regard to legislation if ever the current measure is referred to. When the Minister introduced the Bill he referred to it as "lawyer's law," and every amendment has been presented by the hierarchy of law in Western Australia. If this legislation does not have a smooth passage before judges, I give up!

The Hon. L. A. Logan: I will bet that it does not.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Assembly.

House adjourned at 5.35 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 16th April, 1969

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

TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY BILL

Rejection: Petition

MR. HARMAN (Maylands) [4.31 p.m.]: I have a petition addressed to The Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled. It reads—

> We, the undersigned residents of Western Australia, hereby humbly petition the honourable members of the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia to do all within their power to reject the Termination of Pregnancy Bill, 1968.
>
> The main grounds of our objection are that your petitioners are deeply concerned that any direct intervention to take away the life of a baby in its mother's womb is a violation of the right to life.

The SPEAKER: Order! It is only requisite upon you at the moment to tell us shortly what is in the petition. If the honourable member wants the petition read, he must have a motion carried by the House to that effect. Just tell us what it is about, how many signatories there are, and who is the organisation that presents it.

Mr. HARMAN: The objective is to petition the members of the Assembly to do all within their power to reject the Termination of Pregnancy Bill, 1968. The petition is signed by 29,028 petitioners, and I certify that the petition conforms to the rules of the House. I move—

That the petition be received.

Question put and passed.

The SPEAKER: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

The petition was tabled.

QUESTIONS (53): ON NOTICE

WOOL EXPORTERS ROYAL COMMISSION

Report

1. Mr. HALL asked the Premier:

   (1) Have the findings of the Royal Commission into Wool Exporters been completed?

   (2) If so, when is it contemplated that the report will be made available to members of this House?

   Mr. BRAND replied:

   (1) and (2) No. It is anticipated, however, that the report will be completed by the end of this month. Consideration can then be given to meeting the honourable member's request.

WHEAT TRANSPORT

Receipts

2. Mr. GAYFER asked the Minister for Railways:

   (1) Would he please advise the House of the income received for each of the months from November, 1968, to March, 1969, by the Railways Department for the transport of wheat by rail?

   (2) Could he supply the figures of similar months for the preceding three years?

   (3) What percentage of the total income of the railways has wheat been responsible for over each of the last three years?

   Mr. O'CONNOR replied:

   (1) and (2)

	1965–66	1966–67	1967–68	1968–69
	$	$	$	$
November	84,938	184,458	357,467	266,856
December	959,440	1,060,741	1,214,876	725,345
January	1,462,908	1,388,210	1,277,666	886,984
February	1,257,011	903,319	1,121,876	422,307
March	1,115,863	1,053,595	849,098	*280,000

* Approximate. Final figures not yet available.

   (3) 23.20%, 25.37%, 22.82%.

   The percentage of the total income for 1968-69 is not yet available as the finacial year has not been completed. It must be remembered that there is a terrific amount of wheat in the country areas at the moment and this, again will reflect on the railway revenue for the current year.

CANNINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

Upgrading

3. Mr. BATEMAN asked the Minister for Education:

   When will the Cannington High School be upgraded to a fourth and fifth year high school?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

Fourth year in 1970.

Fourth and fifth years in 1971.

KELMSCOTT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Use of Police Department Land

4. Mr. RUSHTON asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Has the surplus land held by the Kelmscott Police Station been transferred for the use of the Kelmscott Primary School?

(2) If "Yes," when will this land be placed in condition suitable for use by the children?

(3) What work is to be done on these newly acquired grounds?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The Public Works Department reports that it is negotiating to have the site cleared but can give no definite date for the completion of this work.

(3) There are no plans for future development as this will be a matter for the parents and citizens' association with departmental subsidy.

5. *This question was postponed.*

TRANSPORT ADVISORY COUNCIL CONFERENCE

State Representatives

6. Mr. DUNN asked the Minister for Traffic:

(1) Can he advise the name or names of any representatives from this State who attended the Transport Advisory Council Conference held in Hobart on the 20th February, 1969?

Children's Car Seats: Consideration

(2) Was the subject of the safety and adequacy of children's car seats considered; and, if so, what decisions were made?

(3) Are there currently any car seats on the market which satisfy the requirements of the Standards Association of Australia?

(4) If "Yes," could he advise the name or names of those regarded as satisfactory?

(5) What measures, if any, are being implemented to exercise control over the sale of unsatisfactory devices?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

(1) The Minister for Transport, the Director-General of Transport, the Chairman, Road and Air Transport Commission, and Senior Inspector Monck, of the Police Department.

(2) Yes. The decision of the conference was that the Australian Motor Vehicle Standards Committee should be requested to investigate the subject.

(3) to (5) No decision has been made pending the receipt of the report from the A.M.V.S.C.

MINERS HOMESTEAD LEASES

Applications

7. Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

(1) How many applications have been received for Miners Homestead Leases under section 196 of the Mining Act during the years 1963 to 1968 inclusive?

(2) How many of such applications have been approved?

Mr. BOVELL replied:

(1) 61.

(2) 10.

SOUTH PERTH FORESHORE LAND

King Edward Street to Ellam Street

8. Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Lands:

What portion of the foreshore land along Perth Water from about King Edward Street to Ellam Street, South Perth, is held in fee simple by the South Perth Council, and what portion is held by the Crown?

Mr. BOVELL replied:

From the prolongation of King Edward Street to the foreshore and east to Ellam Street, South Perth, with the exception of a small section north of Lots 241 and 242, the river foreshore is a Crown reserve. The area of this reserve is approximately 28 acres. The area south of this reserve, known as the Sir James Mitchell Park, is held in fee simple by the South Perth City Council. The area held by the South Perth City Council is approximately 82 acres.

WOOL SUBSTITUTE

Consumer Benefit

9. Mr. BERTRAM asked the Minister for Labour:

(1) Now that pure wool to be defined by Statute, whilst resembling pure wool will not, in fact, be pure wool but a mere substitute for it, when was, or will the said substitute be marketed in Australia for the first time?

(2) What is the average percentage saving in cost of—

(a) material; and

(b) production,

of the substitute substance as against what is, in fact, pure wool?

(3) Will the consumer benefit from the saving in cost?

(4) If "Yes," to what extent?

(5) If "No," is not the saving in cost, or some of it—and, if so, how much—being applied to meet the huge expense of wool promotion so that consumers will now be subsidising the wool industry by way of taxation of millions of dollars yearly?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

(1) to (5) The manufacture and marketing of textiles is not a matter that comes within the jurisdiction of the Minister for Labour. The information requested is not available within the departments under my control.

TRAFFIC

Give-way-to-the-right Rule

10. Mr. BERTRAM asked the Minister for Traffic:

Is it intended, and, if so, when, to eliminate the confusion currently existing by reason of the conflict of law in respect of the give-way-to-the-right rule?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

It is not proposed to vary the existing rule in this State. The give-way-to-the-right rule is uniform throughout Australia. The Australian Road Traffic Code Committee recently conducted a study on the desirability of some modification but decided that such was not warranted.

ABORTIONS

Unregistered Persons: Charges and Convictions

11. Mr. BERTRAM asked the Minister representing the Minister for Justice:

During each of the 10 years ended the 31st December, 1968, how many persons who were not duly qualified and registered medical practitioners were—

(a) charged;

(b) convicted—

(i) of having procured or attempted to procure an abortion;

(ii) of an offence arising from an abortion or attempted abortion?

Mr. COURT replied:

	(A) Having procured or attempted to procure abortion		(B) Other offences arising from an abortion or attempted abortion	
	Charged	Convicted	Charged	Convicted
1959	...	...		
1960	...	...		
1961	1	1		
1962	3*	3	2	
1963	...	...		
1964	3	3		
1965	6	6	1	1
1966	1	1	...	...
1967	2	2	...	...
1968	...	...	...	...

* Two of the persons charged in 1962 were each charged on two counts, but convicted of one only.

CITRUS INDUSTRY

Effect of Wiluna Project

12. Mr. BATEMAN asked the Minister for Agriculture:

In view of the article which appeared on the 24th February, 1969, in *The West Australian* newspaper, re the establishing of 2,000 acres of citrus orchard in the Wiluna district by a Queensland citrus grower—

(1) Is it true the Department of Agriculture will allow the planting of 800 acres of citrus trees in the spring of this year? ?

(2) What effect will this have on the economy of the present citrus industry in Western Australia??

(3) Is he aware of the crisis existing with respect to the citrus industry in Western Australia at the present time?

Mr. LEWIS (for Mr. Nalder) replied:

(1) The Department of Agriculture has no control over the planting of citrus, but it is known that a special lease under the Land Act for the purpose of citrus growing is being considered by the Lands Department.

(2) The stated intention of the project is to produce fruit for marketing outside the State, in which case it should not have any effect on the economy of the local citrus industry.

(3) I am aware that low citrus prices have prevailed during the last season on the local market and that growers are concerned with the inability

of processors to purchase the quantity of fruit available for this purpose.

13. Mr. BATEMAN asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Is it true the Lands Department will lease 2,000 acres of land to a Queensland citrus grower in the Wiluna area?

(2) If "Yes," has he any knowledge of the effect this will have on the already serious position existing in the citrus industry in Western Australia at the present moment?

Mr. BOVELL replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) I understand that the intended lessee proposes to export to the Eastern States, and operations should not detrimentally affect the local citrus industry.

PROBATIONARY DRIVERS' LICENSES

Re-examination of Holders

14. Mr. LAPHAM asked the Minister for Traffic:

(1) Has consideration been given to a re-examination of probationary license holders at the expiration of the period of probation to ascertain whether the probationary license holder has the necessary driving ability to be issued with an unqualified license?

(2) If so, what is the result of such consideration?

(3) If not, will consideration be focused on this need?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) and (3) It is not considered practicable at this stage to re-examine all probationary drivers at the end of the probationary period. However, every probationary driver who has had his license cancelled is re-examined before the license is reissued.

Suspension

15. Mr. LAPHAM asked the Minister for Traffic:

(1) How many probationary drivers' licenses were suspended during the year ended the 31st March, 1969?

(2) What were the reasons for suspension?

(3) Of those suspended, how many (estimated) would have been suspended if they had held a driver's license which was not probationary?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

(1) and (2)

Driving under influence of alcohol	205
Driving with over .08 per cent. alcohol	35
Dangerous driving	300
Careless driving	723
Reckless driving	101
Speeding	2,646
Contravening traffic control lights	117
Unauthorised use of motor vehicles	83
Failing to stop at "Stop" sign	124
Failing to stop after accident	35
Failing to give way to right	433
Failing to give way to pedestrian on crosswalk	38
Passing stationary vehicle at crosswalk	12
Negligent driving causing death	5
Miscellaneous	896
Driving whilst motor driver's license cancelled	194
Total for twelve months	5,947

(3) This question cannot be answered as the suspension of drivers' licenses is at the discretion of the court except for offences involving mandatory suspension.

TRADE DESCRIPTIONS AND FALSE ADVERTISEMENTS ACT

Prosecutions

16. Mr. LAPHAM asked the Minister for Labour:

(1) How many prosecutions have been taken under the Trade Descriptions and False Advertisements Act since the 1st January, 1959?

(2) In what years were they taken and on what grounds, and were they successful or otherwise?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

(1) One.

(2) 1968. Incorrect labelling of garment—offence proven.

WARNBRO SOUND

Silting, and Restoration of Facilities

17. Mr. RUSHTON asked the Minister for Works:

Relating to departmental investigation of ways and means of correcting siltation in Warnbro Sound, particularly near Safety Bay Jetty and Mersey Point Jetty—

(1) Has the investigation been completed and evaluated?

(2) If "Yes," what are the recommendations?

(3) If "No," when can finalisation of investigation and evaluation be expected?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

(1) Yes. The investigation has shown that the siltation occurring near the Safety Bay Jetty and Mersey Point is a continuing natural process.

(2) and (3) This could only be correctetd by costly and substantial works.

Surveys have been carried out to select new sites for the slipway and Mersey Point Jetty, and these are currently being examined.

ALBANY HIGHWAY-BUNBURY ROAD INTERSECTION

Upgrading

18. Mr. RUSHTON asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Does he agree the recent serious accident and constant growth of traffic through the Albany Highway-Bunbury Road junction in front of Ye Olde Narrogin Inne, Armadale, make the upgrading of this intersection even more necessary and urgent?

(2) Has departmental planning for redevelopment of this interchange been completed?

(3) If "Yes," is a copy of the plan available?

(4) When is it estimated work will commence and be completed?

(5) If "No," when is planning to be finalised?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

(1) The recent serious accident was the result of an out-of-control vehicle and could not be attributed to this junction. Traffic counts do not reveal any congestion in this locality.

(2) No.

(3) Answered by (2).

(4) Work cannot be undertaken until planning and design is completed and therefore no date can be given as to when road works could be commenced.

(5) A proposal is now being examined which could be submitted for consideration to the Armadale-Kelmscott Shire Council within the next few months.

HOSPITAL

Rockingham

19. Mr. RUSHTON asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

Relating to the proposed hospital for Rockingham—

(1) For what capacity is the hospital being planned?

(2) What structure is envisaged?

(3) When the hospital is completed, how many people are expected to be required to run the hospital and in what occupations?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

(1) Approximately 62 in the first phase.

(2) Single level structure with provision for expansion on a single level basis as well as provision for linking with a future multi-storied hospital.

(3) Staffing levels will not be determined until the building plans are completed, and the number depends on occupancy. Initially the number of staff should be approximately 60—nursing and other categories.

BUILDERS

Registration

20. Mr. TONKIN asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Relating to his reply on the 21st August, 1968, that "Registered builders are required to carry out workmanship to the standards required by the Builders' Registration Board" (*Hansard* page 579)—

(a) does this apply to all contracts with registered builders or is it subject to qualifications, e.g., where contracts contain an arbitration clause;

(b) if subject to qualifications, will he state in which instances the reply is not applicable;

(c) what guarantee is there that, in response to a genuine and established complaint, the board will instruct a builder to correct obvious wrong and substandard work?

(2) Where resort has been made to arbitration by a builder doing wrong or faulty work and the policy of the Builders' Registration Board precludes it from taking corrective action, does the board take any disciplinary action

when an arbitration award confirms that a builder's work was wrong and/or substandard?

(3) Whenever potential home owners make specific inquiries at the board's office before signing a contract, does the board help them by disclosing any record of past faulty work including where builders avoid correction by taking complaints to arbitration?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

(1) (a) The statement applies to all registered builders.

(b) Answered by (a).

(c) It is the policy of the board to instruct a builder to correct obvious wrong and substandard work.

(2) Yes. When the board is aware of the arbitration and the findings of the arbitrator.

(3) The provision of such a service is not within the scope of the Builders' Registration Act. However, on receipt of such an inquiry the registrar indicates to the inquirer that there has been either—

(a) no complaints lodged/or

(b) a number of complaints.

This type of inquiry is very rare.

VESTED LAND

Sale by Shire Councils

21. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government:

(1) Can a shire sell land that has been vested in it for development by private treaty, i.e., without first having offered to sell the land by public sale or tender?

(2) If "Yes," under what section of the Local Government Act is this allowed?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

(1) Yes—if the Governor by order so directs.

(2) Subsection (2) of section 266.

Shire of Carnarvon

22. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Under what terms and conditions was the land known as Morgan Town at Carnarvon vested in the Shire of Carnarvon?

(2) Under what terms and conditions was the land known as Pickles Point and Massey Bay vested in the Shire of Carnarvon??

Mr. BOVELL replied:

(1) The area at Carnarvon known as Morgan Town was released to the Shire of Carnarvon as freehold land subject to—

(a) Proposals for development to be approved by the Minister for Lands and to include methods of release and sale.

(b) An approved engineering plan with adequate provision for Public Works Department supervision and control. All levee banks, construction, maintenance, and ownership to remain with the Public Works Department.

