include the meaning of the lines to be struck out, so this amendment is necessary to conform more closely with the Commonwealth Act.

Mr. TONKIN: I have been under the impression that the Commonwealth legislation specifically excluded the servicing of roads with such things as lights. Now the Minister says the situation is the opposite. Is he sure of that?

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Yes, I am sure this is right.

Mr. TONKIN: I regret that at the moment I am not able to pick up the section in the Commonwealth legislation which I read earlier this evening, so I will have to accept that the Minister has been correctly informed by his officers on

this point. All I can do is express the doubt in my mind that the Commonwealth legislation did not provide that this money could be used for expenditure on lights. I know I read it in the report of the Bureau of Roads.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Not the operation of lights. That is being left out. The insertion of the new words will cover street lights but not their operation.

Mr. NORTON: Later on the Minister seeks to insert an interpretation clause, on page 7, which refers to the Commonwealth Aid Roads Act as it is now, and we find that under the interpretation of "roads" in the Commonwealth Act, lighting is mentioned, but it is not under "road construction." I am wondering whether there will be any conflict.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: There is no conflict.

Mr. NORTON: The Minister is putting lights under "road construction" whereas it is under "roads" in the Commonwealth Act.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: There will be no conflict.

Mr. BRADY: Do I understand that by accepting the amendment moved by the Minister the costs involved in the raising and redemption of loans for road construction will come under the interpretation of "road construction"?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I do not quite see the point but I think this explanation might suffice: There is no mention in the Commonwealth Act about costs incurred in the raising and redemption of loans for road construction being counted as "road construction"; and "costs incurred" mean things like advertising for loans. I think subsequently this might be included. If anyone feels interest is involved in this he should refer to the amendment on page 6 of the notice paper where interest is specifically included as an item for matching grants.

The deletion of these words is merely to conform with the Commonwealth Government's appreciation of what can be counted as "road construction." However, there are minor items which can be adjusted at a subsequent stage. They are not specifically mentioned in the Commonwealth Act, and I think subsequently these minor ones can be included.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 5 put and passed.

Clause 6: Section 32 repealed and re-enacted—

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move an amendment—

Page 3, lines 18 and 19—Delete the words "of collection and".

These words can be confused with the cost of collection of motor vehicle licenses by local authorities. The words are redundant and it is therefore requested that they be deleted.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move an amendment—

Page 4, lines 34 to 42—Delete all words, numerals and symbols and substitute the following passage:—

(a) a grant, payable annually, to every local authority, being the sum obtained by increasing the base grant,—

(i) as set out, in each case, in the Second Schedule hereto; or

(ii) as from time to time determined by the Minister,

by the percentage for the year shown in the table to this subsection; and

(b) subject to subsection (3) of this section, an additional grant, as provided by that subsection.

The Table.

Financial Year.	Percentage.
1969-1970	2
1970-1971	4
1971-1972	6
1972-1973	8
1973-1974	10

Paragraphs (a) and (b) of the amending Bill provide that the money to be paid annually to local authorities shall consist of the basic grant as shown in the second schedule and a further grant subject to the matching provisions of proposed subsection (3). The Government has already indicated that amendments will subsequently be made to provide the very valuable concession of a 2 per cent. escalation, which will rise to 10 per cent. in the fifth year.

Paragraph (a) (i) of the proposed amendment has been described. The grant is a sum over the base grant arrived at by virtue of the amount that was paid from the Central Road Trust Fund to local authorities in the 1968-69 base year.

I come now to the balance of proposed paragraph (a). When we will be dealing with the final amendment members will see that the base grant has been altered to provide that where the payments made in the last financial year are not as high as the average of the previous two financial years, the higher amount will prevail.

Paragraph (b) of the amendment provides that, subject to proposed subsection (3) of the section, an additional grant will be paid, in the terms I have already stated, with 2 per cent. rises

to 10 per cent. in the fifth year. Therefore this amendment will provide substantial additional sums to local authorities.

Mr. BRADY: Before this amendment is passed, I would like the Minister to clear up a query concerning subparagraph (ii) of paragraph (a). My interpretation is that if the base figure is not being reached by a shire on the way out financially, or a shire that is having difficulties, the Minister could give additional finance to help it over the stile.

On the other hand, it could be interpreted to mean that the Minister could, in specific instances where he thinks particular works are justified in an area, give additional money over and above the amount of the base figure plus 7 per cent. Could the Minister tell us exactly what that provision means?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The purpose of the amendment is to give additional flexibility to the Minister on representation to him. If it is found for any reason that a base grant requires amendment, then it can be so amended. For the information of the honourable member, I would point out that the base grant is not the same as the basic expenditure. Basic expenditure refers to expenditure from the shire's own resources while the base grant is a grant stipulated and laid down.

Mr. NORTON: Although the Minister has not said so, I take it that this amendment covers the escalation of costs over the following five years. Throughout the bureau's report, reference is made to the 1967 costs, which were referred to as the base figure. However, reference was also made to a cost increase per annum of 2.5 per cent. The reference is to be found in paragraph (iv) of item 1 of the report which reads—

A provision for future cost rises in respect of road works at about a rate of 2.5 per cent per annum during the period 1969-1974 would be appropriate.

I was taking this provision as covering the escalation of costs each year during the currency of the legislation.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: This provision is just to give flexibility. The base grant may be amended for any reason. There is provision for cost escalation in the table the Committee has just agreed to insert.

Mr. Norton: That is the one I am referring to.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: But the base grant is a different thing; it is in the schedule.

Mr. Norton: The table is an escalation of costs.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The honourable member can count it as an escalation of costs if he likes, but if the Minister decides, because of further escalations, that he wants to amend the base grant, then he can do so. However, this is not very likely. The provision is included in order that it will be possible to wipe out any inequities that might occur.

Mr. H. D. EVANS: The Leader of the Opposition was perfectly correct when he said that this proposed legislation had been received by the country shires with apprehension, misgiving, and a certain degree of mistrust. The reason for this attitude stems from the financial arrangement which this portion of the Bill provides for, and the difficulty most country shires will experience in complying with it.

As an observer I attended a number of special meetings, including one of the South-West Ward of the Country Shire Councils' Association, and also a special meeting of the shires association here in Perth.

There were two common factors of concern at all the meetings. The first was the difficulty that country shires would experience in meeting additional rating which would be demanded of them. The second was that there is to be a 2 per cent. increase. Any shire which is prepared to accept just a 2 per cent. increase, and is not prepared to endeavour to participate in the full grant which it could receive by reason of its own matching moneys, would be virtually standing still, or even worse. A figure of 2 per cent. would probably not cover the annual increase of costs.

A further cost would be occasioned by the difficulty in retaining traffic control. I think this will be fairly universal among the country shires. A third source of expenditure demanded of shires is the servicing of loans raised prior to the 1st July, this year. That will be a fairly significant factor with many shires that have borrowed heavily in the last few years.

Regarding the shires in my particular area, I feel that I would be remiss if I did not record their objections. I will refer, firstly, to Nannup and the difficulty this shire will experience. It is a small shire with some 500 licenses, which figure will indicate the revenue. The shire has a loan repayment programme in the next two years of the order of \$5,900 and \$6,000. That may not sound a great deal but the income of the shire is just over \$14,000.

Furthermore, a considerable area of conditional purchase land has been opened up 12 miles south of the shire and the cost of the road that will be required to service the area is very considerable. So there is one shire which will have an almost impossible task imposed upon it. Its rating level is very high, even at this stage.

The Shire of Denmark is not quite as badly positioned. It will show a loss of something like \$2,341 on traffic control and, having regard to the fact that traffic control losses cannot be met from the proposed grant, this amount will have to be obtained from other sources. The only other source is rating. Loan repayments involve \$9,000 in the coming year.

The Shire of Manjimup will also feel considerable stress. The loan repayments of that shire will be \$35,500 in 1968-69, and a further \$6,274 in the forthcoming year. I would like to point out a further difficulty in the case of Nannup and Manjimup: the amount of ratable land which the two shires are able to utilise. At Nannup the figure is just under 18 per cent. of the total shire, and this figure could extend to 20 per cent. in the foreseeable future.

The situation at Nannup is worse than at Manjimup. At Manjimup 27.8 per cent. of the shire area is ratable. This presents a considerable difficulty and when viewed in its correct perspective and compared with the development in the larger shires to the north and the north-east it indicates a problem of a specialised type. I also point out that a considerable number of Government vehicles are operating in these areas.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I am having difficulty in relating the honourable member's remarks to this particular clause. I would like the honourable member to bear in mind the wording of the clause.

Mr. H. D. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman; your tolerance is appreciated. The points I wish to raise concern the difficulties and the specialised problems of the shires, and the area for rating, which increases those difficulties still further. The district is developing and the timber industry is becoming very mechanised and demanding a greater use of the roads. Having regard to these factors, it is understandable that those shires should feel concern.

In addition to the shires that have directly expressed this feeling, I have received communications from other shires and organisations. The Great Southern Ward of the Country Shire Councils' Association wrote in similar fashion, and it protested at what it termed the ungenerous attitude of the State Government.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I cannot allow the honourable member to continue along these lines. Under this clause we are dealing with one particular aspect, and I cannot allow the discussion to spread.

Mr. H. D. EVANS: Very well, Mr. Chairman. The effects I have mentioned are very real and will affect the operation of the shires. I feel that the honorary work that has been the mainstay of local government in this State for so many years

will be jeopardised if shires feel they are merely collecting agents. Men of the calibre of those serving in local government at this moment could well turn elsewhere; they could even shun the shires.

If the rating is increased and is applied to rural industries, costs will be increased still further. About 25 per cent. of rural industry costs stem from transport, and the plight of farmers and country dwellers will be intensified still further. So in opposing this amendment I share the feeling of the shires I have mentioned.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The honourable member touched only tangentially on this particular amendment but he did bring up a matter which gives me an opportunity to read a letter from a country shire which formerly had some objections somewhat along the lines he has expressed.

I think it might be pertinent to read this letter, and the member for Collie will also be interested. It is dated the 13th June, not the 12th May. The letter is from the Esperance Shire Council and reads as follows:—

Dear Mr. Hutchinson,

Thank you for your letter of June 11th and the proposals embodied therein. As these recommendations are even more favourable to my council than the suggestions we offered, it is hoped that these will be embodied in the Act when finally approved.

The Shire President, Councillor W. S. Patterson, extends his sincere thanks for your efforts on our behalf.

Yours faithfully,

O. D. Drysdale,
Shire Clerk.

Mr. Jones: What is their rating value?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Their rating is very high indeed. In fact the basic expenditure is one of the highest of local authorities in the State. We are trying to assist these authorities by this legislation, in the same way as we are trying to assist some of the shires which are not growth shires and which would not receive any great increase in road grants. We are trying to cater for all sections, and the Esperance Shire is one shire which appreciates our efforts.

Mr. H. D. EVANS: Was not this shire cited as an unusual example at the country shires meeting?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: No, a number of them fall into the same category as the Esperance Shire. This typifies what will be the educated reaction to this legislation.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move an amendment—

Page 5, line 1—Delete the word, "further", and substitute the word, "additional".

This is a matter of terminology. The word "additional" describes the grants better than the word "further."

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move an amendment—

Page 5, lines 11 to 15—Delete all words and symbols and substitute the following passage:—

(b) the Minister is satisfied that the amount so expended exceeds either—

(i) the base expenditure of that local authority; or

(ii) the grant for that local authority, as provided by paragraph (a) of subsection (2) of this section;

and, in every case, the additional grant shall be an amount equal to the greatest excess expenditure or equal to

I should like to speak to this amendment in order that the Committee may have a clear idea of what is intended.

Subsection (3) of proposed new section 32 deals with the provisions of the matching scheme with the additional grant available to the local authorities for matching purposes increasing at a rate of 5 per cent. per annum. At first it was proposed to be cumulative but now it is proposed to be on the 5 per cent. increases.

I do not think it is necessary for me to describe the former scheme in any detail, but this 5 per cent. matching money is a part of the 7 per cent. increases that have been agreed to in the amendments that have been determined in the period between the two parliamentary sittings.

The Government became aware that in some cases where a local authority's base year expenditure was very high, it would be inequitable to take this high figure as the base expenditure for future years. Therefore, by subsection (4), the Minister has the power to set a lower base expenditure figure for exceptional cases.

The amendment gives further important concessions. In addition to the 2 per cent. escalating free grant which does not require to be matched, there is the 5 per cent. flat escalation of the base grant which does require to be matched.

An important concession has been made in the form of an alternative to the original matching requirement to ease the matching requirements of those local authorities with reasonable road expenditure efforts. Such a shire is Esperance.

Where a local authority's road expenditure from its own resources exceeds the sum of the base grant and the additional grants, to which the Committee has now agreed, that local authority will be deemed to have satisfied its matching requirements in any year and will receive the full matching grant. It is entitled to a *pro rata* grant if its road expenditure exceeds the base grant and 2 per cent. escalation, but does not exceed the 5 per cent. escalation.

A number of shires will be benefited by this means. Formerly, if a shire had a base grant of \$100,000 and a base expenditure from its own resources of, say, \$150,000, then the 5 per cent. had to be over and above the amount of \$150,000. This was not regarded as fair, because that shire had already discharged its duties and responsibilities in raising funds for road-making purposes.

Mr. Tonkin: The Minister thought it was fair in the first instance.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I freely admitted in my reply to the debate that the period won for this Bill has proved to be of value. Any shire in those circumstances will not need to increase its expenditure, because the amount of \$50,000 will carry over until that figure comes down to the base grant of \$100,000 plus the additional grants. Consequently, this is quite a valuable provision for the shires to have behind them, and I am referring particularly to the shires which are doing a good job.

Mr. NORTON: The necessity to match moneys to obtain further moneys does not seem to be a fair provision for at least two shires in my electorate; namely, the Shire of Murchison and the Shire of Upper Gascoyne.

At present the activities in those two shires are 100 per cent. pastoral. In future there could perhaps be some mineral development in the Shire of Upper Gascoyne, but there will not be any such development in the Shire of Murchison. Rating in a pastoral shire is based on unimproved value, which is set at the rental of a pastoral area. The Pastoral Appraisalment Board sets these rentals perhaps once every 10 years. Consequently the shires concerned find it very difficult to raise their rating in order to acquire extra moneys. I consider that it would probably be beyond their resources to obtain the extra matching money from year to year.