(c) State Housing Commission to be protected for an agreed portion of the land to be made available at cost.

(2) An area of about 35 acres at Pickles Point was proposed by the Shire of Carnarvon as a reclamation scheme for housing. Development of this area was agreed in principle subject to negotiation with the Lands Department on price and disposal. The shire is required to submit a programme to include—

Dredging proposals.

Cost of development.

Time involved from dredging to release of lots for sale.

Ability of shire to finance and develop such scheme.

Massey Bay is not included in the original reclamation scheme.

CIVIC CENTRE, CARNARVON

Condemning

23. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

(1) Is it a fact that the Civic Centre at Carnarvon has been declared unsafe for the holding of public functions?

(2) If so, for what reasons?

(3) On what date was the Carnarvon Shire advised?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

(1) Certificate of approval for the use of the Civic Centre has not yet been issued.

(2) Various defects have yet to be rectified and the Commissioner of Public Health informed.

(3) In a letter dated the 21st January, 1969.

CHILDREN'S CROSSINGS

Installation

24. Mr. LAPHAM asked the Minister for Traffic:

(1) Has he given consideration to installing "children's crossings" as defined in regulation 103 of the Road Traffic Code in areas for which "guard controlled crossings" have been refused?

(2) If so, what is the result of such consideration?

(3) If not, will he do so?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) and (3) Proposals are currently being investigated.

MOTOR VEHICLE INSURANCE TRUST

Payments to the Treasury

25. Mr. LAPHAM asked the Treasurer:

What sums have been paid and/or are payable to the 30th June of each year to the Treasurer by the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust by virtue of the provisions of the Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance Surcharge) Act, 1962?

Mr. BRAND replied:

	$
1962-63	222,562.
1963-64	538,456.
1964-65	572,394.
1965-66	608,771.
1966-67	660,907.
1967-68	700,091.
1968-69 (Estimated)	745,000.

26. *This question was postponed.*

POISON 1080

Availability, Use, and Effects

27. Mr. LAPHAM asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Is the poison known as 1080 in use in Western Australia?

(2) If so, can it be obtained for use by—

(a) the general public;

(b) the farming community?

(3) Is it used by the Department of Agriculture for poisoning—

(a) rabbits;

(b) foxes;

(c) dogs?

(4) Is so, does the department warn of its specific use in areas of operation, or is reliance placed on the general poison sign?

(5) What type of bait is laid, and for how long is it toxic?

(6) Is 1080 injurious to—

(a) other animals;

(b) bird life;

(c) fauna?

(7) Can the poison be transmitted through the carcass?

(8) Is the poison detectable by post-mortem examination?

(9) Is there a known antidote for this poison?

(10) What is the estimated time it takes to kill?

(11) What steps are taken to safeguard the public against purchasing rabbits for food that may be affected by 1080?

Mr. LEWIS (for Mr. Nalder) replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) (a) No.

(b) Yes, in a premixed bait.

(3) (a) Yes.

(b) No.

(c) No.

(4) Yes, by Press notice and, where possible, by displaying local notices.

(5) Oats are generally used (sometimes apple). Bait remains toxic until covered by soil or poison leached by rain.

(6) (a) Yes.

(b) Yes, but relatively less toxic.

(c) Yes.

(7) Yes.

(8) Yes, if quantities concerned are relatively large.

(9) No effective antidote yet available.

(10) Varies according to dosage. In the case of rabbits it may vary between 30 minutes and eight hours depending on the amount consumed.

(11) The "taking" of rabbits is prohibited by law under section 102 (a) of the Vermin Act in all areas where 1080 is used, and notice to this effect is published in the Press.

28 to 31. *These questions were postponed.*

SUPERANNUATION

Automatic Cost of Living Adjustments

32. Mr. FLETCHER asked the Premier:

(1) Is he aware of the comment in *The West Australian* of the 13th December, 1968—

(a) that Tasmania is to provide for automatic cost of living adjustment to State employees superannuation pensions; and

(b) that a percentage of entitlement can be acquired by way of lump sum on retirement with the remainder available by way of fortnightly payment?

(2) Is there any intention in this State to introduce legislation to emulate Tasmania in respect of either (a) or (b) above?

Mr. BRAND replied:

(1) (a) Yes.

(b) Yes.

(2) (a) Consideration has been given to this method of adjusting pensions along with others, and a decision will be announced shortly.

(b) Not at this stage.

PENSIONERS

Motor Vehicle License Fees: Concessions

33. Mr. FLETCHER asked the Treasurer: Relevant to my question on further motor vehicle license concessions to pensioners, on Wednesday, the 2nd April, and his reply that receipt of income in excess of the basic wage precludes entitlement—

(1) Since a basic wage is not now determined, does the figure apply to the last determination?

(2) If not, what is the exact figure of income which precludes a concessional vehicle license?

(3) Will this figure vary from year to year?

Mr. BRAND replied:

(1) There is a basic wage determination in Western Australia capable of being reviewed in accordance with section 125 of the Industrial Arbitration Act. This is in accordance with legislation enacted by this Parliament in 1968.

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

STANDARD GAUGE RAILWAY

Albany to Southern Cross

34. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) In an effort to bring about co-ordination of transport, has the Government given further consideration to the building of a standard gauge railway from Albany to Southern Cross to link up with the east-west line to serve the farming community known as the Lakes District, 3,500 Farm Scheme?

(2) If "No" will he undertake to have the matter investigated with a view to implementation, bearing in mind that the deferment of the scheme was caused by a world depression?

Mr. O'CONNOR replied:

(1) No.

(2) The construction of a standard gauge railway as suggested by the honourable member would require large scale tonnages to warrant its consideration.

Where the development of mineral or other resources has brought a requirement for the movement of large scale tonnages, a careful examination of the transport facilities has been undertaken, and similar action would be taken where it was evident that development had created a transport demand in excess of the existing facilities.

McLEAN'S SAWMILLS, NARRIKUP

Reduction of Royalty

35. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Forests:

(1) Is he aware of the article in the *Albany Advertiser* on the 7th April headed "Company may stop cutting sleepers," referring to McLean's Sawmills, Narrikup, Western Australia?

(2) If so, bearing in mind the small recovery rate brought about by the light timber in the southern portion of the State, would he give reconsideration to the reduction of royalty paid by the company in the interests of decentralisation of industry?

Mr. BOVELL replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) As stated in my answer on the 26th March, 1969, these royalties were bid in close competition at open auction and in fairness to other bidders cannot be reduced.

PORT HANDLING CHARGES

Payments by Exporters and Importers

36. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Do Western Australian exporters and importers pay certain handling charges to port authorities?

(2) If "Yes," what are the charges made by port authorities in Western Australia, and what are the names of the ports where charges are made?

(3) What is the procedure as to payment for handling at other ports in Australia?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Handling charges for various types of cargo at Western Australian ports exclusive of Fremantle, Bunbury, and Albany are detailed in the amendments of the regulations of the Jetties Act, 1926-1965 published in the *Government Gazette* No. 50 of the 4th June, 1968.

Handling charges for the ports of Fremantle, Bunbury, and Albany are in accordance with the relevant regulations of each port authority and are detailed in *Government Gazettes* as follows:—

Fremantle, No. 107 of the 25th November, 1968.

Bunbury and Albany, No. 80 of the 1st September, 1965.

With the exception of the Port of Fremantle, the basic rates detailed are varied from time to time in accordance with variations in waterside workers' pay rates and stevedoring industry charges. The present surcharge in accordance with this principle is as follows:—

	Per cent.
Esperance	15
Albany	22
Busselton	15
Bunbury	25
Geraldton	23
North-West ports	28

(3) Detailed procedure for payment is not known but it is understood that handling charges on imports are paid to stevedoring companies by the importer and generally the cost of handling exports is borne by the shipping company.

FESTING STREET, ALBANY

Widening, and Cost

37. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is it the intention of the Government to implement work immediately on widening, alteration of gradients, and rebuilding Festing Street, Albany?

(2) If "Yes," what will be the approximate cost of the proposed works and who will finance same?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

(1) No. Any decision to improve Festing Street will depend on consideration of the report to be submitted by the Albany technical committee formed to consider the problem of access to Albany Port. The findings of this committee are not expected to be available for some weeks.

(2) Answered by (1).

ROAD TRANSPORT

Subsidies

38. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Transport:

What was the amount paid in road transport subsidies for the year ended the 30th June, 1968, to users in areas—

(a) where railways had been promised;

(b) where railways were discontinued;

(c) where regular road services have been introduced by the Department of Transport;

(d) other than those listed above?

Mr. O'CONNOR replied:

(a) $196,661.

(b) $97,698.

(c) $65,810 (included in (a) and (b) above).

(d) $1,174.

MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS

Collisions with Cattle and Sheep

39. Mr. GAYFER asked the Minister for Police:

(1) In each of the last three years how many motor vehicle accidents have been caused in the South-West Land Division, and the Esperance and Lake Grace districts by vehicles colliding with—

(a) cattle being driven—

(i) along a road;

(ii) across a road;

(b) sheep being driven—

(i) along a road;

(ii) across a road?

(2) How many of these accidents were fatal?

(3) In which shires did fatal accidents occur?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

(1) to (3) The information sought by the honourable member is not readily available to the police, as this will have to be obtained from the Bureau of Statistics. Here again I am informed it will involve a considerable amount of work. I was wondering whether the honourable member would be prepared to condense his question, or to confer with me on what information can be obtained on the lines he sought.

MIGRANTS

Reasons for Dissatisfaction

40. Mr. BATEMAN asked the Minister for Immigration:

In view of the many complaints from migrants returning to Britain, could he advise—

(1) How many migrants came to Western Australia in 1967 and 1968, and to March, 1969?

(2) How many migrants returned to Britain from Western Australia in 1967 and 1968, and to March, 1969?

(3) Does he know the reasons why so many British migrants are unsatisfied and are returning to Britain?

(4) Is there an officer from the Western Australian Immigration Department appointed to Australia House to advise and inform the migrants of the problems associated with Western Australia with respect to housing and land prices, together with the higher cost of living?

(5) How often is the publicity material which is given to migrants as a guide brought up to date?

Mr. BOVELL replied:

(1) British assisted passage arrivals, Western Australia—

1967	12,921
1968	15,242
1969 (Jan.-March)	2,894

(2) The figures stated hereunder are confined to those British assisted passage migrants who have been recorded as having returned to Britain within the two-year qualifying period as that is the only figure that can be given on a State basis with any degree of accuracy. Statistics on returning settlers are kept only on a Commonwealth basis—

British assisted passage migrants returning to Britain within two years of arrival in Western Australia—

1967	502
1968	390
1969 (Jan.-March)	94

(Source of information—Commonwealth Immigration Department).

(3) The reasons why migrants return to their homeland was the subject of an intensive inquiry made by the Immigration Advisory Council. A copy of that final report is submitted for tabling.

I have here the final report of the Committee on Social Patterns of the Immigration Advisory Council relating to the departure of settlers from Australia, and I ask that it be tabled.

The findings of the council indicated that 86 per cent. of the migrant units investigated gave non-economic reasons for their return.

Currently, the stated reasons for return are many and varied but predominantly for personal and family reasons. I say that homesickness is the cause of many of the early departures, and it has been recorded that many of them make early applications for re-entry into Australia.

The 94 individuals who returned during the quarter ended the 31st March, 1969, represented 30 family units of 74 persons and 20 single units.

(4) No. Although State officers are not appointed to Australia House, information is available from, and supplied to, Australia House officials by the officers of the State Immigration Branch in London.

(5) Information distributed in the United Kingdom to potential migrants is continually under review.

Information not subject to continual change is reviewed and updated half yearly in publications known as *What Migrants Need to Know* and *As Advertised*. Supplementary information prepared in the United Kingdom on items of a more variable nature, i.e. housing, rents, wages (when applicable) are updated quarterly from information supplied from the various sources within this State.

I ask that the brochure *What Migrants Need to Know*, prepared by the Government of Western Australia—and the information is current to the 1st February, 1969—be tabled.

The booklets were tabled.

Hospital Benefit Entitlements

41. Mr. BATEMAN asked the Minister for Immigration:

(1) What is the situation with respect to hospital benefits to migrants who immediately upon arrival in Western Australia have to be hospitalised?

(2) What allowance if any, is made to migrants with respect to the qualifying periods for hospital benefits?

Mr. BOVELL replied:

(1) Migrants who are hospitalised immediately on arrival in Western Australia are normally not eligible for the Australian National Health Scheme benefits. However, in a number of cases, assistance has been granted to migrants who have been hospitalised on arrival and who had not taken membership of the Australian scheme before leaving the United Kingdom on the proviso that they join immediately.

Those who have taken membership of an approved fund before departure from their homeland are eligible for immediate assistance. This information is given to migrants before they leave England.

(2) Normally there is no qualifying period for benefits if migrants join the hospital benefit fund within 30 days of arrival and friendly society health services within eight weeks of arrival.

TEACHERS' COLLEGES

Applicants: Qualifications and Withdrawals

42. Mr. BATEMAN asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Of the applicants selected for entry into teachers' colleges in 1969, how many students, both male and female, possessed—

(a) four leaving subjects;

(b) five leaving subjects;

(c) six leaving subjects;

(d) seven leaving subjects;

(e) foreign or interstate matriculation?

(2) How many accepted applicants have had two or more attempts at the Leaving Certificate and entered teachers' colleges within each of the categories (a) to (d) above?

(3) What were the interview ratings, both male and female, within each of the following categories—

(a) highly suitable;

(b) suitable plus;

(c) suitable to suitable plus;

(d) suitable;

(e) suitable to suitable minus;

(f) suitable minus?

(4) How many students, both male and female, withdrew after being selected for teacher training, within each of the following categories—

(a) four leaving subjects;

(b) five leaving subjects;

(c) six leaving subjects;

(d) seven leaving subjects;

(e) others?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

		M.	F.	Total
1.	(a) Four leaving subjects	52	119	171
	(b) Five leaving subjects	109	179	288
	(c) Six leaving subjects	82	207	289
	(d) Seven leaving subjects	93	209	302
	(e) Foreign or interstate matriculation	11	9	20
2.	(a) Four subjects	11	4	15
	(b) Five subjects	19	18	37
	(c) Six subjects	15	12	27
	(d) Seven subjects	6	4	10
	(e) Eight subjects	2	1	3
3.	(a) Highly suitable	11	25	36
	(b) Suitable plus	78	264	342
	(c) Suitable to suitable plus	25	90	115
	(d) Suitable	232	318	550
	(e) Suitable to suitable minus	9	8	17
	(f) Suitable minus	3	7	10
4.	(a) Four leaving subjects	Not available as at the 16th April, 1969		23
	(b) Five leaving subjects			68
	(c) Six leaving subjects			98
	(d) Seven leaving subjects			138
	(e) Others			42

43. *This question was postponed.*

WOOD CHIPS

Tests, Results, and Export License

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

(1) What volumes of marri logs have been despatched to Japan for the carrying out of commercial tests by the Japanese pulp/paper industry?

(2) When and by whom were these consignments made?

(3) Are the results of these tests known?

(4) If the results of any of these tests are not known, when is it expected that they will be available?

(5) Was the price to be received by any company which applied for the right to export wood chips from Western Australia sufficient to satisfy the minimum now stipulated by the Commonwealth Government before which it will issue an export license?

Mr. COURT replied:

(1) 15,350 cubic feet.

(2) Bunnings Timber Holdings Ltd.—July, 1967.

Bunnings Timber Holdings Ltd.—November, 1968.

Hawker Siddeley Building Supplies Ltd.— January, 1968.

Hawker Siddeley Building Supplies Ltd.—September, 1968.

(3) The results of the earlier shipments have been received.

(4) The results of the later shipments are expected in the near future.