I would like to refer to vehicle registration. In 1968 the cars and station wagons registered by the Shire of Murchison numbered 42. The number of trucks and utilities—and these are only half rated, because they are used for pastoral purposes—was 121, making a total of 163.

The Shire of Upper Gascoyne has 55 cars and station wagons, and 130 trucks and utilities registered, and again, the trucks and utilities would be half rated.

Members can see that those shires are not likely to receive any increase whatsoever in the registration of vehicles, nor are they likely to be able to raise their rates, because their rating is already high and it covers vermin and other taxes.

From reading the Commonwealth Act it appears to me there is no requirement under that Act for any matching moneys to be made in this respect. The moneys, as far as the Commonwealth and this State are concerned, are allocated under six schedules.

The first schedule gives the basic grants State by State, and the Western Australian grant—using the grant for the 1st July, 1969 as a base figure—rises by—

	Per Cent.
Second Year	14
Third Year	30.5
Fourth Year	50
Fifth Year	72.7

Those grants are again split up under other schedules. The second schedule shows the amounts of principal grants to be expended on urban or arterial roads. These are the grants, of course, that affect this State the most. Using the base figure for 1969 once again, the percentage increases are—

	Per Cent.
Second Year	24.4
Third Year	54.6
Fourth Year	90.6
Fifth Year	132.5

The third schedule is for rural arterial roads, and the increases are as follows:—

	Per Cent.
Second Year	25
Third Year	55
Fourth Year	91.6
Fifth Year	133.3

The fourth schedule affects rural roads other than arterial roads, and I am particularly interested in it. It corresponds with the figures which the Minister intends to insert in a future amendment, and there is a distinct drop in the percentages of money allocated for this purpose. The increases are—

	Per Cent.
Second Year	5
Third Year	10.2
Fourth Year	15.7
Fifth Year	21.5

Those figures correspond almost exactly with the figures the Minister intends to insert into the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Gascoyne is now discussing the next amendment.

Mr. NORTON: It might appear so, Mr. Chairman, but I am coming back to the point that no matching moneys are required. I wish to set out my case in this respect, with your guidance.

There are no strings attached to those particular amounts as required under the Minister's amendment—that is, the re-

quirement of matching moneys. If we take license fees away from local authorities, we will take away one of the avenues by which extra moneys can be raised for road construction, maintenance, and so on. I feel that to include the restriction of having to raise matching money in order to qualify for this extra amount is not right, particularly as the schedule to the Commonwealth Act lays down very clearly that the increases are payable to the State in each of the five years. Therefore, if we are to follow the Commonwealth we should give increases without the need to raise matching moneys.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Very briefly, as a result of these linked amendments, about 60 local authorities will be exempted from the matching money requirement for at least the first year. In effect, this means they will not only get the 2 per cent. free money, but they will also get virtually 5 per cent. free money because of what they have already done with regard to raising money.

It is important that we try to place in this legislation something which provides for matching requirements. I think we should ensure that there is some incentive for those local authorities which are not playing their role in raising funds for roads through their own resources. We would be wrong if we did not try to give them an incentive to do this, having regard to the fact that the five-year period will end, and before it does the Bureau of Roads will look at the scene to determine what our share of the new moneys will be in the next quinquennial period.

Mr. Tonkin: Will the State use the amount spent by the local authorities to qualify for matching money as a basis for qualifying for matching money from the Commonwealth?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I am sorry, I cannot be sure of that. I will try to find out.

Mr. Tonkin: It will be pretty rough if it does.

Mr. JONES: I would like to know whether special consideration will be given to shires with special circumstances. I refer to the Collie Shire where the 5 per cent. matching money required to be met will impose a burden. This shire has a special problem in that 82 per cent. of its land is unratable due to water putrefaction, and other causes. The Collie Shire is rating at the maximum amount permissible at the moment. However, it will now have a greater burden in relation to other shires in raising the 5 per cent. I understand there are other shires in similar circumstances in the south-west. In these circumstances, is the Minister prepared to give special consideration?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I have stated, and the Commissioner of Main Roads has stated, that there will be certain

shires which will find it difficult to raise funds due to having reached their rating limit, or as a result of other special circumstances. If the commissioner has flexibility in his use of the funds he will be able to assist those shires. There are a number of shires which will require special assistance in one form or another. I cannot promise that they will get everything they ask for, but a serious attempt will be made to assist them in the annual grants made under the department's programme.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move an amendment—

Page 5, lines 23 to 27—Delete all percentage numerals and substitute the following, in the respective column:—

5
10
15
20
25

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move an amendment—

Page 5, line 28—Insert a subsection, to stand as subsection (4) of the re-enacted section, as follows:—

(4) Where the amount expended by a local authority on road construction, from its own resources, during any financial year, is greater than the sum of its base year expenditure and the quota for that year, the excess is deemed, for the purposes of this section, to have been expended by the local authority during the next succeeding year.

I have already hinted at this amendment in the description I gave of these related amendments. It is a further important concession in the matching scheme that is being introduced. The amendment provides that where the road expenditure of a local authority from its own resources is greater than that required for matching purposes in a particular year—that is, is greater than the basic expenditure figure, plus the matching requirement for that year—it can carry the excess expenditure over to the following year for matching purposes. This will assist those shires that are helping themselves.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move an amendment—

Page 5, line 38—Insert before the word "does", the following passage:—

includes expenditure for interest payments on loans applied for road construction, during the five-year period commencing on the first day of July, nineteen hundred and sixty nine, but

This is the means whereby we will ensure that interest may be counted with the matching moneys.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move an amendment—

Page 6, line 4—Insert after the passage, "Crown;" the word, "or".

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move an amendment—

Page 6, line 8—Delete the passage, "authority; or" and substitute the passage, "authority."

Mr. Tonkin: What is the reason for that?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: If the Leader of the Opposition studies the clause he will find that it will read better with the deletion that is proposed with the next amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move an amendment—

Page 6, lines 9 to 13—Delete all words and symbols.

As there is no need for these words in the Bill, they are redundant. When the Bill was first drawn it was thought they could be included, but it is now considered that the passage is wide enough without them.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. TONKIN: I move an amendment—

Page 7—Insert after proposed subsection (8) the following new subsection to stand as subsection (9):—

(9) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section above enumerated, no local authority will receive less in any year from the Main Roads Trust Account than it remits to the Main Roads Trust Account out of fees collected in respect of licences issued by it in the district wherein it exists.

During the course of the Committee discussion members on this side of the Chamber have pointed to the difficulties of various local authorities in raising sufficient money to qualify for matching money, and we feel that if we guarantee to the local authorities the full amount of the license fees they collect it will enable them to overcome these difficulties.

By interjection earlier I asked the Minister if the State intended to use the forced expenditure by a local authority to enable it to qualify for matching money from the Commonwealth, and although I am not perfectly clear on the position yet, it is my opinion that the Government will not be giving the local authorities anything out of its own resources. It will oblige them to tax their own taxpayers

to provide the money which will enable a shire to qualify for this 5 per cent. matching money, and it will then demonstrate to the Commonwealth that the State expenditure has been increased by the total of the expenditure by the various local authorities. That will enable the State to qualify for matching money from the Commonwealth, and the State will then give that money to the shires to match their expenditure.