(5) No finality was, or has been, reached in price negotiations, but the level of prices indicated earlier was within the limits which we understand would be approved for export license purposes.

WOOROLOO HOSPITAL

Patients and Staff

45. Mr. BRADY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

(1) What number of patients are hospitalised at Wooroloo at present?

(2) What number of patients were at the hospital when the decision was taken to close the hospital?

(3) What number of patients is it expected will have to be transferred?

(4) To what hospitals will the patients be transferred, and when?

(5) What number of staff have left the hospital since the announcement of possible closure?

(6) What number of staff are remaining at present?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

(1) 104.

(2) 130.

(3) This depends on the situation at the time.

(4) This depends on the medical assessment of each patient. It is expected that transfers will be arranged in the first half of 1970.

(5) and (6)—

Staff November, 1968	223
Staff at present	209
Decrease of	14

MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS

Recognition of Indian Qualifications

46. Mr. T. D. EVANS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

(1) Is a graduate with a medical degree obtained at the Madras University, India, entitled therewith, with no other qualifications, to practise pursuant to the Western Australian Medical Act?

(2) If not, why not?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

(1) No, only under regional registration when available.

(2) Because of lack of reciprocity (see section 11 of Medical Act).

TAXI LICENSE PLATES

New Issue

47. Mr. T. D. EVANS asked the Minister for Traffic:

What steps, if any, are to be taken to issue new license plates to taxis so as to distinguish them from private vehicles fitted with reflectorised plates similar to present taxi plates?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

Regulations are being amended to provide for the issue of number plates with red letters and numbers on a white reflective background.

TEXTBOOKS

Printing in Asia

48. Mr. DAVIES asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Is he aware of any textbooks used in Government schools being printed in Hong Kong or other parts of Asia?

(2) If so, what are the titles of such books?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) An exhaustive list could only be obtained from the booksellers but the following are some of the titles:—

Nelson: Australia Since Federation.

J. Watts: Encounters Stages 1 to 3.

C. Woodland: Creative Approaches—Unit 1.

Hannan & Allinson: English Part 1.

Russell & Chatfield: Poetry Workshop. Junior Poetry Workshop.

M. Fowler: Land of the Rainbow Gold.

RAIL FREIGHTS

Koolyanobbing-Kwinana

49. Mr. DAVIES asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) In regard to the haulage by rail of iron ore between Koolyanobbing and Kwinana—

(a) does any special rate apply;

(b) what is the rate;

(c) does any contract or agreement of any kind exist;

(d) if so, does such agreement provide for minimum quantities to enjoy any special rate and, if so, what are the conditions;

(e) what quantities have been hauled for each week during 1969?

(2) What is the standard rate for haulage of iron ore?

Mr. O'CONNOR replied:

(1) (a) Yes.

(b) The Broken Hill Pty. Company's Integrated Steel Works Agreement Act, 1960, provides as follows:—

In tons per financial year. Up to but not exceeding	Rates per ton mile expressed in pence
1,000,000	1·43-1·102 cents (approx.)
1,500,000	1·28-1·067 cents (approx.)
2,000,000	1·23-1·025 cents (approx.)
2,500,000	1·10- ·992 cents (approx.)
3,000,000	1·15- ·958 cents (approx.)

The freight rate for the estimated tonnage of iron ore to be hauled in the current year from Koolyanobbing to Kwinana is 1.067c per ton mile.

Under the terms of the agreement, the freight rates are subject to amendment in accordance with variations in costs and they are currently the subject of negotiation.

(c) and (d) Answered by (b).

(e)

		Tons
Week ending	4/1/69	10,727
	11/1/69	21,746
	18/1/69	23,317
	25/1/69	22,847
	1/2/69	14,361
	8/2/69	35,696
	15/2/69	18,456
	22/2/69	32,435
	1/3/69	29,134
	8/3/69	16,954
	15/3/69	21,027
	22/3/69	10,459
	29/3/69	10,733
	5/4/69	15,116

(2) The standard rates for iron ore hauled from Koolyanobbing to Kwinana would be—

Ores exceeding $16 per ton but not exceeding $100 per ton, f.o.r. in value—$7.05 per ton.

Ores not exceeding $16 per ton f.o.r. in value—* $6.35 per ton.

* Subject to a maximum rebate in any one year as approved by the Treasury.

NORTHERN WHEATBELT FARMS

Economic Size

50. Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) How many wheat and sheep farms in the northern wheatbelt below the 12-inch rainfall isohyet are less than 2,000 acres in extent?

(2) Having regard for current farm costs, what is considered to be a minimum economic size for a wheat and sheep farm in this rainfall zone?

(3) Does the Government recognise the need for farmers on small holdings in this area to increase the size of their properties in order to keep pace with rising costs?

(4) Has the Government given any consideration to this problem and, if so, is any Government action contemplated?

Mr. LEWIS (for Mr. Nalder) replied:

(1) As only portions of the Shires of Northampton, Chapman Valley, Mullewa, Morawa, and Perenjori have less than a 12-inch rainfall, it is not possible with the statistical information available to be specific. Officers working in these districts are of the opinion that there are few farms, if any, under 2,000 acres.

(2) Since 1960-61 wheat farm releases in these shires have exceeded 3,000 acres, with the average size 3,800 acres.

(3) In the higher rainfall areas—over 12-inch rainfall—there are about 175 farms with less than 2,000 acres. As most of these are in Chapman Valley and Northampton shires with 14 to 18-inch annual average rainfall there is no apparent small farm problem.

(4) Land releases in the below 12-inch rainfall areas during this decade have been maintained at a sufficient area—4,000 acres and above—to facilitate economic farming.

51. *This question was postponed.*

TIMBER AND PEAS

Imports from New Zealand

52. Mr. H. D. EVANS asked the Premier:

(1) Would he indicate the amounts of—

(a) timber;

(b) peas;

imported into Western Australia from New Zealand in the six months immediately preceding the signing of the New Zealand-Australia Free Trade Agreement?

(2) What were the amounts of—

(a) timber;

(b) peas,

imported into Western Australia from this source in 1968?

Mr. BRAND replied:

(1) (a) 35,918 super feet.

(b) 4,180 centals.

(These figures represent 12 months to the 30th June, 1965. Statistics for six months are not available.)

(2) (a) 574,079 super feet.

(b) 4,119 centals.

(These figures represent 12 months to the 30th June, 1968.)

(Above information obtained from the Bureau of Census and Statistics.)

53. *This question was postponed.*

QUESTIONS (6): WITHOUT NOTICE

McLEAN'S SAWMILLS, NARRIKUP

Reduction of Royalty

1. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Forests:

In view of the answer given to question 35 on today's notice paper, does he, or does he not, agree that it is unreasonable to stick rigidly to an outdated position when a review is necessary under prevailing conditions?

Mr. BOVELL replied:

The position is not outdated. It is quite common sense. If these people bid at auction for this concession under the provisions of the Forests Act and were the highest bidders and were awarded the concession, and they cannot manage it, there are processes available under the Forests Act which they should follow. Other than that I am certainly not going to authorise the reduction of a royalty which was obtained in competition with other legitimate tenderers.

AGREEMENT ACTS

Variations

2. Mr. BERTRAM asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

With reference to the several agreements or said agreements as amended by Parliament and evidenced by the Statutes below—

(1) Have there been any variations of the said agreements or the agreements as amended by Parliament? If "Yes," then in each case—

(a) when;

(b) what are the details thereof?

(2) Have any separate agreements been made between the State, or anyone on its behalf, with the respective companies? If "Yes," then in each case—

(a) when;

(b) what are the details thereof?

The Statutes are as follows:—

Irrigation (Dunham River) Agreement Act, 1968.
Iron Ore (Cleveland-Cliffs) Agreement Act, 1964.
Iron Ore (Hamersley Range) Agreement Act, 1963.
Iron Ore (Hanwright) Agreement Act, 1967.
Iron Ore (Mount Goldsworthy) Agreement Act, 1964.
Iron Ore (Mount Newman) Agreement Act, 1964.
Iron Ore (Nimingarra) Agreement Act, 1967.
Iron Ore (Scott River) Agreement Act, 1961.
Iron Ore (Tallering Peak) Agreement Act, 1964.
Iron Ore (The Broken Hill Company Proprietary Limited) Agreement Act, 1964.
Leslie Solar Salt Industry Agreement Act, 1966.

Mr. COURT replied:

I thank the member for Mt. Hawthorn for advising my office of his intended question. Unfortunately I could not undertake all the detailed research I desired, but I will make further studies to ensure I have not omitted anything, because it is a fairly long list.

The answer I am about to give, members will realise, will confirm the information I gave the House last night, and for that reason I should probably thank the honourable member for asking the question. The answer is as follows:—

(1) and (2) The only agreement which has been varied is the Iron Ore (Hamersley Range) Agreement, 1963-1964. This was varied by a supplemental agreement pursuant to the provisions of clause 21 of the principal agreement on the 19th April, 1966. In this instance the schedule—that is, the form of mineral lease attached—was varied to permit the issue of the mineral lease before the survey of its boundaries was completed.

In explanation I should say that the provisions of the original agreement—in particular, clause 9(1) (a)—required the survey to be completed before the issue of the mineral lease. Because the

mineral lease comprised 231 pieces of land in rugged terrain, the time involved to complete such a survey would take some years, thus denying the company a title until the lease could be issued on completion of the survey, and also denying the State the development that has come from getting the project going and into production. I might mention also that this contingency has been covered in subsequent agreements. Otherwise, to the best of my knowledge, there have been no amendments to these agreements except those submitted to Parliament.

MOTOR VEHICLE (THIRD PARTY INSURANCE) ACT

Postponement of Answers to Questions

3. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government:

What are the reasons for, or the significance of, the postponement of the replies to questions 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, and 43, all of which relate to the Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act and in respect of which the figures are readily available and therefore could have been supplied even on a few minutes' notice?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

I am afraid I can only say that I was replying on behalf of the Minister who normally represents the Minister for Local Government, and the information supplied to me with the rest of the questions he was able to answer today was that I was requested to ask for a postponement of the questions. I have no information other than that.

Mr. Graham: For pretty sinister reasons!

Mr. O'Neil: If the information is so easily available, you should have it.

Mr. Graham: It is available down there, not here.

The SPEAKER: Order!

PERTH RAILWAY STATION: LOWERING

Area Available, and Open Space

4. Mr. BURKE asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) What area is available for redevelopment at the Central Station at present the subject of a letter of intent given by the Government to W.A.D.C.?

(2) How much of the above area will be allocated to open space?

Mr. O'CONNOR replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question. I would like to point out that as no acceptable proposal has, at this stage, been given to the Government, the reply I give is only approximate and could be altered to a degree. The answer is as follows:—

(1) and (2) Approximately 24 acres. An additional 13½ acres would, by the rail-lowering proposal, be released for development of parks, gardens, roadways, and open space. Final details will not be accurately known until—

(a) a suitable proposal is submitted to the Government;

(b) the proposal has been accepted by the Government and ratified by Parliament.

PERPETUAL POOLS PROMOTIONS

Protective Legislation: Introduction

5. Mr. BRAND: Yesterday the member for Mt. Hawthorn asked the following question:—

Has the Government taken any preliminary action to legislate in respect of unit trusts and the prevention of fraud along the lines of the Imperial Prevention of Frauds (Investments) Act, 1958?

If not, then, in view of the recent reports that a large number of people have, or appear to have lost their money in consequence of their having invested money with the firm Perpetual Pools Promotions, will it now introduce legislation of the type referred to?

The reply which I have obtained through the Minister for Justice, is as follows:—

The provisions of the Imperial Prevention of Fraud (Investments) Act, 1958 which are relevant to the case which gave rise to the question and to unit trusts, are embodied in the provisions of the Companies Act, 1961-1966. The proprietor of Perpetual Pools Promotions has been recently convicted of an offence under the provisions of the Companies Act as referred to above.

PERTH RAILWAY STATION: LOWERING

Area Available, and Open Space

6. Mr. BURKE asked the Minister for Railways:

With reference to my question without notice a few moments ago, does he mean that 37½ acres is the total area of land available for redevelopment, or that 24 acres will be developed and 13½ acres will be left for open space?

Mr. O'CONNOR replied:

The total area of land available is approximately 37½ acres. The company has based its proposal on the use of approximately 24 acres of this area, which will leave about 13½ acres for open space.

Mr. Tonkin: That includes roads, railway requirements, and so on?

Mr. O'CONNOR: Yes. I mentioned that in my previous reply.

BILLS (2): INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Air Navigation Act Amendment Bill.

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr. O'Connor (Minister for Transport), and read a first time.

2. University of Western Australia Act Amendment Bill.

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr. May, and read a first time.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Precedence on all Sitting Days

MR. BRAND (Greenough—Premier) [5.13 p.m.]: I move—

That, on and after Wednesday, 16th April, Government business shall take precedence of all Motions and Orders of the Day on Wednesdays as on all other days.

This is a motion which is normally moved at the end of any session. Although this is the second period of the one session, we did revert at the beginning of this period to the normal procedures under which private members' day was carried on and consideration was given to grievances.

At the end of this week there will remain only a fortnight of this second period. Having regard to what I believe is the desire of the House to finish on or about the 1st May, it seems that this motion is in order and justified so that Government business can be given prior consideration.

I would remind the House that there is a proposal to hold a party of some sort on the 23rd April. This will take up another night, and it would seem that we have not a great deal of time between now and the proposed end of this period of the session.

I think it is desirable to finish as we have proposed because it is a relatively short time before the beginning of the next session. I might take advantage of this opportunity, Mr. Speaker—although I have not advised the Leader of the Opposition or the House—to say that the Government has in mind the reopening of Parliament for the next session on the 31st July, which is a Thursday. We will start the session, truly, in August. That is the day we have set aside; it is not binding, but we plan to start again on the 31st July.

Mr. Graham: When are you finishing this period.

Mr. BRAND: On the 1st May, if this is at all possible. In moving this motion I am mindful that we have a lot of private members' business on the notice paper. I am also mindful of the fact that quite a deal of it was carried on from the beginning of this session, and it is the desire of the Government to deal with the motions. A number of motions will be introduced today. I am not going to make any firm commitment with respect to dealing with, and reaching finality on, those motions, but we will make every endeavour to do so.

From the point of view of Government business, I cannot say how many more Bills will be introduced, but I can say that there are two or three important Bills associated with road aid agreements made with the Commonwealth this year, and also a Bill about which I have already advised Parliament. This Bill will propose major amendments to the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act, and associated legislation. The Minister for Works is anxious to give notice of his Bills as soon as he can obtain their clearance, and the same applies in my case in respect of the superannuation and family benefits amendments.

The amendments to the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act have caused many headaches at the Treasury, and to the Superannuation Board because of very real problems in sorting out a Bill which will make the Act clear and concise. We want it to provide substantial improvements in pensions and conditions generally.

The Government will have regard to the fact that we have a finishing date in mind, and will not clutter up the notice paper with unnecessary legislation which might well be introduced in the forthcoming session.

I do not think there is anything more that I could add to the motion which I have moved. It simply puts the Government in a position to get important legislation through. No doubt it is the right of the Opposition to introduce whatever measures it wishes in the meantime, but precedence will be given to Government business. We desire to finish on the 1st May, and I am hopeful that we can avoid

going on to Friday, the 2nd May, because I understand a number of members have commitments for that day.

There is no need to create a position where Parliament will not finish its business properly and consider measures fully. However, it must be realised that a finishing date has to be set, and unless we take action and co-operate we could go on and on. I commend the motion.

Adjournment of Debate

MR. TONKIN (Melville—Leader of the Opposition) [5.20 p.m.]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion (adjournment of debate) put and negatived.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

MR. TONKIN (Melville—Leader of the Opposition) [5.21 p.m.]: A sudden-death motion like this, which is to apply immediately, and which will mean that we can completely disregard the notice paper as printed, is unfair and unreasonable. I would not have taken the step I did if this motion had not included today, but it is to have application forthwith. This means that immediately, instead of doing what we anticipated we would have the right to do—proceed with private members' business—we will proceed to give consideration to Government business.

If one looks at the notice paper one will see that the Government business on the notice paper could be cleaned up quite easily in one sitting and it would, therefore, appear that there is no justification for taking this action today. The Government might well have contented itself with applying this resolution as from next Wednesday, in which case I would have had no objection.

I had a premonition that this motion was coming forward, not because I felt it was justified, but because in ordinary circumstances this is about the time that Governments generally bring in such a motion. However, in all my experience previously there has been a considerable amount of Government business on the notice paper. It is quite right that the Government should be keen to ensure that its own business can be considered and determined.

I would point out that on the notice paper there are Orders of the Day upon which not a single syllable has been spoken during this session. They have been carried over from the first period of this session. For example, I gave notice of a Bill which I intended to deal with in connection with something which is crying out to be remedied. It deals with motorcar insurance and there has been no opportunity at all for me to deal with that. It looks as if there will be scant opportunity in view of the motion which the Government has moved today.

It would not have been unreasonable for the Premier to move that as from next Wednesday Government business should take precedence. If he had done that there would have been no complaint from this side of the House. However, with the amount of Government business already on the notice paper, and without any knowledge at all of what the Government intends to bring forward—other than what we were told this afternoon—how could we be expected to accept this situation? If the Government knew that it had substantial legislation still to be introduced, that legislation should have been prepared before this and introduced earlier instead of bringing it to Parliament in the last week or two of the session and depriving private members of what little opportunity there is of dealing with the business they bring forward. I think it is most unreasonable.

If the Premier had been prepared to give a definite assurance that everything which is at present on the notice paper would be dealt with then that would have allayed our fears to some extent. However, it seems to me that more than half of the items on the notice paper will be amongst the slaughtered innocents, and I think it is unfair that that should occur in these circumstances.

Amendment to Motion

Therefore, to test the feeling of members, I propose to move an amendment to the motion to strike out the words, "on and." The motion would then read—

> That, after Wednesday, 16th April, Government business shall take precedence of all Motions and Orders of the Day on Wednesdays as on all other days.

Accordingly, I move an amendment—

> That in line 1 the words "on and" be deleted.

MR. BRAND (Greenough—Premier) [5.25 p.m.]: I oppose the amendment. I think I made it quite clear that we were prepared to give an undertaking that the motions and orders of the day from item 4 onwards would be dealt with. The Government intends to go on with the notice paper as it is, so this day, as a private members' day, will not be interfered with.

Mr. Jamieson: You did not make that clear.

Mr. BRAND: The Leader of the Opposition knew that, I am sure.

Mr. Tonkin: That makes a lot of difference.

Mr. BRAND: We drew up the present notice paper intending to abide by it, and we did not intend, in any snide way, to move any motion to alter the notice paper. If that is the way the Opposition does business, it is not our way of doing it. When the Clerk asked me last night how

to place the notice paper, it was placed in its present form and we intend to follow it.

Mr. Tonkin: Why didn't you say so?

Mr. BRAND: The Leader of the Opposition only took this opportunity to get up and say something. I am opposing the amendment while giving an undertaking that we will deal with the notice paper as set down. The intention of the Government is that all the items at present on the notice paper, from 4 onwards, will be dealt with, and we will make every endeavour to do this.

Mr. Tonkin: If that is your intention, why are you opposing this amendment?

Mr. BRAND: We are opposing the amendment because we want control of the business of the House from today.

MR. GRAHAM (Balcatta—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [5.27 p.m.]: The Premier has realised the mistake for which he was responsible and is endeavouring to make virtue out of necessity.

Mr. Court: The sinister mind of the Opposition!

Mr. GRAHAM: I have recollections, at the beginning of this session, of this House having passed a resolution sponsored by the Premier that Government business shall take precedence on Tuesdays and Thursdays. That therefore means that private members' business takes precedence on Wednesdays.

Until about two minutes ago that resolution still stood. In other words, irrespective of what the Premier cared to think about it, the instruction of this House—of the Parliament—to the Clerks was that business should be arranged in a certain fashion. On Wednesdays the motions of private members should appear first on the notice paper and, therefore, they have not appeared in that order because of any generosity whatever on the part of the Premier. The Clerks have done their job in accordance with a decision which, I repeat, was initiated by the Premier.

I agree with my leader that, unquestionably, there was no necessity for the Premier, in his motion, to ask this House to agree that as from today private members' business should be placed to one side so that Government business should take precedence. The Premier could have stated that the motion would take effect as from next week, or as from tomorrow if he had wished that to be the position.

There was no intimation whatsoever as to what the Government's plans were. In carrying this motion—and the Government has the numbers—the Government would be quite entitled today to bypass completely private members' business and get on to its own business. The difference would be that we would go home reasonably early because there is such a paucity of Government business on the notice paper. This question is in line with so many similar things. The Government should accept the Opposition's *bona fides*, and take the Opposition more into its confidence. The Government should show some respect to private members—respect to which they are entitled. After all, the private members did not put themselves here; they were elected by the people of Western Australia and they have certain responsibilities.

We have obligations and we are entitled to discharge them, and because the Government is the Government it does not mean that other elected members of this House should be ridden over roughshod. Therefore, there is an obligation on the Premier to supply certain information, and, as my leader has intimated, if this information had been supplied there would have been no necessity to raise any objection at all.

However, there is something to be saved from the shipwreck, perhaps, and that is, we have now belatedly received an assurance from the Premier that it is his intention to proceed through the notice paper as it appears before us—a notice paper, I say, which was prepared by the Clerks at the instruction of the Legislative Assembly in August of last year. Neither the Premier nor anybody else could have arranged it in a different form from that in which it appears before us at the moment.

MR. BRADY (Swan) [5.31 p.m.]: I do not think the Leader of the Opposition or the Deputy Leader of the Opposition have to offer any apologies to the Government for this amendment because, after all is said and done, if the Premier had explained his intentions to the House, the amendment would not be before us. I would like to remind the Premier and the Government that of 21 items on the notice paper, no less than seven are motions from this side of the House.

Mr. Brand: They can put 50 motions if they want to.

Mr. BRADY: The motions would not have been spoken to, and therefore the Opposition had the feeling that the Government was deliberately going to forestall it in regard to these matters, all of which are important to the general public or to sections of the public.

Mr. Court: You are using up private members' time now.

Mr. BRADY: The Opposition is entitled to move this amendment in order to point out to the Government that it is going to stand its ground as an Opposition—which it is entitled to do. We represent the general public, and we are entitled to see these motions debated as they should be.

Some of the motions appearing on the notice paper are of vital importance, and it is not right for the Government simply to say that as from and including today Government business shall take precedence. If the Premier liked, he could substitute for the motions any of the business of the Government, including second readings, and the Government would have no kick coming from this side of the House; that is, if we had not objected at this point of time and moved the amendment. So, in my opinion, the Leader of the Opposition is only safeguarding the rights of the Opposition in regard to these matters, and I wholeheartedly support him.

Amendment Withdrawn

MR. TONKIN (Melville—Leader of the Opposition) [5.33 p.m.]: Mr. Speaker, I seek the permission of the House to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Question put and passed.

CLOSING DAYS OF SESSION: SECOND PERIOD

Standing Orders Suspension

MR. BRAND (Greenough—Premier) [5.34 p.m.]: After that kerfuffle, I move—

That, until otherwise ordered—

(1) Standing Order 224 (Grievances) be suspended and

(2) The Standing Orders be suspended so far as to enable Bills to be introduced without notice, to be passed through all their remaining stages on the same day, and all Messages from the Legislative Council to be taken into consideration on the same day they are received.

This motion is related to the previous motion, and is to allow the suspension of Standing Orders in order that business might be expedited in both Houses of Parliament. I might say I took for granted that the House would accept the notice paper as it was listed, but I omitted to say we would follow it through. But there was no offence meant, and nothing underhand planned.

MR. TONKIN (Melville—Leader of the Opposition) [5.35 p.m.]: We offer no opposition to this motion, although we regret the necessity to deprive private members of the opportunity to state their grievances. I think this is an innovation which has met a need. Ordinarily there is little opportunity for a member to raise an urgent important matter and the provision of a grievance day, which only occurs once a fortnight, is in my opinion something which was lacking in the Parliament previously, and full advantage has been taken of it.

Unfortunately, because we did not sit during the week following Easter, we have had very few opportunities during this part of the session to take advantage of the grievance day. After all, there is not a long time involved; it is only a matter of 40 minutes at the utmost if all members take advantage of it, and if no member on the Government side takes advantage of it then the time is limited to 20 minutes. So that would not be a great deal out of the time of the Government. Whilst we do not propose to oppose the motion, I suggest that the Premier might give consideration to this, because I do not think it would unduly interfere with the transaction of Government business.

The motion to suspend Standing Orders is to be expected. It is one which is generally moved towards the end of the session, when we do not go through the ordinary formalities—although I have always been opposed to the idea, and it is one which is pretty hard to justify, because it means that in the early part of the session when we have fewer Bills, fairly regularly spaced, and with more time to study them, we have to go through all the requirements of the Standing Orders. But when Bills start to come thick and fast and we have less time to study them, we dispense with the requirements of the Standing Orders—which are there to safeguard such a position—and we permit Bills to be introduced and rushed through without time for consideration. I think that is all topsy-turvy, and I have never approved of it.

If it were the other way round there might be some sense in it. I fail to see that it is a course of action which ordinarily ought to be followed by a deliberative Assembly. However, it has been going on all the time I have been in this Parliament, and I suppose it will go on for a long time after I leave.

With regard to the reference made by the Premier to the "little kerfuffle," the Premier is entirely to blame. We on this side have to do a lot of guessing and we had a lot to guess on this occasion. We are not given a great deal of information; we are given no more information from the Government side than it is obliged to give us. We have only to take the performance of the Minister for Education this afternoon with regard to questions asked through him of the Minister for Local Government. I could have answered some of those questions myself; so the Minister must be either sick or lazy to have had to pass over all those questions.

However, Mr. Speaker, the point is this: Neither you, Sir, nor the officers of the Parliament, nor the Premier, was entitled to anticipate what the Parliament would do with the Premier's motion. If that motion, worded as it was, had not been carried, then in accordance with the

motion moved at the beginning of the session the notice paper would have been arranged as it is now.

As you well know, Mr. Speaker, I made some inquiries last night as to what was going to be the procedure today, and the information given to me was that what would happen to the motion of the Premier could not be anticipated, and therefore the notice paper would be drawn up as it would have been drawn up if the Premier had not given notice of his motion. As the motion was worded to include today, the only conclusion to which I could come was that it was meant to apply to today. In other words, in any other circumstances there would not have been any justification to word the motion "on" today. It would have met the desire of the Premier if he had worded his motion "after" today, and then there would have been no doubt about it. So I had to conclude that it was the intention of the Government to supersede private members' business today with Government business.

It was for that reason I objected, and I took the only step open to me to try to safeguard our position. However, in view of the assurance given by the Premier—which is all we wanted—that we can proceed to deal with private members' business today, there is no reason for us to proceed in the direction we indicated, and so we do not propose to oppose this motion.

MR. DAVIES (Victoria Park) [5.41 p.m.]: I just want to point out what the application of Standing Order 224 means to Parliament and to members. When it was introduced I argued that greater opportunity should be given to members to air their grievances, but I was assured there would be ample opportunity under the proposed system for a member to record any grievance he may have; but, in fact, since the Standing Order was introduced only nine members have raised grievances in this House.

Commencing with Opposition members the member for Balcatta has spoken once; the member for Collie twice; the member for Clontarf once; the member for Northam once; the member for Belmont once; the member for Victoria Park once; and the member for Maylands once. Only two members on the Government side have raised grievances since the Standing Order was introduced, and they are the member for Wellington, who spoke once, and the member for Murchison, who spoke on two occasions.

This means that 11 speeches on grievances have been made, and if each of the speakers had taken the full time of 10 minutes to air the grievance raised, the maximum time spent on grievances since this session started last year would have been 110 minutes. For a Parliament of this size in a State of this size, I think that is quite inadequate, especially at a time when so many matters need to be queried. It is true that a member can ask questions on any matter, but he cannot present his subject material to Parliament properly by way of question only. On many occasions a question has to be followed up with other questions and some of the answers to the questions are anything but full. So I consider it is regrettable that at this stage it is intended that grievances shall no longer be heard, because before the session closes each member should have had at least two more opportunities to air grievances.

I would also point out that members did not have an opportunity to start to air grievances until Wednesday, the 28th August, 1968. Grievances were again heard on the 11th September, 1968, but were not heard again until the 9th October, because on the 25th September, when members could have aired their grievances, Parliament suspended its deliberations because of Show Week. Then, when we reached the next date for the airing of grievances, which was the 23rd October, members were denied their rights because the Standing Order had been suspended and the hearing of grievances had to be abandoned.

During this second period of the session, grievances have been heard on only one occasion; namely, the 26th March, 1969, which was the day after Parliament reassembled. Grievances were due to be heard again on the 9th April, but Parliament was not sitting on that date because of Easter week. The next grievance day is the 23rd April, but, as the Premier's motion will undoubtedly be carried, members will be denied any opportunity to air grievances on that date.

I hate to say "I told you so," but I feel I am justified when I argued right from the start that members should have more opportunity to air grievances. Although at that time I was assured there would be plenty of occasions for members to raise grievances, exactly the opposite has happened. I have had only one chance to air a grievance. That was to the Minister for Education, and he was good enough to say after I had spoken, that he would have the matter investigated. Following that he wrote to me and told me the Director-General of Education was in Paris and that he would reply to me early in December when the Director-General returned.

I waited patiently for the reply to come from the Director-General through the Minister, but I have not yet received it. I wrote to the Minister on the 12th March, 1969, asking if he would be good enough to let me have a reply, but I still have not heard from him.

Mr. Lewis: What is the subject?

Mr. DAVIES: The subject is a grievance over long-service leave granted to supply teachers. For the benefit of the Minister I will repeat that he was good enough to say he would reply to me when the Director-General of Education returned from Paris where he was attending a conference. When I did not receive a reply I took it upon myself to write to the Minister on the 12th March, 1969, but I still have not had a reply to that letter.

Mr. Lewis: Will you drop me a note on it?

Mr. Brady: In other words, put it in writing.

Mr. DAVIES: I was about to point out that at this stage the Minister need not bother to reply to my letter, because he wrote to the member for Maylands on the 18th February, supplying him with the information I have been seeking since last December. Despite this, I still have not received a reply to my letter of the 12th March.

Mr. Lewis: Has the member for Maylands anything you have not, apart from the reply?

Mr. DAVIES: I realise that although it is over a month since I wrote, the department has still not been able to reply to me to tell me what it has told the member for Maylands. In my letter I even quoted the file number dealing with the subject, and unless the department has lost the file, I do not know what has happened.

I raised that matter merely to point out that grievance day has not been particularly successful, or as successful as we would have liked it to be. Grievances have been raised by seven members on the Opposition side and two members on the Government side, but the occasions made available to members to air grievances, so that they may bring to the attention of the House matters which they consider important, have not been frequent enough.

MR. BRAND (Greenough — Premier) [5.46 p.m.]: I simply want to say that there was no intention on this occasion to take away the rights of members on grievance day. The procedure that was followed was exactly the same as that which was used at the end of the first period of this session when Standing Orders were suspended to give Government business precedence over private members' business, including the hearing of grievances. Therefore, this was a normal motion that was moved. However, having made the decision about this grievance day, I do not think we should alter it.