So it will be the shires that will be carrying the burden of obtaining the matching money from the Commonwealth. One of the reasons we have fared so badly under the new formula that has been adopted is that the State as a State has not spent so much from its own resources in the years past. The Minister now blames a certain shire for hanging back and not doing its duty by raising money for certain expenditure, but the State did not set a very good example.

In the Senate the following question, No. 948, was asked by Senator Withers of the Minister representing the Treasurer, upon notice:—

- (1) What were the amounts of additional grant moneys paid to each State annually from 1959 to 1968 under the Commonwealth Aid Roads Acts 1959 and 1964?
- (2) What were the sources of State revenue on which the additional grant moneys were made available to the States?
- (3) What were the amounts claimed by the States from each source in order to qualify for additional grant moneys?

Senator Anderson replied:—

The Treasurer has provided the following answer to the honourable senator's question:—

Amounts paid or payable to the States under the Commonwealth Aid Roads Acts, 1959 and 1964, by way of additional grants are as follows:—

Then he sets out the totals paid to each of them. He then goes on to say that under the 1959 Act the amount of additional grant for which a State qualified was calculated by reference to the amount allocated each year by the State from its own resources for expenditure on roads. He then says—

Under the 1964 Act the amount of additional grant for which a State qualified has been governed by the amount expended by a State from its own resources on roads expenditure during the year concerned plus the amount set aside during that year and, not being spent in that year, expended within six months of the end of that year. The sources of State funds for these "allocations" or expenditures have been classified, for

purposes of administering the relevant sections of the Roads Acts, into (A) State Road Funds; (B) Consolidated Revenue; (C) Loan Funds; and (D) Other State Accounts. The amounts shown by States to have been allocated or expended from each of these sources over the period 1959-60 to 1967-68 in order to qualify for the additional grants are as follows:—

You will be interested to know, Mr. Chairman, that a little State like Tasmania was able to expend in every year from 1959-60 to 1967-68 a substantial amount, in every case exceeding \$1,000,000, from Consolidated Revenue.

Mr. O'Connor: Would the amount in Tasmania include motor vehicle license fees?

Mr. TONKIN: I do not know and I cannot see that it makes any difference.—

Mr. Court: It does, because they collect them centrally there

Mr. TONKIN: —because I am about to show that we spent nothing from Consolidated Revenue; to use the vernacular we did not spend the proverbial cracker. In addition, from loan funds Tasmania spent \$2,041,000 in 1959-60, \$1,681,000 in 1960-61, \$1,714,000 in 1961-62, \$938,000 in 1962-63, \$1,588,000 in 1963-64, \$1,200,000 in 1964-65, \$1,482,000 in 1965-66, \$1,000,000 in 1966-67, and \$450,000 in 1967-68. If we look at what was spent from Consolidated Revenue in Western Australia, between the period 1959-60 to 1967-68, we find the amount shown as nil. In the case of loan funds we find that for the period 1959-60 to 1963-64 nothing at all was spent; in 1964-65, \$800,000 was spent, and again nothing was spent during the period 1965-66 to 1967-68.

It is little wonder that the Bureau of Roads took a dim view of our performance as compared with the other States. Now all the State proposes to do is to say to the local authorities, "Put your rates up so that you can qualify for an extra 5 per cent., and when you do we will show the Commonwealth what good fellows we are in this State. That will enable us to qualify for the matching money they will provide and then we will pay it over to you, the local authorities."

That seems to me to be a most unfair situation. If the time were available I could illustrate this further by quoting the figures for some of the other States. I propose to do what the shires suggest ought to be done; what they tried to get the Minister to agree to do when he met their representatives in conference; what they still would want done, despite the suggestion that they went away satisfied from the discussions with the Minister.

In view of the fact that the number of vehicles is to increase substantially in certain shires, these shires will be called upon to find very much larger sums for

the maintenance of roads, because more vehicles will mean more road wear; it will mean, not more road construction but more road maintenance.

Accordingly the local authorities concerned will need additional funds and they have a right to expect that the whole of this additional money will not fall into the lap of the State, if it contemplates increasing the impost on the motorist—and the State Governments do that.

I notice the Premier of Victoria gave a guarantee to his motorists that they would finish up with the best freeways and expressways in Australia, with no additional tax to the motorist for five years. No such guarantee has been given here, so we must contemplate the possibility that additional taxation will be considered so far as motorists are concerned.

The shires will not benefit, but the Government will. This raises a question to which I hope you, Sir, will permit me to refer. I ask whether the Government has already obtained sufficient money to pay for the new office buildings being erected, because under the Commonwealth legislation it will not be able to claim a dollar from the funds being made available.

Mr. Brady: I do not think the Minister heard you.

Mr. TONKIN: This is an important point which must be considered. If the money has not already been appropriated and set aside, then not a dollar of the money under the new agreement will be available for the new office block.

Mr. Davies: They will have plenty of time to think about it, because the builders have gone broke.

Mr. TONKIN: When he had to face up to criticism on the reduction of money to certain States for expenditure in country districts, the Prime Minister said, "The States should direct their own revenue to unclassified rural roads." The Minister does not want to listen to that.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I am all attention.

Mr. TONKIN: The Prime Minister said, "The States should direct their own revenue to unclassified rural roads." That is apparently what this State is not prepared to do, although New South Wales has decided it will do that. Premier Askin made it perfectly clear to the people of his State that New South Wales would find the additional money to enable the country local authorities to carry out the road construction which was necessary in their districts.

The CHAIRMAN: The honourable member has one more minute.

Mr. TONKIN: The purpose of this amendment is to give the local authorities more money than the Government is prepared to give them under the provisions of the Bill. The amendment will meet the

requirements of the local authorities and, with the possible exception of the Esperance Shire, they are all asking for it. Certainly the shires in the north of the State want it, and I think it is a reasonable proposition.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: This amendment seeks to give the best of all worlds to local authorities. Before I go on with that I would like to say that if license fees are to be increased by the Government that will be the time for consideration to be given to the matters surrounding the point raised by the Opposition. Certainly at this point of time the Government has no intention of raising the license fees. It seems unlikely that we will increase these fees in the next five years, but who knows what may happen in the State within five years? There could be a Labor Government and it might increase the fees.

In essence, an amendment of this kind caters only for the shires. In order to treat everybody as fairly as possible we have introduced new and important amendments to the legislation which give approximately an additional \$3,000,000 to the shires. That is virtually in lieu of the proposal which the Opposition is introducing. The amendment moved by the Opposition would create inequities. Something of this very principle was first intended by the Country Shire Councils' Association. It was pointed out to that association that under a system of this kind there would be quite a number of inequities as between the country shires. Some of the shires which did not have growth rates and which were declining would see their neighbours getting richer and richer.

It would seem to me that an amendment of this kind could only be agreed to—although I do not propose to agree to it—if the local authorities were to forgo these concessions. We cannot have a free escalation of the table of 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 per cent. over the five-year period of the system, as suggested by the Leader of the Opposition.

I would point out in conclusion that the shires in which more and more licenses are being issued will receive an additional amount of \$4 for each vehicle for the first 1,000 vehicles, and \$3 for each vehicle thereafter.