It so happened we did not sit on the Wednesday following Easter, and it so happened that that may have been a grievance day. I do not think we can have it every way. I believe that private members in this House, compared with private members in other State Houses throughout the Commonwealth, have many opportunities to speak. No-one begrudges them that position, but such opportunities are equal to, or better than, the opportunities afforded private members in other State Houses.

With respect to what the Leader of the Opposition has said, I would like to say that although his comments applied to the last motion, the moving of the motion today gave notice to members that we were going to follow this course, so they would not be giving notice of intention to move motions for the balance of this week, thus filling up the notice paper in a way that would make it difficult to finish on the date we have chosen.

I think this an honest line that I took and this was my true intention, having regard for my plan to proceed with the notice paper as it now is.

Question put and passed.

AGENT GENERAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Message: Appropriations

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

BILLS (2): RECEIPT AND FIRST READING

1. Innkeepers Bill.
2. Property Law Bill.

Bills received from the Council; and, on motions by Mr. Court (Minister for Industrial Development), read a first time.

BILLS (5): RETURNED

1. Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Act Amendment Bill, 1969.
2. Brands Act Amendment Bill.
3. Reserves Act Amendment Bill.
4. Plant Diseases Act Amendment Bill.
5. State Housing Act Amendment Bill, 1969.

Bills returned from the Council without amendment.

THE WEST AUSTRALIAN TRUSTEE EXECUTOR AND AGENCY COMPANY LIMITED ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Third Reading

MR. COURT (Nedlands—Minister for Industrial Development) [5.50 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

I promised that before this Bill was read a third time I would make some comments following research related to the objection taken by the member for Mt. Hawthorn to

this Bill being introduced as a public Bill. The research I have undertaken does not bring me to change my mind at all from the comments I made when replying to the second reading. However, in view of the fact that there is a principle involved in the matter—at least a principle as I see it—which I think should be recorded, I propose, with the indulgence of the House, to quickly make some comments on the point, and, if the honourable member still wishes to persist, naturally he will also make some comments.

Firstly, the Reprinting of Acts Authorisation Act, 1953, quoted by the honourable member does not, and cannot, apply to the reprint of The West Australian Trustee Executor and Agency Company Limited Act, 1893, and its amendments. The Reprinting of Acts Authorisation Act, 1953, only applies to the reprint of an Act that has not been amended. The appropriate Act for the reprint in this case is the Amendments Incorporation Act, 1938-1966.

The situation is that the company requested the reprint, but not the Bill that is now before the House. The Parliamentary Draftsman quite rightly advised the Minister that a Bill would be necessary to amend the principal Act, 1893-1966, and the amending Act of 1923, before the Act could be reprinted, because of some homeless sections.

The Minister for Justice referred to this in his speech in *Hansard* on the 17th September, 1968, at page 1111. The Bill before the House is not a Bill for a private Act. It is, in essence, a Bill for a public Act. It is in the public interest that the Act be reprinted, and it is Government policy to have all Acts reprinted as soon as practicable.

This is a rather pertinent point, although the Bill itself is of no great consequence when we get down to its subject matter. The Bill is purely a formal, procedural measure and in no way affects the rights of the trustee company or any other person. Consequently, the Standing Orders in relation to private Bills do not apply.

If the Government of the day, for very good reason, say to protect beneficiaries from maladministration by a trustee company—but let me hasten to say this is not involved in this case—decided that the principal Act should be repealed—and I only put this forward as a hypothetical case—is it seriously suggested by the member for Mt. Hawthorn, or by any other member, that the Government of the day would have to comply with the Standing Orders relating to private Bills in order to effect such repeal; or any desirable amendment? I submit members would not have a bar of it; they would want Parliament to have complete control of the situation.

Section 57 of the Fremantle Gas and Coke Company's Act, 1886, which was referred to by the honourable member, was then concerned with the method of legally proving the Act. In 1886 judicial notice was taken of public Acts, but it was necessary to prove a private Act to a court by special pleading; thus section 57 removed that disability and the position is now covered by section 53 of the Evidence Act, 1906-1967, under which the courts must take judicial notice of all Acts of Parliament.

I have had some information extracted regarding a number of cases where private Acts have been amended by public Acts. I am not suggesting this is a complete list, but it is rather an interesting group. The Acts in question are as follows:—

(a) Church of England School Lands Act, 1896, amended by Church of England School Lands Act Amendment Act, 1957 (No. 41 of 1957) introduced by the Minister for Lands (Hon. E. K. Hoar).

(b) Kalgoorlie and Boulder Racing Clubs Act, 1904, amended—

  (i) by the Kalgoorlie and Boulder Racing Clubs Act Amendment Act, 1912 (No. 53 of 1912) introduced by the then Premier (Hon. J. Scaddon);

  (ii) by the Kalgoorlie and Boulder Racing Clubs Act Amendment Act, 1926 (No. 8 of 1926) introduced by the then Premier (Hon. P. Collier).

(c) Roman Catholic Church Lands Act, 1895, amended by—

  (i) the Roman Catholic Church Property Acts Amendment Act, 1916 (No. 4 of 1916) introduced by the then Attorney General (Hon. R. T. Robinson);

  (ii) the Roman Catholic Bunbury Church Property Act, 1955 (No. 28 of 1955) introduced by the Minister for Justice (Hon. E. Nulsen).

It is important to note that the Standing Orders with respect to private Bills were then in existence and the above Bills made substantive amendments, unlike the Bill before the House which is formal and procedural.

My final comments refer to the general question of private Bills and the procedure laid down in Standing Orders. These do not make it requisite that such Bills should be introduced only by petition. Private legislation could be introduced as a public Bill either by a private member or by the Government.

The petition procedures are included for a very special reason, because if we do not have these petition procedures we could easily have a situation where a private

citizen had no machinery available to him at all for getting a Bill before the Legislative Assembly or the Legislative Council.

Let me quote a hypothetical case. Let us suppose that the Nedlands Bowling Club came to me wanting a private Bill introduced and I, as the local member, was not in accord with the club's views and I refused—and quite rightly—to sponsor the Bill. The club might then go to another member of Parliament who might say, "I am not going to introduce it; if the local member will not touch it, why should I?" In any case such a member might feel incompetent to handle the legislation because he might not know enough of the local background.

If the position rested there, it would mean that the Nedlands Bowling Club—to quote a case—would have no machinery available to get its Bill introduced by Parliament; but the club might feel that if it got the Bill before Parliament it would be passed.

Mr. Tonkin: You can only be certain of that when you bring down Bills containing agreements.

Mr. COURT: Let us consider this matter in an objective fashion, not in the sinister way which the Leader of the Opposition has developed as a habit these days. I am trying to state the position fairly.

Mr. Tonkin: Don't tell me that a slight interruption would interfere with your train of thoughts.

Mr. COURT: There is machinery laid down whereby the Nedlands Bowling Club could petition for a Bill. The club might feel that if it could get the Bill before Parliament the majority of members would support it; therefore it would ask for a petition.

By tradition the local member—even though he might not accept responsibility for the Bill and might not agree with it—would present the petition. It would be most unusual for the local member to refuse to present it. Having presented the petition his job is ended; Parliament takes over, and the Standing Orders governing private Bills operate. Then the machinery is set to work, and Parliament duly makes its own decision on the report of the Select Committee.

By this means a private Bill can be brought to the consideration and the decision of Parliament; and I submit with respect to the honourable member that this particular Bill—forgetting whether it be a procedural one, or one dealing with a substantive matter—is quite within the competence not only of the Government but of a private member to introduce. The Government should not be debarred from introducing a public Bill merely because the measure has been branded as a private Act based on the original concept of the Act.

MR. BERTRAM (Mt. Hawthorn) [6.2 p.m.]: We have just received a somewhat lengthy answer to the proposition that I put up; and I am convinced that the reply given by the Minister is not a correct one. The Minister said—as he stated before, and as I think I was prepared to concede—that the Government and Parliament can do what they like; but if Parliament has certain rules it should abide by them wherever it can. If the Government does what it likes then in due time the electors will reward it for its performance!

The explanation given by the Minister is somewhat lengthy, and, after some weeks' adjournment following the second reading debate, it is a little difficult to attempt to answer it off the cuff. The essence—if not the essence then a most important ingredient—of a private Bill is that a private party—an individual, a very small number of persons, some corporate body, or something of that sort—should ask for it. That is precisely what happened here.

This is not a Bill initiated by the Government. It never dreamt of doing so. The Western Australian Trustee Executor and Agency Company Limited came along, as I understand the position, and asked for something to be done. It acted properly in this regard. Something had to be done before the reprint legislation could take effect. We know that, and nobody argues about that.

As my recollection goes, the blemish in the 1923 amendment occurred, no doubt, inadvertently because the comany concerned took up that particular procedure in the form that now exists. In my view it is not asking too much of the company to follow that procedure; it could not care less, and it would only be too happy to follow the procedure. It is the procedure the company adopted, and it is not unfair to ask it, in the ordinary course of events, to follow that procedure.

There is no urgency about this Bill. It has been before the other place and this House for some months, and I think therefore this is another reason why we should have said, "There is an element of doubt. Let us go about this in accordance with what appears to be the procedure which has been followed by the company ever since its inception. The Act has always been a private one, and it has been amended by private Bills."

Suddenly, and without any explanation to this House, we are asked to veer from the normal course. I should have thought that the Minister, having made some inquiries, because he alleged in his speech that he had some doubts on the Bill, would tell us about them. He should have said, "I have some doubts. I will tell the House about them." That would have been the reasonable and proper thing to do; but that did not happen. We just had the Bill placed before us, and we

were taken by surprise and put off our guard. It just occurred to some honourable member to question the procedure in respect of private Bills.

I regret that I am unable to answer seriatim the comments of the Minister, off the cuff. I have made one other note; that is, the Government has the right to repeal any Act, whether it be a private Act or otherwise. Nobody questions this right, and it is elementary enough. One could hardly imagine the original promoters of, or beneficiaries under, some private enactment asking the Government to repeal or amend it. This is where the procedure starts. A private person, a firm, or body corporate—it matters not—comes along and asks, "Will you do something about it?" It is not very likely that the people benefiting from a piece of legisla- will ask the Government to repeal it against their interests.

I do not wish to take the matter any further. At least we have something on record now as to where we are going in the future in regard to cases of this sort.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Council with amendments.

BILLS (2): THIRD READING

1. Lake Lefroy Salt Industry Agreement Bill.
2. Alumina Refinery (Mitchell Plateau) Agreement Bill.

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

Sitting suspended from 6.10 to 7.30 p.m.

AIR SERVICES

Cargo Rates and Passenger Fares: Motion

MR. NORTON (Gascoyne) [7.30 p.m.]: I move—

> That this House views with grave concern the steep increase in air cargo rates and passenger fares brought about by the introduction of commuter air services to the remoter areas of Western Australia and requests the Government to make strong representations to the Federal Government for a subsidy to reduce the present air cargo rates and passenger fares to the level they were prior to 1st of January this year.

Before dealing with the actual motion itself, I feel I should relate the history of air services in the north-west and the Murchison. I am not going to deal with the early days of Mac.Robertson Miller Airlines and Kingsford Smith, but rather to start with the late 1940s and early 1950s when M.M.A. was servicing the north-west coast and some of the hinterland of the Gascoyne and the Pilbara plus the Kimberleys. At that time the Western Australian Airways ran a service throughout the Murchison area from, I understand, Kalgoorlie to Meekatharra and all the towns in that area.

Mr. Burt: Airlines (W.A.) was the correct title.

Mr. NORTON: I thank the honourable member for his interjection. The two companies when operating at that time provided an exceptionally good service to a lot of the outback stations and places which today are not catered for by a regular air service, although charter aircraft are used occasionally.

When M.M.A. and the other lines amalgamated in the early 1950s, quite a number of the stations which were enjoying a fortnightly service had their timetables reduced. At that time, having taken over the other airlines which ran smaller planes like Doves, M.M.A. changed over to DC3s. This, of course, meant that the airstrips within the areas previously serviced by the smaller planes were not large enough.

Because of this M.M.A. applied for permission to relinquish these services. At the same time the subject of subsidies was involved, but I will deal with this a little later on. The same thing has occurred now. Ansett has taken over M.M.A. and is taking out, as it were, the smaller aircraft—the DC3s—and giving preference to the Fokker Friendships and the larger planes on order at present.

When Ansett took over control on, I think, the 16th January this year, it was stated the company would have to obtain a greater subsidy or it would be necessary to bypass the smaller air ports, such as Shark Bay, Gascoyne Junction, Meekatharra, Mt. Magnet, and many others, which had been serviced previously. This information is supplied in answers to questions asked in the Federal Parliament in December last.

It seems that as the airlines amalgamate and become bigger, the smaller ports are automatically dropped and those people who have for many years enjoyed a service find themselves in the same position as they were years and years ago; that is, they are left with only a weekly road service. I must add that these people are able to make use of charter aircraft if they so desire.

The following question, which comprises five parts, was asked by the Federal member for Kalgoorlie of the Minister for Civil Aviation (Mr. Swartz) towards the end of last year. However, time did not permit

an answer being given in Parliament, but the Minister replied by letter. The first question was—

> Which companies (a) have taken over or (b) are expected to take over the airline services which MacRobertson Miller Airlines Ltd. now operate or will, in the near future, cease to operate?

The answer the Minister supplied was—

> Port Hedland Stations Services—Murchison Airlines Pty. Ltd.
>
> Carnarvon to Shark Bay—Murchison Airlines Pty. Ltd.
>
> Carnarvon to Gascoyne Junction—Murchison Airlines Pty. Ltd.
>
> Perth-Geraldton to the Murchison area—Hicks Airlines Pty. Ltd.
>
> Perth-Rottnest Island — Murchison Airlines Pty. Ltd.: Civil Flying Services (W.A.) Pty. Ltd.
>
> Perth-Albany—Civil Flying Services (W.A.) Pty. Ltd.
>
> Kalgoorlie - Norseman - Esperance—Noeska Aviation.
>
> Kalgoorlie - Leonora - Laverton—Noeska Aviation.

The next two questions were—

> Has he approved the charges for air fares and freights to be made or now being made for the new services in each instance?
>
> If not, on which specific routes have charges been approved?

The Minister's reply was—

> I have approved fares and freight rates on the following services:
> Port Hedland Stations.
>
> Perth-Geraldton to the Murchison area.
>
> Perth-Rottnest Island.
>
> Perth-Albany.
>
> Kalgoorlie-Norseman-Esperance.
>
> Kalgoorlie-Leonora-Laverton.
>
> The fares and freight rates from Carnarvon to Shark Bay and Gascoyne Junction are still under consideration.

The fourth question was—

> Have any of the new companies applied for subsidies? If so, have they been approved?

The following was the Minister's reply:—

> None of the new companies have applied for subsidy.

The fifth question was—

> Where no application for subsidy has been made could a successful application at this stage be the means of reducing current fare and freight charges or would the subsidy only be granted to prevent any further increases in charges?

The Minister's reply, which I think is quite significant, was—

> This would depend on the detailed investigation which will be made of the applications for Commonwealth air service subsidy. Whilst not wishing to anticipate the results of any such investigations it would seem more likely that the subsidy would be granted to prevent any further increases in charges.

From that answer it appears that the Minister was fairly definite that there would be no relief regarding the present charges made.

Mr. O'Connor: This, I think, has been confirmed.

Mr. NORTON: The Federal member for Kalgoorlie asked some further questions, the first of which was—

> (1) Has there been a recent steep increase in air fare and freight charges to northern areas of Western Australia?

The answer was—

> There have been increases in fare and freight rates to these areas.

The next question was—

> (2) Is it a fact that from Perth to (a) Shark Bay (b) Gascoyne Junction and (c) Marble Bar air fares have increased from:
>
> (i) $21.80 to $51.40,
>
> (ii) $39.90 to $49.00 and
>
> (iii) $56.80 to $72.00 respectively, and freight charges have increased from—
>
> (a) 13 to 27 cents per lb.
>
> (b) 16 to 27 cents per lb. and
>
> (c) 22 to 36 cents per lb. respectively.

I might interpose here and say that these figures are not exactly correct, but in the vicinity of the correct figures. The Minister replied as follows:—

> Apart from two minor differences, the fares and freight rates are as set out in the question.

To continue—

> (3) If so, did he approve these charges?

The reply to that question was—

> Those to Marble Bar have been approved but those to Shark Bay and Gascoyne Junction or, more correctly, from Carnarvon to Shark Bay and Gascoyne Junction are still under consideration. It must be appreciated that changes in the route structure were involved and indirect routings to these centres are now necessary.

Question 4 was as follows:—

Are the airline companies operating on these routes—

(a) in receipt of subsidy or

(b) entitled to subsidy if their profits are below a certain figure?

The answer was—

(a) No subsidies have been sought by the commuter operators serving these routes.

(b) This could only be determined by the detailed investigation of the financial affairs of the companies which would follow any request they might make for Commonwealth air service subsidy.

Mr. O'Connor: Was this, again, in December?

Mr. NORTON: Yes, in December. The original question was number 1,022, and this is question, 1,023. To continue—

(5) Will the recent increases in charges substantially reduce the need for subsidy?

The answer was—

A substantial reduction in subsidy should result from these increases.

Now I think that is quite a pertinent point; that is, the Commonwealth Government was definitely looking to reduce the subsidy throughout the north-west by introducing commuter services. Another series of questions was asked by the same person on the 16th December, and the questions are as follows:—

(1) Did he or his Department recommend or make the request that MacRobertson Miller Airlines Ltd. drop out of uneconomical air service routes in Western Australia in favour of commuter air services?

(2) If so, for what reason other than to reduce subsidy pay out was the request made?

The answers to those two questions were combined, and are as follows:—

MacRobertson Miller Airlines Ltd. and the Commonwealth were concerned at the trend towards increasing subsidy need with an estimated requirement of more than $400,000 for the current year. The Company submitted proposals to withdraw from the more uneconomical routes in favour of commuter air services.

I want to draw the attention of the House to the fact that in 1951-52 the subsidies paid for the Murchison and the north-west services were $342,982.58. For the years 1951-52 to 1953-54 inclusive, the average subsidy paid to Mac.Robertson-Miller Airlines, and the other airline—if it was operating during that period—was an average of $294,723.04.

When one considers that the amount of subsidy paid in those times was only $60,000 or $70,000 less than the $400,000-odd now being paid one can see the difference is not very great. I think the Minister must have been quibbling over quite a small sum, really. Question (3) reads as follows:—

(3) Did he expect a substantial increase in the costs of travel and cargo delivery as the result of the changeover?

The reply was—

It was anticipated that the consumer would be required to bear a higher proportion of the costs involved though the extent of any increase was not expected to be steep.

I will deal with that aspect in a minute or two when I discuss the steep increases in air fares and air freights. The next question was—

(4) Was any consideration given to subsidising the commuter airlines to keep costs of travel and cargo delivery to a reasonable level?

The Minister replied—

The Government recently reviewed its policy on subsidising air services and decided that consideration will be given to subsidising commuter operators who take over existing subsidised developmental airline services provided a saving in subsidy will be achieved.

I wonder can we claim that those people being serviced in the 1940s and 1950s were in a developmental area. They have probably been on those stations upwards of 50 or 60 years, so I cannot see how they—and they are the ones affected—will be subsidised. It will be the more developed areas where there are iron ore deposits and various other mineral deposits throughout the north—and probably in the Murchison, too—which will be subsidised. The last question asked was—

Is it claimed that the charges now being made are reasonable?

The reply was—

In the light of costs of operation, the type of aircraft being used and the frequency of service provided, it is considered that the present charges are reasonable.

I do not know what the Minister calls reasonable, but as far as I am concerned, the charges are unreasonable. It seems to me that the people in this remote area of the State are being hit all the time with ever-increasing costs. It is making their lot far harder than is actually necessary.

Not so long ago we were faced with increased transport costs by having to pay the road maintenance tax. Now we have increased air cargo rates and air fares. Only this week I consigned a case of apples from Perth to Exmouth. I bought a top

line of apples for $2.60. The general cargo rate to Exmouth was $2.15 on the case. If the weather had been hot, I would have had to send the apples in a chiller truck and it would have cost $3.50 for one single case of apples.

I now come to the schedule of rates which affect the people in my electorate, and also those in part of the area represented by the member for Murchison-Eyre. These figures have been taken from the schedules of the airline company, and they are factual. I have them in tabular form so that they can be recorded in *Hansard*. I will first of all quote the names of the towns, and then I will quote the air miles; the passenger fares from the 20th September, 1968; the passenger fares from the 16th January, 1969—that is when Ansett really took over—the percentage increase in air fares; the cargo rates on the 20th September, 1968; the cargo rates at the 16th January, 1969; the percentage increases; and the return fares.

The distance from Perth to Carnarvon is 512 air miles. This mileage was taken from the *Western Australian Pocket Year Book*. The air fare at the 20th September, 1968, was $37.90. It did not increase and, at the 16th January, 1969, it was still the same. There was no percentage increase, but the freight rate increased from 13c to 17c, which is an increase of 31 per cent.

Shark Bay, which comes into the commuter air services, is 428 air miles from Perth. The passenger fare rate at the 20th September, 1968, was $30.80; but, with the introduction of the commuter air service, it is $51.40, which represents an increase of 70 per cent. Cargo rates were 11c on the 20th September, 1968, and these increased to 27c on the 16th January, 1969, which represents an increase of 145 per cent.

I do not have the air miles to Gascoyne Junction, but the passenger fare at the 20th September, 1968, was $39.90. It is now $51, which represents an increase of 32 per cent. Cargo rates at the 20th September, 1968, were 16c, but these have increased to 26c, which represents an increase of 62 per cent.

The passenger fare to Cue at the 20th September, 1968, was $28.10, but this increased on the 16th January, 1969, to $37.75, which represents an increase of 34 per cent. Cargo rates jumped from 14c to 28c, which is an increase of 100 per cent.

Meekatharra is 435 air miles from Perth. The passenger rate on the 20th September, 1968, was $33.10. It is now $43.30, which represents an increase of 31 per cent. Again, the freight rates jumped in the same period from 14c to 28c, which represents an increase of 100 per cent.

The distance from Carnarvon to Gascoyne Junction is 100 air miles. In the same period the passenger fare rose from $10.60 to $11.10. The freight rate jumped from 9c to 10c. I emphasise that this is the increase that has taken place for a journey of only 100 miles.

The distance from Carnarvon to Shark Bay is only 65 miles, but the passenger fare rose from $12.10 at the 20th September, 1968, to $13.50 on the 16th January, 1969, and the freight rate rose from 6c to 10c in the same period.

First of all I want to compare the charges which I have just read out with the charge applicable for the Perth to Adelaide trip. I will mention the economy fare, and I think it is quite reasonable to do this. In my electorate we have only the one fare rate, which therefore is the highest and the lowest, but in making a comparison with the Perth-Adelaide service I will take the lowest, which is the economy fare rate. The distance between Perth and Adelaide is 1,377 miles whilst the distance between Perth and Shark Bay is only 428 miles. The return fare from Perth to Adelaide is $112.50 whereas the return fare from Perth to Shark Bay is $102.80. I ask members to compare the mileage; namely 1,377 miles to Adelaide and only 428 miles to Shark Bay.

On top of that, the minimum cargo rate for Carnarvon and Shark Bay at the 20th Septembed, 1968, was 80c, but on the 16th January, 1969, it rose to $1.20 for Carnarvon and, in respect of Shark Bay, to $2.20. If anyone in these parts wants something urgently, usually he pays express air freight, which is double the ordinary rate. This means that at least 30 per cent. of the cargo would be freighted at double the ordinary rate. Consequently, the freight rates I have given are quite low compared with the express rate.

When the Mac.Robertson Miller Airlines was operating it gave a 25 per cent. discount, I understand, on the freighting of all papers to the north-west. This was cut out from the 16th January and it means that the people at Carnarvon have to pay an extra 2c for every copy of *The West Australian* received in that town. On three different ocassions I have gone to the trouble of weighing six issues of *The West Australian*. The price paid for the paper by the person in the street in Carnarvon only covers the freight paid by *The West Australian* offices to get it to Carnarvon. There again, there is a 25 per cent. increase in respect of air freight on papers.

At this point I wish to analyse the cost per passenger mile per ticket issued. The passenger rate to Geraldton is 6.826c per passenger mile. To ports in the north-west it is over 7c; for instance, Port Hedland is 7.23c per passenger mile. When we come to examine the cost per passenger mile to somewhere like Meekatharra, we find that it is 10c. If one compares that cost with the cost to Geraldton, one will see it is approximately 80 per cent. dearer

per passenger mile to travel to Meekatharra than it is to travel to Geraldton. I would guess that there is no subsidy whatsoever paid between Perth and Geraldton.

Mr. Burt: The aircraft flies a much longer distance, of course. To get to Meekatharra the aircraft flies half-way around the State.

Mr. NORTON: But it is still the distance from Perth which I quoted. Like all other commuter air services, the firm of Murchison Air Services Pty. Ltd. has been giving a very good service. I had occasion to try to persuade the company to alter its time schedule to suit the people in the district, which it did. When Murchison Air Services replied to my request it forwarded me a lengthy letter. I do not intend to read all of it, but it reads, in part, as follows:—

> In addition, it is planned to commence a Perth-Denham-Denham-Perth service and verbal permission has been obtained from the Department of Civil Aviation for this. However, it is obvious that such a service could only exist if the traffic warranted it.

I quite agree with those comments. The letter continues—

> I would like your advice on this matter to days, times and frequencies on which you consider the proposed direct service should operate. Actually it is planned to go Perth-Denham-Carnarvon-Coral Bay and return. Initially once per week and depending on demand twice per week.
>
> We have also discussed the matter of fares with the Department of Civil Aviation and when we have consolidated figures in front of us, which should be in the next two or three weeks, we will be examining ways and means of altering the present fare structure. Obviously the proposed Denham-Perth service would assist this is no small degree.

Mr. O'Connor: What was the date of that letter?

Mr. NORTON: It is dated the 20th January, 1969. Recently I asked the Minister whether an application had been made by the company to fly Perth- Denham-Carnarvon-Coral Bay. The Minister replied that one had been received and that it had been refused.

It seems to me that Ansett-A.N.A.—or M.M.A., whichever one likes to call it—rigidly opposed this proposition, because it is transporting passengers and cargo to Carnarvon for Shark Bay. It is also transporting passengers and cargo to Coral Bay. If an application by Murchison Air Services had been granted, it would have meant a possible inroad into M.M.A.'s services. However, if the people in the district could have a direct flight, and at a lower cost than they are paying today, then it would be a service to those people. I do not see why an airline, such as M.A.A., which is being heavily subsidised, should be allowed to influence in any way the operations of a service which is not being subsidised, especially if that service would be of advantage to the people in the district.

Mr. O'Connor: Did the honourable member know that a proposition was put to both Murchison Air Services and to M.M.A. to reduce the fares?

Mr. NORTON: Apparently that has been rejected.

Mr. O'Connor: No, it has not.

Mr. NORTON: I have here a letter from the Murchison Shire Council. I do not know whether the member for Murchison-Eyre also received a copy, because my letter does not indicate this. The letter, which is addressed to myself, is headed, "Commuter Airlines." It reads as follows:—

> Council decided at its recent meeting that a resolution as follows be submitted for your attention and support:—
>
> > "Commuter Airlines: That Council request Parliamentary Members to press for all impediments to the successful and profitable operation of third level operation in remote areas be removed. In particular attention is drawn to time-tables and routing of competitive companies operating through high population density areas in districts, such as, in particular Geraldton and Meekatharra. Furthermore that strenuous efforts be made to have portion of subsidy now paid to M.M.A. allocated to Third Level Operators in Northern Areas."
>
> All councillors were unanimous in support of abovementioned resolution, and appreciation for the establishment of air-services is to be conveyed by letter to the Hicks Aviation Company.
>
> Trusting this will receive your support, and wishing you 'Compliments of the Season.'

I think that resolution virtually sums up the feelings of the people in the outback with respect to higher freight and passenger rates, and so on. No matter where I go in my electorate where these commuter services operate at what I call extortionate rates, the people are of the same opinion.

It is no fault of the commuter airlines that they have to use small aircraft such as the Cessna 310, 401, and 402. However, in the outback areas there is often a lot of heavy freight urgently required. Some of this freight is bulky and it might not

be so heavy but, nevertheless, it may be urgently required by a station or a mining company, or whatever it may be, and these aircraft, which are large in the small aircraft field, cannot cope with such an emergency.

For instance, the Cessna 310 has an all-up carrying capacity of 1,786 lb.—that figure includes passengers—and so it would not be able to carry a very bulky or heavy article, such as a gearbox, which may be urgently needed for a heavy transport in one of the more remote areas. Nor would the Cessna 401 or Cessna 402 be able to cope; those aircraft have an all-up weight of 2,300 lb. This makes it very awkward—irrespective of freight charges—for people in those areas to obtain the urgent air services which are often required.

In conclusion, I believe that the people in the outback are just as much entitled to a share in the Commonwealth subsidy for the maintenance of aircraft and air services as are those in the more populated districts, such as mining areas, of Western Australia. I commend the motion to the House.

MR. O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Transport) [8.5 p.m.]: I listened with much interest to the comments made by the member for Gascoyne, as, no doubt, all members did, and I agree that most of the comments he made are relevant and to the point. In regard to the motion, I propose to agree to it and to support it.

The State Government has been concerned at the increases which have taken place in many of these areas. We realise, as does the member for Gascoyne, the necessity to endeavour to protect the outback areas as far as we can and also to protect what are in some cases referred to as developmental areas. The Commissioner of Transport and I have had a number of talks with the Commonwealth, and particularly with the Director of the Department of Civil Aviation in this State, Mr. Wally Boud, and we have indicated to him the necessity to endeavour to keep prices down to a figure at least below that at which they are now, and to endeavour to obtain a subsidy for operations in some of the outback areas.

Unfortunately it has been pointed out that in connection with some of the areas concerned the use of the air service is so poor that in actual fact the service is barely warranted. However, as was pointed out by the member for Gascoyne, there are many other areas in which the costs of a particular service are very high, and I believe we should endeavour to do everything we possibly can in an effort to keep those charges down to a minimum.

When M.M.A. relinquished a number of branch lines, I assumed they were the lines which were the least profitable and which were probably carrying a large amount of the subsidy in the early stages. It was considered by some that the use of smaller aircraft in the areas concerned would not only help to keep rates down to a reasonable figure, but would also enable a better service to be provided. However, I must agree that this has not occurred.

In connection with some of the outback areas, a number of the operators at present are in difficulties in endeavouring to maintain their present rates, and I would not be surprised if some of them were not able to carry on for very much longer. Therefore, even with the high rates which have been quoted it is doubtful whether some of the operators will be able to continue in the future.

As I pointed out earlier, I did discuss this matter with the Director of Civil Aviation in this State, as did the Commissioner of Transport, who is presently in Melbourne where he has had discussions with the D.C.A. officials in connection with these operations. I might add that Hicks Airlines in Western Australia has obtained assistance by way of a subsidy from the Commonwealth for the operation of its airline. I have been advised by the Commonwealth that it is the only commuter operator in Australia which at present receives a subsidy. When I say "commuter operator" I am not referring to A.N.A. or T.A.A. Those companies are referred to as airline operators, and I am told that apart from those two airlines and their branches, Hicks Airlines is the only commuter operator in Australia receiving a subsidy.