Mr. Tonkin: That is peanuts!

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Nevertheless, the amount involved reaches a total of approximately \$640,000 a year, and this amount goes back to all the shires. For that reason the Government cannot agree to the amendment.

Mr. T. D. EVANS: I support the amendment. When I spoke on the second reading this morning I concluded by expressing a desire that there should be written

into this legislation an amendment such as the one now before us. This legislation has not been introduced at the behest of the local authorities; it has been forced upon them. The Minister said they cannot have the best of all worlds, but he is foisting the legislation on them. The local authorities have not requested a change at all.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: If there was no legislation they would not request it.

Mr. T. D. EVANS: This is a change which the local authorities are most reluctant to bring about.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You have agreed with this legislation. There was not a voice raised against it.

Mr. T. D. EVANS: The Minister should recall that the stand of the Opposition was that we would endeavour to make the legislation more acceptable to local authorities in Western Australia. In the second period of the present session of Parliament the Minister for Traffic introduced legislation requiring local authorities in the future to carry out inspections of vehicles on first and subsequent registrations, and on changes of registration. This is an expense which is foisted upon local government, but of course it will be paid by the motorists. However, certain administrative costs will be involved, and these will have to be borne by the local authorities.

Under the motor vehicle third party surcharge legislation the local authorities, when receiving registration fees for vehicles, collect a sum of \$2 per vehicle which they must remit to the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust; yet under the legislation before us we find there is very little incentive for them to be concerned with traffic control at all.

This brings me to the point I mentioned this morning. I see this legislation as a snide method and the thin end of the wedge to force local government to hand over, reluctantly but inevitably, traffic control to the Police Department. If that is the aim of the Government why should it not do it in the way the Australian Labor Party would do it; that is, by direct action and not through the back door. Local government, having been vested with the right of traffic control beyond the metropolitan area, rightfully looks upon this duty and privilege as its own. This legislation will take that right away from the local authorities, and will make them landlords or estate agents.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must point out to the honourable member that he is not speaking to the amendment at all.

Mr. T. D. EVANS: Under this legislation the local authorities will become mere collection agencies. We feel they should be given greater incentive. I support the amendment, and I earnestly hope that the majority of members will do likewise.

Mr. NORTON: In the north-west of the State the pastoral development that is taking place and the distances which the people there have to travel naturally create a great expense for the various shires in that area. By depriving them of the license fees their revenue will be reduced by quite an amount. By and large I cannot see that they will be compensated adequately.

The Minister said that if various shires were to retain the money from license fees, one would say that its neighbour was getting richer and richer while it was getting poorer and poorer, according to whether license fees received went up or down. However, if the amount received from license fees went down, there would not be the same amount of traffic and the local authority would not have to carry out the same amount of maintenance on roads. But if the amount received from license fees for vehicles was increasing, this would mean there was more traffic with additional wear and tear on the roads.

It would be interesting to know what amount is going to be taken from the various shires. Unfortunately, I have not the figures, but I do have figures for vehicle registrations of all shires in Western Australia. I intend to quote one or two in respect of shires in the north-west. On the 31st December, 1967, at Carnarvon, 999 cars or station wagons were registered, 734 trucks or utilities—and the majority would be of the heavy class, and paying big license fees—and 33 motor cycles, giving a total registration of 1,764 vehicles.

At Port Hedland, another fast-developing town, the registration of vehicles at the 31st December, 1967, was 597 cars and station wagons, 782 trucks and utilities—again, I think these would be heavy vehicles—and 24 motor cycles, giving a total registration of 1,385 vehicles. No doubt, that figure could have doubled by this time.

Going further north to Wyndham and East Kimberley we find that particular shire has 356 cars and station wagons on its register, 387 trucks and utilities—here again, I assume they are heavy vehicles paying big license fees—and 17 motor cycles, giving a total of 760 vehicles on the register. It is reasonable to assume that the number of licenses in this shire will greatly increase.

At West Kimberley the registration situation is rather unusual because there are considerably more trucks and utilities than cars and station wagons. The number of cars and station wagons registered in that shire was 313; trucks and utilities, 407; and 28 motor cycles, making a total of 749 registrations.

We see from these figures that the revenue of various shires from license fees is quite extensive and it would help those

shires if they could retain that revenue, even if it were repaid to them as suggested in this amendment.

Mr. LAPHAM: The basis of the complaints of the shires is the fact that they will experience a reduction in revenue. Referring once again to the fringe shires, they will have increasing costs due to a population explosion in their areas. The amendment proposed by my leader will, to some extent, take into consideration the fact that where there is an excessive increase in the population in the district of a particular shire, there will be a balancing effect inasmuch as instead of relying on the grant, plus the inflationary trend of 2 per cent. per year, there will be this additional provision which stipulates that the amount received by a local authority in license fees shall be the amount it shall receive as a grant for that year.

Local authorities are not asking for the best of two worlds, they are asking only for the best of one. At the present time a shire receives the amount it remits to the Central Road Trust Fund, plus 75 per cent. matching money. This comprises its revenue. Under the new arrangement, a shire will receive its grant, plus 2 per cent.

Where there is a terrific increase in the number of motor vehicle licenses, a shire will receive the amount stipulated as being obtained from additional licenses for that year. So it cannot receive less than the amount it remits. The amendment will provide a safeguard for any particular shire to receive an increase equivalent to its problem. It is a very fine amendment and I cannot understand why the Minister has rejected it. I ask the Minister to have another look at this question, because I feel that this is a worth-while proposal. Admittedly, the amendment has come from the shires which feel that it is the answer to their problems.

The amendment will make provision for shires to receive the equivalent of the amount of money they remit as license fees; but even this will not be sufficient, because at the moment they receive an additional 75 per cent. I support the amendment.

Mr. McPHARLIN: This is one of the matters which has created quite a lot of discussion and members of the Country Party have looked at it, studied it, and discussed it with the Minister and with the officers of the Main Roads Department, as well as with Mr. McCarrey from the Treasury.

I have here a question which was issued by the Minister relating to this subject. The question is as follows:—

Is this not just a device for taking vehicle licence funds away from local authorities?

The answer is—

No, just the reverse. An amount equal to the whole of vehicle licence

fees collected by local authorities plus a 75 per cent. supplementation is to be incorporated in the Base Grant which will be paid each year and increased by 2 per cent. plus 5 per cent. subject to the matching arrangements. Consequently whatever may be the future pattern of vehicle licensing or traffic control in country areas, local authorities are assured of retaining their funds in the form of a system of grants laid down in an Act of Parliament. The new system assures local authorities of the vehicle licence funds (with supplementation) in a different form, it does not take it away.

We have been assured by the officers of the Main Roads Department that this is the case. It is on this basis that I personally have gone along with the assurance.

Mr. TONKIN: Whatever one might think of the honourable member's acceptance of the assurance given, he is to be commended for getting up and expressing a point of view. It is refreshing to find that at least someone on the Government side, other than the Minister, has an opinion and is prepared to express it.

It is often said that in some instances silence speaks louder than words and this debate is one such instance where some members were afraid to trust themselves to say anything and, of course, the Ministers obviously were not prepared to trust them to try.