I know this does not carry much weight with operators in other areas who are not receiving a subsidy and who need to charge very high freight rates and fares in connection with their operations. However, I am also advised that even though Hicks Airlines is being subsidised to the extent of approximately $50,000 a year, this will not give it the advantage of being able to reduce fares. In fact, the subsidy will only permit it to continue operating at a reasonable profit at its present rates.

The member for Gascoyne mentioned the Murchison Air Services, which operates in the Denham-Shark Bay area, and through to Coral Bay. The Department of Civil Aviation—and this is a point I was trying to make earlier, but probably the member for Gascoyne did not have the information that I have in this regard—has had discussions with us, and it has approached Murchison Air Services and M.A.A. in an effort to have a reduction made in the fares of those companies by through-routing.

Part of the problem is that when a person travels by two airlines in order to get to his destination—that is, he takes one plane to a certain point, and then a second to his destination—the fares involved are extremely high; and the service to Shark Bay and the surrounding areas is one that has caused some concern.

The Department of Civil Aviation made an approach to two operators in the area; namely, M.M.A. and Murchison Air Services Pty. Ltd., and put a proposition to them which, if agreed to, would result in a reduction of fares. M.M.A. did agree with the proposition, but Murchison Air Services refused to negotiate and co-operate and therefore the proposal was not proceeded with. This is the information I have received from the Department of Civil Aviation.

However, Murchison Air Services has been advised to make application for a subsidy whilst operating in certain areas, and when we were last in communication with the Department of Civil Aviation last Easter this application had not been made. I spoke to Murchison Air Services to ascertain the reason the application had not been made for subsidy—I think the subsidy will be forthcoming, but I do not know to what extent at this stage—and Murchison Air Services apparently had some work to do on its books and until this was completed this company was unable to give the information requested by the Department of Civil Aviation in support of a subsidy for operating in the area concerned.

The point made by the honourable member in the question he asked in the House was quite relevant. The Commonwealth has made fairly obvious the operations it will support by way of subsidy, and it appears that such subsidy will not be as easy to get as that available for developmental roads. The honourable member mentioned this point. I was in communication with the Department of Civil Aviation in regard to this matter some time ago and I was advised that areas such as Shark Bay, Kalumburu, Gascoyne, Pardoo, Laverton, and Leonora, would probably be included in those areas that would, on the basis it had laid down, be considered. I know that the member for Albany will not be impressed when I tell him that the Albany and Esperance areas were considered not to be developmental routes.

As I have said, I believe we must do everything we possibly can to obtain subsidies for these areas in an endeavour to keep rates and fares down to the minimum, and as close as possible to the charges that were previously obtaining. The Commissioner of Transport also obtained advice for me some time ago from the Department of Civil Aviation in respect of several different areas, and for the information of the House I will try to give some of the detail, but will endeavour to make it as brief as possible. Part of that advice is as follows:—

> The Department of Civil Aviation is also considering an application for a subsidy in respect of the air service to Leonora and Laverton. Although the justification for this service is problematical; a recent check showed that 24 flights carried a total of only 28 passengers.

We have had further talks with the Department of Civil Aviation on this matter, and in view of the limited number of people availing themselves of this service there is some doubt as to whether it will be subsidised.

One of the points that was strongly impressed upon me by the Commissioner of Transport in connection with the Murchison Air Services operating in the Shark Bay area was that in the figures returned to us by that company it was indicated that the amount payable to the Transport Commission would be at the rate of 1 per cent. gross earnings, and that the gross income of this company for this particular service would be in the vicinity of $14,000 a year. Therefore, on that yearly gross income, the company would be unable to maintain an adequate service.

Mr. Norton: By charging such high freight rates one could not expect anything else.

Mr. O'CONNOR: The operator himself could not maintain a service for very long on that gross income. That is borne out when one carefully studies the expenditure that is made on fuel, pilots' salaries, and so on. What I am trying to point out is that it is very difficult to imagine that this operator would be able to continue for very long bearing in mind the gross annual income he would earn from operating this service in the Shark Bay area. This is only one of the aspects of the problem which concerns us, and, as I have already pointed out, the Government is gravely concerned about the matter.

The Commissioner of Transport has been in Melbourne for the purpose of entering into discussions with the Department of Civil Aviation on the problems of subsidies in an endeavour to improve the present freight rates. He will discuss whether the other services will be on a similar basis and if the existing rates will be maintained. We will continue with our efforts to encourage the Commonwealth Government to support us in this particular field. We believe that subsidies should be coming forward in support of various air services. In conclusion, I wish to say that I support the motion put forward by the member for Gascoyne.

MR. HALL (Albany) [8.6 p.m.]: It is very heartening to hear a motion on this subject being moved by a member sitting on the Labor benches. The member for Gascoyne put his case very well, and as the Minister has shown that he is sympathetic to it, this, in itself, is quite an achievement. I know the Leader of the

Opposition would like to have as many victories as the member for Gascoyne has had on this occasion.

I liken the air services in the north to the rail developments in the south-west, the southern portions of the State, and the goldfields area. As the Minister well knows, in these modern days, the object is to achieve co-ordination of all forms of transport including the latest method of sea transport; namely, the container system. I understand that this system of transport originated in Europe.

A striking feature that was mentioned by the member for Gascoyne is that the impost of these extra charges for air transport would have to be borne by the people in the area, or by people generally throughout the State. We have heard that the Minister and the Government are very concerned about the Commonwealth Government's action in virtually saying that subsidies will not be paid unless the air transport companies who apply for subsidies agree to have their affairs investigated. Perhaps that may not be a bad condition, because quite often we find that the operation of transport services, whether they be air services, or other forms of transport services, are inefficient, and perhaps an application by such companies for the payment of a subsidy would disclose many of the weaknesses that may exist in the management of their particular transport services.

Today I asked the following question of the Minister for Transport, and on this occasion I anticipated the answer wrongly. I was very thankful for the answer that was given:—

> What was the amount paid in road transport subsidies for the year ended the 30th June, 1968, to users in areas—
>
> (a) where railways had been promised;
>
> (b) where railways were discontinued;
>
> (c) where regular road services have been introduced by the Department of Transport;
>
> (d) other than those listed above?

The answer to the question, which, as I have stated, I did not anticipate, was as follows:—

(a) $196,661.

(b) $97,698.

(c) $65,810 (included in (a) and (b) above).

(d) $1,174.

I asked the question for the purpose of giving some support to the member for Gascoyne in moving his motion. I sought to find out if the Government had granted subsidies to the lakes district because of the Government's failure to continue with the railway to serve the farms situated in that area. My object was to show that if the Government can subsidise rural industries in the southern portion of the State, surely the Commonwealth Government, which enjoys the lion's share of the taxation obtained from Western Australia, could afford the payment of subsidies to air transport operators to assist the northern development of the State.

I do not think I need say much more, except that I do not think the commuter system has worked as efficiently as it should in the true sense of the word. I believe this system has been designed to effect greater efficiency, but according to the figures quoted by Mr. Collard, Mr. Swartz, and the member for Gascoyne, it has been proved conclusively to me that there has not been a decrease, but a decided increase, in the fares and rates charged.

And even as it affected the area of Albany the fare went from $11 to $21 and the freight charge from 10c to 13c. If we add these figures to the cost involved as a result of the curtailment of the State ships that used to service Albany, and the Albany region generally, we find there has been a considerable and general increase in costs; because freights carried past the ports by these ships had to be brought back by road transport to the areas concerned. This, of course, means a further imposition by way of cost to the people in such areas. These extra charges made on freights and air fares certainly constitute a great burden to the people involved.

Though this is certainly not in proportion to the costs faced by the people in the north-west, I can only reiterate my previous remarks and relate the development of the north-west to the development taking place in the south.

In his report Mr. Wayne states conclusively on page 44 that air services to the north-west are imperative and the cost factor should not be considered. The Minister has accepted that, and, having studied the report in association with the officers of his department, he realises that the north must be supported and carried for some period of time.

I visualise the time when Western Australia will, perhaps, be divided into three separate States, each State having to stand on its own feet, and having to stand or fall on its merits. I know the member for Narrogin is prepared to assist me in this theory which, because of constitutional obstacles that must be overcome, is very vague at the moment.

There is certainly no doubt that we must continue to develop the north; this position will be with us for a considerable time. I see Port Hedland as the hub of the north, and although the member for Gascoyne may differ with me on this, he does point out that the subsidies will help to meet the ever-rising costs which face the people in those developing areas.

I commend the motion. The Opposition, of course, supports it and, now that the Government has supported it, I am sure it will please the member for Gascoyne to know that he has achieved something which will be of benefit to the whole State.

MR. BURT (Murchison) [8.24 p.m.]: In moving this motion, the member for Gascoyne outlined the many shortcomings which have been foisted on the people of the outback as a result of the rather dramatic change which occurred in the air services to which they had been accustomed for a large number of years. I wish mainly to dwell on these shortcomings as they affect the area I represent, because this is an area in which, unfortunately, the population has been reduced during the past 12 years or so.

The people of the Murchison and the north-eastern goldfields, anyway, are facing similar transport problems to those faced by the people who live in the more remote areas of the Pilbara—those areas which are not experiencing the mineral boom—and also the people in some of the areas in the West Kimberley.

After the war a firm called Airlines (W.A.) Limited took over the Murchison service and did a pretty good job. In those days the population of the area was fairly high and the Dove aircraft gave an excellent service to Kalgoorlie, through to Wiluna, and along the routes of the Murchison.

But as the member for Gascoyne said, with the advent of Mac.Robertson Miller—which bought out Airlines (W.A.) Limited—the service rapidly deteriorated and the people living in the Murchison and the goldfields soon became the poor relations of that service and, for many years, the chief topic of conversation at all meetings and conferences, whether they were held by shire councils, the Pastoralists Association, or others, was confined to the deficiencies of the Mac.Robertson Miller service.

I think this criticism was well deserved because M.M.A. gave a service to suit itself. Timetables were changed and no thought was given to the times that would suit the local inhabitants, or how the airline could serve the interests of the population in those areas.

In spite of that, this airline was given a whacking great subsidy by the Federal Government. I think the figure was a flexible one and was designed to permit the airline operator to achieve a profit of something like 12 per cent. It varied somewhat but it was in the vicinity of $350,000 per annum. This was to enable the service to look after the unfortunate people who lived in the less populated areas.

With the tremendous increase in mineral discoveries and other activities in the north-west, the main towns in those areas —towns like Geraldton, Carnarvon, Port Hedland, and Derby—were indeed very profitable to the airline concerned.

As I said, the Murchison and eastern goldfields had to take a very bad third best service. This position was getting steadily worse until last October when the commuter services were introduced and Hicks Airlines was given the contract to service the Murchison towns. I would like to add here that the Murchison Air Services has nothing to do with the servicing of the Murchison district, strange as that may sound.

Hicks Airlines has established quite a good service; it is quite frequent and it has given attention to the needs of the district. The principals of the firm made a tour of every town to be serviced in an endeavour to find out the most suitable days on which to call, and they generally tried to do their best to suit local requirements. Some towns had their services doubled, and most of them received just as good a service and, in many cases, a better service, than that operated by M.M.A.

Unfortunately, however, from the outset Hicks decided to increase its fares—and this has been instanced by previous speakers—by an overall average of 35 per cent. This was a little more than the patronage warranted and, as a result, the service initially showed a tremendous falling off in patronage both in passengers and freights.

From its inception Hicks Airlines showed a loss of roughly $6,000 a month and this went on until the beginning of this year without any subsidy. Finally, I understand, after several representations were made by members of Parliament, shire councils, and others, the Commonwealth Government decided to subsidise Hicks Airlines to the extent of $50,000 per annum. That, however, merely kept the service in operation, but did nothing to reduce the fares.

So the result is that so far as the Murchison towns are concerned, Hicks Airlines is giving a service which is little more than a mail service, and is catering for urgent passengers and urgent freight. However, that is better than no service at all.

It can easily be seen that unless this subsidy is, I would say, doubled, there will be no chance of reducing the fares as they now stand. The Department of Civil Aviation, of which Mr. Boud is the regional director in Western Australia, considers that the previous fares charged by M.M.A. were not sufficient and were economically unattractive. When one realises that many towns which were getting a weekly or twice-weekly service—and the average patronage was perhaps one half or three-quarters of a passenger

per week and the average freight was round about 10 to 12 lb.—it is understandable the airline was battling along, despite the subsidy. That, of course, is the penalty for any district which is losing its population.

At the same time, with the great improvements to the main roads in the area —a very efficient railway bus service has been established between Perth and Meekatharra—a great number of previous airline patrons are now using this bus service which takes them to and fro at about one-quarter of the cost by air. The people are mainly concerned that a plane may not call at regular intervals each week, and they will not get their newspapers and mail. That will be the position unless something is done to increase the subsidy.

So far as the Eastern Goldfields services are concerned, they were taken over from M.M.A. a little later than those transferred to Hick Airlines. They were then taken over by a firm known as Noeska. Whilst it gives a slightly better service, the fares have also been increased. To give a comparison of the fares and freight rates to the more far-flung towns served by these two services, the fare from Perth to Wiluna when M.M.A. was operating was $36.60; it is now $49.40, or an increase of 45 per cent. The air freight has risen from 14c to 28c per pound, which is an increase of 100 per cent. The freight on newspapers to the town of Leonora has caused the price of what people regard, and should regard as everyday requirements in any town, to rise to 11c for a copy of *The West Australian* sent up by air, 9c for a copy of the *Daily News*, 15c for a copy of the *Weekend News*, 20c for a copy of *The Countryman*, and 12c for a copy of the *Sports Review*.

This illustrates some of the penalties imposed on people living in the far-flung areas of the State, and once again emphasises the difficulties that confront people who are brave enough to live in those areas. The only way in which we can assist them is by making available to them the everyday necessities of life at a cheaper rate. When we consider that an everyday necessity in these areas is a letter which can be delivered three or four days after being posted, or a newspaper which is not more than two days old, we can see how urgent it is to increase the subsidy which, at present, is barely keeping the airline alive.

I want to refer to this matter of subsidies. It has been stated by previous speakers that in answer to questions asked by the Federal member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Collard) in the Federal Parliament, the Minister for Civil Aviation (Mr. Swartz) said that the present subsidy received by M.M.A., despite the relinquishment of the unprofitable sections of its services, is something like $400,000 per annum. Before I saw that in the Federal *Hansard* the regional director in Perth told me that the M.M.A. subsidy had been cut out. I advised several shires, including the Shire of Murchison, of this fact.

Mr. Collard sent copies of his speech to all the shires. They naturally wanted to know whether the Federal subsidy had, in fact, been cut out when the Minister for Civil Aviation had said it was being paid at the rate of $400,000 per annum. I again contacted Mr. Boud and was told that in respect of the services that had been relinquished by M.M.A., no subsidy whatever has been paid to it. That is only just. He said that the total subsidy received by M.M.A. was in the vicinity of $150,000 per annum to cover certain uneconomic services—presumably the run to Denham is one—and certain sections of the Pilbara and the West Kimberley services.

Be that as it may, if my arithmetic is correct, the Federal Government has been spared a subsidy of $400,000 per annum and is now paying approximately $150,000 per annum to M.M.A., and $50,000 to Hicks Airlines. This means that the Commonwealth's expenditure in this connection has been halved. For that reason it is not very much to ask the Federal Government to reconsider the subsidies that are being paid to these commuter air services. It should be willing to outlay as much as it outlayed previously before the services I have mentioned were taken over, mainly for the purpose of assisting the people who live in the more remote areas of the State. I therefore compliment the member for Gascoyne for bringing this motion forward to Parliament, and I fully support it.

Question put and passed.