Understandably, the Commonwealth set out to prevent what it regarded as unjustified and unauthorised expenditure of Commonwealth money. So to some extent it took away the flexibility which was previously in the scheme and directed the channels in which the expenditure could be made. However, that does not mean that the same amount of flexibility or manoeuvrability cannot be obtained. It could be if the State itself were prepared to provide the funds; and this is one way of doing it, if the State is prepared to allow the local authorities to have this extra money—and I can tell the member for Mt. Marshall that I do not for a second accept the statement that the proposals in the Bill will ensure that the local authorities will receive as much money as they would receive if they were permitted to retain the license fees, as is suggested in this amendment.

I say this because it must be remembered that the basis which operated until now was the 1958-59 allocation—which is some time ago—plus 75 per cent. matching money. The measure proposes the present collection and the collection for future years, and to expect me to accept that the present arrangement is equal to the proposition in this amendment is to expect me to do something which is completely hopeless for me to do. The Minister knows the situation quite well and

ought to inform the member for Mt Marshall that he has the wrong impression.

I will agree that the improvements which the Minister has succeeded in getting accepted by the Committee will give a greater amount than was originally intended. For example, Albany says it will receive \$46,000 more. However, Albany will still not get as much as it would get, without the Minister's improvements, but with the proposition contained in the amendment now under discussion.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Would all the shires do equally well?

Mr. TONKIN: No. It is idle to contend that the Shire of Kimberley, for example, will fare as well as the Shire of Esperance. The Minister's proposition takes no cognisance of the difference in the cost of operation in certain parts of the State and the ability to raise funds in different parts of the State.

This Bill will inevitably impose upon the majority of local authorities, if not all of them, the obligation to rate their ratepayers over and above the present limit of rating in order that they might qualify for this additional matching money.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: But they have been rating very high indeed now.

Mr. TONKIN: The Minister's proposal will make them rate still higher.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: No it will not.

Mr. TONKIN: The Minister is not prepared to go on record as saying that if all local authorities expect to get the advantage of this extra matching money they can do so without imposing additional rates.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Yes, if they have already done more than their job and they are higher than the base grant

Mr. TONKIN: Have they all?

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I have told you that about 60 of them have.

Mr. TONKIN: That means that at least 40 per cent. will have to increase their rates.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Only to get the matching money; but there is no compulsion.

Mr. TONKIN: I think the number will be more than that, but let us accept the Minister's figure, which means that 40 per cent. of the local authorities—

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: No, not 40 per cent. There are, I think, about 144. I was referring to 60 local authorities, not 60 per cent.

Mr. TONKIN: That is, 60 out of how many?

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: About 140-odd I think.

Mr. TONKIN: That makes the percentage more in my favour, not the Minister's.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I know. I was merely trying to correct your statement.

Mr. TONKIN: It weakens the Minister's argument because it indicates that more of the local authorities than I was calculating will be required to increase their rates if they are to get their matching money.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: One is Swan-Guildford.

Mr. TONKIN: The present proposal is to try to alleviate the burden which will otherwise be imposed on the ratepayers in many parts of the State.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Many of those left over, after you take out the 60, are in the static class—in other words, they will not improve—and a pure system of licensing would harshly affect them.

Mr. TONKIN: The static class seems to be the one in which the Minister is placed. It should be apparent to members, if they have listened to the representations of the various local authorities, that those local authorities, almost without exception, consider that they have a right to the benefit they would obtain if they had been able to get back the full amount of collection of license fees.

I hope the member for Mt. Marshall will give very careful consideration to this because I say, without hesitation, that the present Bill, although improved considerably, will not ensure that the local authorities, or even half of them, will get as much revenue as they would under my proposal.

If the member for Mt. Marshall is to vote on the assumption that they will, he will cast his vote under a misapprehension. The Minister will have an opportunity to disprove what I say, if he can, and I will be anxious to hear what he has to say. I think it would be wrong for him to receive the vote of the member for Mt. Marshall if that member is left with the belief that what he has been told is correct. I hope the amendment will be carried.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Of course, the Leader of the Opposition has been trying to persuade the member for Mt. Marshall that he is wrong, and when he does this he is getting off the beam quite considerably. What the member for Mt. Marshall has said is perfectly true.

The Leader of the Opposition is right in that under the terms of his amendment the growth shires would receive more money than they would receive under the system proposed by the Bill. However, not all the local shires would be in this situation. In order to cater for this need, and in order to deal properly and fairly with everybody, the system in the Bill has been evolved to cater for all circumstances.

Legislation of the kind proposed by the Leader of the Opposition would lead to all sorts of trouble, and the poorer local

authorities would remain at their present level and the growth shires would become rich by comparison. It is not fair to introduce an amendment of this kind when the concessions have already been given.

Mr. Tonkin: It could not be introduced anywhere else.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: If this intention was contained in one of the amendments we would have left out the escalation amendment.

Mr. Tonkin: Then, recommit the Bill.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The Leader of the Opposition is not serious; this would break down the whole basis of the legislation.

Mr. Lapham: The escalation is very poor.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: It is not a very poor amount. It is surprising how members on that side of the House talk about poor amounts. The Leader of the Opposition talked about peanuts and that, in this case, amounted to something like \$640,000. That would buy a lot of peanuts. To suggest that we recommit the Bill indicates that the Leader of the Opposition is joking.

Mr. H. D. EVANS: The member for Mt. Marshall pays no regard to the fact that the Bill takes away from the shires a right and the prerogative of regarding license fees as the legitimate revenue of country shires. I think this is a very necessary part of the overall picture. He had regarded purely to the amount and not to the inherent right.

The member for Mt. Marshall did not take into account the amount that could be involved if license fees were increased. There would be no recognition of this fact in the grant to shires.

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

Ayes—20

Mr. Bateman	Mr. Lapham
Mr. Bertram	Mr. May
Mr. Bickerton	Mr. McIver
Mr. Brady	Mr. Molr
Mr. Burke	Mr. Norton
Mr. H. D. Evans	Mr. Sewell
Mr. T. D. Evans	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Harman	Mr. Toma
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Jones	Mr. Davies

(Teller)

Noes—23

Mr. Burt	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Cash	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Court	Mr. O'Connor
Mr. Craig	Mr. O'Neill
Mr. Dunn	Mr. Ridge
Mr. Gayfer	Mr. Runciman
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Rushton
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Stewart
Mr. Kitney	Mr. Williams
Mr. Lewis	Mr. Young
Mr. McPharlin	Mr. I. W. Manning
Mr. Mensaros	

(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr. Hall	Sir David Brand
Mr. Fletcher	Mr. Boyell
Mr. Graham	Dr. Henn

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause, as previously amended, put and passed.

Clause 7: Section 33A added—

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move an amendment—

Page 7, lines 13 and 14—Delete the passage, "or reconstruction, only, of class 3, 4 and 5 roads", and substitute the following:—"of rural roads, other than arterial rural roads, only".

As I indicated earlier, there is a need for certain consequential amendments as a result of the introduction of the new Commonwealth legislation. The States were led by the Commonwealth Bureau of Roads to believe that the classification of roads in the Commonwealth legislation would be in numbers as well as in groups. The numbers ranged from 1 to 7 in three groups. The number classification has not been used in the Commonwealth legislation and so it is necessary to make consequential adjustments to our legislation.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move an amendment—

Page 7, lines 18 and 19—Delete the passage, "or reconstruction, only, of class 6 and 7 roads", and substitute the following:—"of urban arterial roads, only".

Mr. BRADY: "Urban arterial roads" are referred to in this amendment. Does the Minister have a definition of such roads?

Mr. Tonkin: They are ordinary suburban roads, are they not?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: An "urban arterial road" means a road or proposed road in an urban area that is for the time being declared by the Minister to be an urban arterial road or an urban subarterial road for the purposes of this Act.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move an amendment—

Page 7, lines 23 and 24—Delete the passage, "road construction, within the meaning of this Act", and substitute the following:—"the construction and maintenance of roads".

This amendment is necessary because of the terminology of the Commonwealth Act, and it is consequential to that Act.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move an amendment—

Page 7, lines 35 and 36—Delete the words, "or reconstruction".

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move an amendment—

Page 7—Delete subsection (3) of new section 33A and substitute the following:—

(3) In this section the expressions, "construction", "maintenance", "rural arterial road", "rural road" and "urban arterial road", have the same, respective meanings as they have in, and for the purposes of, the Commonwealth Aid Roads Act, 1969, of the Commonwealth; and the expression, "Metropolitan Region", means an area designated by the Commonwealth Statistician, for the purposes of the Census taken in the year nineteen hundred and sixty-six, as the Perth Statistical Division.

This amendment is also necessary as a result of the Commonwealth legislation. It deals with the expressions, "construction, maintenance, rural arterial road, rural road," and the like. It is considered that they should be referred to in our legislation in the same way as they are referred to in the Commonwealth legislation.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 8 put and passed.

Clause 9: Second Schedule added—

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The necessity has arisen for a number of amendments to be made to the schedule. I advanced the reasons for these amendments earlier in the debate. The first amendment concerns the Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale, which is referred to on page 9 of the Bill. Accordingly, I move an amendment—

Page 9, Metropolitan Shires—Delete the following:—

Serpentine-Jarrahdale 34,584

and substitute in lieu:—

Serpentine-Jarrahdale 34,744

Mr. Tonkin: Will the Minister explain how he arrives at the new figure?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Yes. This base grant in the Bill was arrived at initially by making the base grant the same figure as the payment made to each local authority from the Central Road Trust Fund, which included the 75 per cent. payment for licenses put in for the 1958-59 base year. It was found, in between the two sitting periods of this Chamber, that this figure did not reflect a true picture of the income of local authorities, because sometimes licenses are paid late towards the end of June and they are allowed to go into July and so appear in the next year's figure. Further, sometimes the year ending on the 30th June is completed and people are late in paying their licenses and those amounts are reflected in the next year's figure. So it was decided that if the average of the two years gave

a higher figure, that figure could be included in the base grant. By adopting that idea, 55 local authorities will get a new base figure.

Mr. GAYFER: Do I understand that we intend to go through this procedure 55 times, when each member has a copy of the new second schedule in front of him? Surely there is some Standing Order which will allow us to make all the necessary amendments *en bloc*?

The CHAIRMAN: I have given considerable thought to this matter and I think we can find a way around the difficulty, but the suggestion had to come from a member of the Committee. We will dispose of this one item. As members will see, the schedule has been divided into two sections—metropolitan and country. When we reach the shires under the heading of "Country" we will deal with them *en bloc* if that is the wish of the Committee.

Mr. JAMIESON: Would it not be more correct, if we are to deal with the amendments expeditiously, if the Minister were to move for the schedule in the Bill to be deleted and replaced with the schedule that has been put before us, as he has been doing with amendments that have already been passed, rather than make this piecemeal approach?

The CHAIRMAN: That will be the objective when we reach the shires. We will deal with the first two amendments in the ordinary way and then we will deal with the amendments to the shires *en bloc*.

Amendment put and passed.

The CHAIRMAN: If members will pay attention to the country towns section the Minister will move for the deletion of the figures against the two towns concerned and substitute other figures. The two towns affected are Geraldton and Northam.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move an amendment—

Page 9, Country Towns—Delete the following:—

Geraldton 198,419

Northam 80,969

and substitute in lieu—

Geraldton 201,014

Northam 82,986

Amendment put and passed.

The CHAIRMAN: If it is the wish of the Committee, the deletion of the figures opposite each of the shires outlined in the schedule in the Bill can be moved with a view to inserting those set out in the typewritten schedule, copies of which have been circulated among members. I wish to point out that these amendments are not on the notice paper.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: This procedure is rather formal, but I would like to deal with the amendments as expeditiously as possible. My view is the same as that expressed by the member for Belmont, but I do not want to do something

which would prove to be of no value because it is not set out on the notice paper. I cannot understand why we cannot take the amendments *en bloc* simply because they are not set out on the notice paper.

Mr. Tonkin: Ask the Printer.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I prefer to go the long way round if it is the sure way.

The CHAIRMAN: We will have to have this procedure recorded in some way, because these amendments are not on the notice paper. They will have to be recorded by *Hansard*. We have selected the towns that are affected, so that will save a considerable amount of work. The Minister has all the towns in question marked on the typewritten sheet and if he would move for the deletion of the figures opposite each shire he could then move for the insertion of the figures opposite each shire on the typewritten schedule. All that will be necessary will be a motion for the deletion of the figures relating to the towns enumerated by the Minister and the insertion of the amended figures.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Before I take this move, I ask the Leader of the Opposition if he will agree to it.

Mr. Tonkin: Yes.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move an amendment—

Page 9, Country Shires—Delete the following:—

	\$
Ashburton	14,608
Augusta-Margaret River	46,762
Balingup	17,883
Beverley	39,467
Boddington	12,244
Bridgetown	43,995
Brookton	29,900
Broomehill	18,770
Bruce Rock	54,459
Busselton	102,675
Capel	44,140
Carnamah	23,485
Coorow	26,321
Collie	90,319
Cranbrook	36,591
Cuballing	15,349
Cue	4,126
Cunderdin	54,391
Dowerin	33,408
Exmouth	34,398
Goomalling	35,289
Greenbushes	9,684
Harvey	101,590
Irwin	19,048
Katanning	81,730
Kondinin	41,224
Kulin	36,285
Marble Bar	9,321
Menzies	6,012
Merridin	91,481
Moora	70,987
Mt. Magnet	9,116
Murray	52,532
Northam	48,183
Nungarin	18,719
Quairading	45,089
Tammin	21,029

Upper Blackwood	41,573
Victoria Plains	38,513
Wandering	12,219
Warooka	37,584
West Arthur	32,504
West Kimberley	40,339
Westonia	24,047
Williams	26,196
Wiluna	2,781
Wongan-Ballidu	57,978
Woodanilling	16,597
Wyndham-East	
Kimberley	54,473
Yalgoo	6,270
Yilgarn	60,707
York	38,144

and substitute in lieu—

Ashburton	15,252
Augusta-Margaret River	51,478
Balingup	17,902
Beverley	40,354
Boddington	13,762
Bridgetown	46,796
Brookton	31,763
Broomehill	19,159
Bruce Rock	57,805
Busselton	105,154
Capel	46,132
Carnamah	23,685
Coorow	26,720
Collie	92,075
Cranbrook	36,810
Cuballing	16,434
Cue	4,367
Cunderdin	56,114
Dowerin	33,997
Exmouth	37,400
Goomalling	36,591
Greenbushes	11,660
Harvey	108,216
Irwin	19,165
Katanning	83,272
Kondinin	42,476
Kulin	37,919
Marble Bar	11,299
Menzies	7,158
Merridin	93,749
Moora	70,996
Mt. Magnet	9,892
Murray	52,955
Northam	54,188
Nungarin	19,780
Quairading	45,991
Tammin	22,008
Upper Blackwood	44,141
Victoria Plains	39,632
Wandering	14,449
Warooka	38,236
West Arthur	33,696
West Kimberley	41,364
Westonia	25,700
Williams	27,190
Wiluna	3,505
Wongan-Ballidu	60,283
Woodanilling	16,761
Wyndham-East	
Kimberley	54,572
Yalgoo	7,234
Yilgarn	61,309
York	39,997

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported with amendments.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe—Minister for Works) [10.9 p.m.]: I move—

That the report of the Committee be adopted.

MR. TONKIN (Melville—Leader of the Opposition) [10.10 p.m.]: I am a little curious about this matter. One of the amendments did not appear on the notice paper, and the Minister was at a loss to explain why it did not. He had to resort to an unusual procedure in order to move that amendment.

Normally the Standing Orders require that a Bill so amended be reported with amendments and the report be adopted the following day. You, Mr. Speaker, would require a fair print of this Bill to be able to agree to the adoption of the report, as moved by the Minister. I cannot see how you can get a fair print under the circumstances mentioned by the Minister, those circumstances being that one of the amendments was not on the notice paper but was only on a roneod form. Are you, Mr. Speaker, quite satisfied that the procedure is in order, and that we can adopt the report, as moved by the Minister; or should it be made an order of the day for the next sitting of the House?

The **SPEAKER**: I am informed there is a complete copy of the Bill, with all the amendments, initialled by the Chairman of Committees; and the Chairman of Committees has given a certificate to the effect that it is a fair print of the Bill. It appears to be in order.

Question put and passed.

Report adopted.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr. Ross Hutchinson (Minister for Works), and transmitted to the Council.

TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL

(No. 2), 1969

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 22nd April

MR. TONKIN (Melville—Leader of the Opposition) [10.13 p.m.]: We on this side do not propose to take up much time in the discussion on this Bill. It is a complementary measure to the one that has just been passed. We have expressed our opinions on the desirability of making the amendments that have been made, and we sought to give the local authorities a better deal. The so-called representatives of country districts were not prepared to

go along with us in this direction, and they were quite prepared to agree to the Government's proposals, as apparently they were in the first place when the Bill was introduced.

Having made the amendments which were made to the Main Roads Act, it is necessary to make amendments to the Traffic Act. We are not so fatuous as to assume that amendments to the Traffic Act Amendment Bill (No. 2) which would cut across the decisions made by this House in respect of the Main Roads Act Amendment Bill would be agreed to, so we do not propose to take up the time of this House in futile discussion.

I simply say that we are disappointed the Government was not prepared, firstly, to agree to further consideration of the proposals by having the previous Bill referred to a Select Committee; and, secondly, to agree to a limitation of the operation of the amendments to one year in order that experience of the effect of the new proposals on the financial operations of the various local authorities may be gained.

We have done our best to effect some improvement in the directions indicated, but without any assistance at all from the Government side—either by way of explanation or by any member opposite attempting to point out whether or not we were doing something unreasonable—we were left to argue the points raised. We failed to achieve the improvements we sought, and we now accept the situation, believing that when the legislation starts to operate the Government will be made to realise that the local authorities are not as contented with what is being done for them as the Minister would have us believe. So we will not oppose this amending Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr. W. A. Manning) in the Chair; Mr. Ross Hutchinson (Minister for Works) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 5 put and passed.

Clause 6: Section 14 repealed and re-enacted.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move an amendment—

Page 3, line 16—Delete the words "each motor vehicle" and substitute the words "the motor vehicles."

The words proposed to be inserted are more appropriate.

Amendment put and passed.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move an amendment—

Page 3, line 22—Delete the words "three dollars" and substitute the following words:— "four dollars in respect of each motor vehicle, up to and including one thousand vehicles,

and three dollars in respect of each motor vehicle in excess of that number."

In the past this has been described as a concession. Instead of the amount of \$3 being retained for each vehicle licensed, on the register, the amount is to be \$4 for each vehicle for the first 1,000 vehicles and \$3 for each vehicle thereafter.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I move an amendment—

Page 3, line 25—Insert after the word "cents", the words "in respect of each motor vehicle".

The amendment describes the situation and clarifies the paragraph.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 7 and 8 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, with amendments, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr. Ross Hutchinson (Minister for Works), and transmitted to the Council.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

MR. NALDER (Katanning—Acting Premier) [10.22 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 11 a.m. Thursday, the 19th June.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.23 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 18th June, 1969

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver) took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL AND LADY HASLUCK

Visit to Parliament House

THE PRESIDENT: It is with pleasure that I inform the House, and place on record, that His Excellency the Governor-General, The Right Honourable Sir Paul Hasluck, a member of Her Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, accompanied by Her Excellency Lady Hasluck, made an official visit to Parliament House

on Wednesday, the 11th June, 1969, and were entertained by members of both Houses at a Parliamentary Dinner.

BILLS (40): ASSENT

Messages from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

1. Plant Diseases Act Amendment Bill.
2. Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Act Amendment Bill, 1969.
3. Brands Act Amendment Bill.
4. Reserves Act Amendment Bill.
5. State Housing Act Amendment Bill, 1969.
6. The West Australian Trustee Executor and Agency Company Limited Act Amendment Bill.
7. Exotic Stock Diseases (Eradication Fund) Bill.
8. Cattle Industry Compensation Act Amendment Bill.
9. Poultry Industry (Trust Fund) Act Amendment Bill.
10. Banana Industry Compensation Trust Fund Act Amendment Bill.
11. Mining Act Amendment Bill, 1969.
12. Inspection of Machinery Act Amendment Bill.
13. Mines and Machinery Inspection Act Repeal Bill.
14. Trade Descriptions and False Advertisements Act Amendment Bill.
15. Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act Amendment Bill (No. 2), 1969.
16. Alumina Refinery (Mitchell Plateau) Agreement Bill.
17. Lake Lefroy Salt Industry Agreement Bill.
18. Police Act Amendment Bill, 1969.
19. Air Navigation Act Amendment Bill.
20. Judges' Salaries and Pensions Act Amendment Bill.
21. Acts Amendment (Superannuation) Bill.
22. Transfer of Land Act Amendment Bill.
23. Land Act Amendment Bill, 1969.
24. Stock Diseases (Regulations) Act Amendment Bill.
25. Town Planning and Development Act Amendment Bill.
26. Property Law Bill.
27. Stock Jobbing (Application) Bill.
28. Strata Titles Act Amendment Bill.
29. Local Government Act Amendment Bill, 1969.
30. Coal Mine Workers (Pensions) Act Amendment Bill.
31. Traffic Act Amendment Bill, 1969.
32. Solicitor-General Bill.
33. Agent General Act Amendment Bill.