MOTOR VEHICLE THIRD PARTY INSURANCE

Inquiry by Royal Commission: Motion

MR. GRAHAM (Balcatta—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [8.38 p.m.]: I move—

> That this House deplores the recent increases in premiums for motor vehicle third party insurance, resulting in part from the requirement to retrieve within three years the unpaid dividends to insurance companies which have accumulated from 1957-58; and calls for the appointment of a Royal Commission or other form of exhaustive enquiry for the purpose of devising a more equitable system of both premiums and payments to claimants.

This motion is no empty gesture. It is a *bona fide* endeavour to confront a most important and worrying problem. It is one which is in the lap of the Government at the present moment, but it would be just as worrying and disturbing to a government of a different political colour.

There has been considerable public outcry following the Press announcement on the 27th March last of the intention to increase premiums to be paid for this form of insurance, which, as members know is compulsory. A vehicle cannot be licensed without the owner simultaneously paying the premium required for third party insurance cover. This move, of course, imposes extra burdens on an already heavily taxed motor and transport industry; and for that reason it deserves the closest scrutiny and examination generally.

Some sections will be exceedingly hard hit. I am referring to those who are on minimum incomes and others who use their vehicles on a very limited number of occasions and travel short distances only, in contradistinction to those who are constantly on the road in their vehicles.

I want to make it perfectly clear the motion is not a condemnation of the Government, except perhaps to the extent it suggests the Government might have done a little more in examining the problem before approving the sharp increases which have been announced and which become operative from the 1st July next.

Mr. Brand: We had a subcommittee of Cabinet throughly examine this matter, although I was not one of the members. I know the subcommittee examined all of the alternatives that you have suggested and still had to admit there seemed no alternative to the present decision. I am passing on the fact that at least this action was taken.

Mr. GRAHAM: It is my intention, a little later, to submit some 15 to 20 questions, which, in my view, require an answer. I think, too, some of the facts and figures which I will adduce will be positively astounding. I sincerely hope and trust the Government has an open mind on this question and, if I am able, as I believe I am, to raise grave doubts in the minds of members, that the Government will treat this as a serious and responsible endeavour to gather some facts, because something is radically wrong at the present time. If members will bear with me, I hope to establish that point beyond any argument or doubt.

We on this side of the House are not satisfied that merely an upward adjustment of premiums is all that is required. The Premier has indicated that a subcommittee of Cabinet has given some attention to some aspects of this matter and I say here as kindly as I can that I do not think it went sufficiently deeply into the matter, otherwise there would have been a different result from that which has been announced.

I express regret in advance if what I am saying is considered to be too severe in the way of criticism. I emphasise it is not my intention that that should be so. I am leading up to some points I intend to make to indicate that this matter does, in fact, require the most intensive examination.

There are a whole lot of propositions that deserve an answer; not a quick political answer, but a reasoned analytical answer after full examination of the whole matter. The more I look into the outline of how this scheme operates at the present moment the more I wonder how Governments of whatever political colour have allowed the process to continue. I say here and now that I am not drawing on my own imagination or fancy. I have had discussions with persons occupying responsible positions and who have had many years of direct association and experience with insurance, with motor vehicle insurance, and more particularly third party insurance, the subject of this motion.

The motion seeks this inquiry which I have already postulated and it also proposes that we should analyse the method of paying dividends and the arrears of dividends to the insurance companies, more particularly to ask why the Government wants, in a period of three years, to pay arrears of dividends which are stated to be spread over a period of some 12 years. Why this urgency?

I link this with another question: Why the failure to answer questions which were asked this afternoon? Those answers would have conveyed the true situation which, I repeat, when revealed presently will, I think, stagger most members of this Parliament. The position is that some two years ago premiums were increased from $16.80 to $25.20; and now, following the decision of the Government, there is the prospect of the premium being increased to $34.20—more than double in a period of some two years.

The proposals which have been accepted by the Government following the recommendations of the Premiums Committee give this result: the premiums as affecting motorcars are stepped up by 36 per cent.; for goods vehicles the increase is 36 per cent.; for metropolitan buses, the increase is 40 per cent.; for metropolitan taxis, the increase is 51 per cent.; and for country taxis, the increase is 67 per cent. Why the higher charge in respect of country taxis I do not know.

I will give an outline of the earlier history of this legislation before I deal specifically with what I want to submit as it may be of interest to members. I do not know the reason or the circumstances, but history shows that Bills were introduced into this Parliament by Labor Governments in 1938, 1939, 1940, and 1941, and on every occasion they failed to pass the Parliament. However, in 1943, another Labor Government introduced

a Bill for compulsory third party insurance and that was adopted by this Parliament.

It was different from what operates at the present moment. Whilst it was compulsory, each motorist made his individual decision as to the company with which he would take out his policy. Subsequently, in 1948, a Liberal-Country Party Government altered the legislation to establish a trust. So no longer were premiums paid to the insurance companies. Previously, motorists had to produce their policies or receipts for payment of their premiums before they could be issued with a motor vehicle license, or the renewal of a license, but with the introduction of the measure in 1948, to which I have referred, which became operative on the 1st July, 1949, when one paid one's motor vehicle license one was required simultaneously to pay the third party insurance to the Police Traffic Branch, or the local authority if in the country districts. Those bodies, in turn, were required to pay the premium portion to the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust.

It is interesting to peruse the records to see what the Minister in charge of the Bill—Mr. Watts, who I suppose is known to nearly all of us—had to say. He spoke of a premium ranging from $2 to $2.25 and expressed the hope that the premiums would fall below that figure because of the saving following a single insuring authority instead of 40, 50, or 60 insurance companies which were engaging in this business at the time.

At that time a premium from $2 to $2.25 was mentioned, while today we are discussing a premium of $34.20! There are certainly some miscalculations somewhere. In any event the scheme started with the premiums for motorcars in the metropolitan area being $3.60, and $1.80 in the country districts.

However, having regard to the number of cars in those areas it would be an average of approximately $3 per annum. That was in 1949 compared with, I repeat, $34.20 in 1969.

Having said that, we start to make an approach upon the problem. In 1949—and I am speaking of motorcars only, not trucks and commercial vehicles—there were some 40,000 paying an average of $3, which means a total of premiums of $120,000 in the year. Under the arrangement—for some unaccountable reason, but more of this a little later—those insurance companies engaged in the activity prior to July, 1949, were still regarded as being part of the scheme of things and in proportion to the amount of business they were doing prior to that date so they were and are entitled to dividends from the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust of an amount not exceeding 5 per cent. per annum of all premiums received; but it has, in fact, become a regular commitment of 5 per cent. per annum. So 5 per cent. of the $120,000 would give a sum total to be divided amongst these 50 or 60 insurance companies of $6,000 each, which is not very much. That is in respect of motorcars only.

Time has moved on, and if we peruse the figures submitted to the Government by the Premiums Committee we find some 276,000 motor vehicles currently at a fee of $34.20 which will give a total of premiums of $9,500,000 and a return to the insurance companies in this forthcoming year of some $475,000. I repeat that 20 years ago they started off on $6,000. This means the dividends to the companies have increased nearly 80 times or by 8,000 per cent.

Mr. O'Neil: How many times has the dividend been paid?

Mr. GRAHAM: It is proposed the whole lot including way back to 1957-58, shall be paid over the next three years.

Mr. O'Neil: But up to date how many times has it been paid?

Mr. GRAHAM: I am afraid that, because of the attitude of the Government in refusing to answer any questions this evening relating to motor vehicle third party insurance, I am unable to give the exact figures.

Mr. Lapham: To 1967, $1,960,000 was due and $700,000 actually paid.

Mr. GRAHAM: I think it might be slightly more than that but we will deal with this bit by bit. Having regard to the annual increase of 8 per cent. in the number of motor vehicles—and that is what is stated by the Premiums Committee in its report—in the next financial year after that which is shortly to commence, the companies will receive $513,000 and, the year after that, $554,000. This, to me, is absolutely preposterous. However, a little more with regard to that presently.

The sheet which was part of the report made to the Government indicates that in the next three years approximately $2,000,000 will be paid to the companies to cover the three years, and from my calculations there is approximately $3,000,000 to be paid in respect of arrears of dividends, making a total of some $5,000,000 to be met by the motorist to pay these premiums within a period of three years.

Based on the figures which have been supplied, there is a sum total somewhere in the vicinity of 375,000 motor vehicles of all types and they will be required to pay, in three years, this $5,000,000 of dividends. Motorists are to be asked to pay an extra $9 a year for three years. That is $27 each motorist, and roughly it averages that amount in respect of all types of vehicles. Therefore each motorist will be called upon to pay an additional $27 over the three years for third party insurance.

If, to find this $5,000,000 for dividends—past, present, and future—for the three years, we work on the basis of 375,000 vehicles, the amount is roughly $13.50 each vehicle. In other words, 50 per cent. of the increased premiums is not going for cover for third party, but will be paid to the insurance companies. I guarantee this was not analysed by the subcommittee which was detailed to look into this matter.

I think the member for Roebourne, subsequently the member for Pilbara (the late Mr. Rodoreda), was approximately on the ball when he spoke on the 28th October, 1948, to the Bill introduced by the Liberal-Country Party Government, and what he said appears on page 1995 of volume 2 of *Hansard* for that year. Mr. Rodoreda said—

> I was puzzled, when I saw the Bill and heard the Minister's explanation of it, as to why the insurance companies had so readily agreed to the formation of a pool, but on making enquiries I believe I have discovered the reason. It seems to me that it will be practically a matter of "all for nothing" for the companies. They will not have to do anything in the matter except participate in any profit that may be derived, simply because they happen to be in the business at the time when the measure comes into operation. Naturally the premiums committee will fix premiums that will ensure at least some profit to the companies.

Prophetic words, because what the Government has agreed to is on the basis of ensuring that every cent due under this formula which I am going to submit presently should not be in the Statute is to be paid to the insurance companies. I repeat, 50 per cent. of the additional impost is to pay not for insurance, but for dividends to people; namely, those in the insurance companies.

We have had some 20 years' experience of this legislation since the inception of the trust, and surely it is convenient and necessary that there should be some sort of an exhaustive review, not by the interested parties only, but including those who have a direct interest in the opposite sense; that is to say, those who are the payers. Perhaps it would have been proper for an examination to be made five years after the commencement of its operation. I am indicating the non-party nature of my comments, because at that time a Labor Government was in office. However, it was one of those things not attended to, and I am hoping before I have concluded I will have alerted members of the Government, and other members, to the serious necessity for a complete examination of the scheme of things.

It is my intention, as I indicated earlier, to pose a number of questions about which I have not consulted my colleagues or members on the other side of the House. Every member is, of course, entitled to agree or disagree with what I am submitting, but I hope there is some validity in some of the questions and that members will agree they require answers. I hope and trust that other members will have their submissions to make in respect of what they feel with regard to a detailed examination. I am outlining these questions not in order of importance or priority, because somewhere in the middle of them I will come to what I consider to be the most important of the aspects I raise. First of all I ask the general question—

> Are the increased premiums necessary or warranted and are the present rises merely an instalment or an interim increase with more to come in, say, three years?

If we have regard to this report, it covers a three-year period from the 1st July next, and as there has been a substantial increase in the last two years it would almost suggest that at the expiration of this three-year plan there could well be another increase. The second question I submit is—

> Is the Premiums Committee too disposed to raise the premium rates?

It is too simple; there is no need and, indeed, there is no legislative requirement for the committee to make a full and exhaustive inquiry into all the factors. It merely makes an inquiry into the financial situation and reports on whether the premiums are fair and reasonable. As deficits are shown, or as prospects of deficits appear, it is an easy matter for the Premiums Committee to recommend an upward adjustment of the premiums and, of course, there cannot be any buyer resistance.

The payment of the premiums is compulsory, otherwise one's vehicle must be stowed. I suggest, therefore, this is the easy way out and there are other factors which might be inquired into and which I do not think have been inquired into.

One can perhaps pose the next elementary question—

> Are there savings or economies which could be effected in the system and procedures?

I intend to deal with this matter of economies a little more extensively under further questions. The fourth question is—

> As the taking out of third-party insurance is compulsory, should it not be entirely a Crown function to operate the scheme?

Where we compel people to make certain contributions, is it right or proper that private concerns should have the right to operate the system? It is inescapable that portion of my premium goes to some 50 insurance companies, whether I like it or not.

Mr. Court: They have not had much, of course.

Mr. GRAHAM: Not much, but they will receive plenty; every cent of it.

Mr. Court: That is, if the scheme works out. I am not being critical of what you are saying; I am stating a fact.

Mr. GRAHAM: I think the Minister is immediately rushing in with the umbrella to try to protect these people. I suggest he will probably require something more than an umbrella before I finish. The point is that we compel people to make this payment, and I put this further question—

> Is it right that concerns should be making a profit on the outlay?

Where the Government compels people to engage in some form of monetary outlay the Government itself should conduct the activity exclusively. I feel there is a broad principle in connection with this and it is not in any way dependent upon a political philosophy. Indeed, as I think I indicated a short while ago, if my memory serves me correctly the Deputy Premier at the time felt there was considerable merit in the proposition that the trust should run the whole of the concern exclusively, and that private operators should play no part. I pose that as a question which should be looked into.

I have another question—

> Was the decision which was made by this Parliament in 1966 a proper and justifiable one; namely, to remove the limits which previously existed?

The amounts were varied from time to time but there had always been, until some two or three years ago, a maximum which could be claimed under the third party insurance scheme. However, an amendment made in 1966 removed that maximum entirely and so it is not unusual for awards—and I have in mind a particular case—of $150,000 being made in connection with the death of one person.

Previously, if I remember rightly, the maximum was $12,000. I am not suggesting what the figure ought to be, or whether there should be a limitation, but surely it is something that requires attention. I now go to the next point which follows. Under workers' compensation legislation, as introduced by successive Governments of the two political colours, there is a basis of payment, and a maximum sum of compensation is defined following certain injuries, and a certain maximum in respect of death.

We feel that some of the amounts are most inadequate, but if this is a scheme which applies in respect of some misadventure occurring to a worker—whether injury or death—why should there be a totally different scheme of things where a similar injury or a similar fate occurs following a motor accident? Which of these two systems is right? Should workers' compensation follow the existing third party insurance, or should third party insurance be based upon the procedure which has been in operation so long under the Workers' Compensation Act?

I asked some questions this afternoon which were not answered. One of the questions concerned the reducing of legal costs. The processes of law available to all are most expensive. The costs have reached the point where we can ponder as to whether the third party insurance tribunal should not be the final arbiter. It is presided over by a judge, and there are two others to assist. Why then the necessity to go to courts? This involves a terrific outlay by somebody—either the applicant who is unsuccessful or the trust which is unsuccessful. It might be an idea for the tribunal to be the final arbiter in respect of all matters except legal points, or where the trust denies any legal liability. In other words, in respect of matters of law only should there be an approach to the court.

I am not advocating this but I am suggesting it is something that could be looked into, because I am as certain as I stand here that there are substantial costs in respect of litigation, and they are being paid by somebody and, in the final analysis, by the motorist in the premium which he pays.

I also ask the question—

> Should there not be an alteration to the system of payment?

Where there is a wealthy family, what is the necessity for paying a lump sum of $100,000 or $150,000? Surely, if there is a lamenting widow and children to be provided for it would be more proper for an amount to be paid periodically. In that way a great deal of the money would remain with the trust and it would be earning interest and assisting in accumulating funds to meet other commitments.

Obviously provision would be made for a lump sum payment if there were particular circumstances in the family which, in the view of the trust, warranted such lump sum payment instead of periodical payments.

Now I ask the question—

> Are the dividends warranted in respect to what are called the participating approved insurers; in other words, the insurance companies?

I have made inquiries and, in connection with this point, I have had consultation with those directly associated with the activities. I am assured—and members have only to read and understand the legislation to appreciate this—that the insurance companies play no part whatsoever. They do not receive a cent by way of premiums. They do not handle claims. They do absolutely nothing in respect of the transactions. They provide no funds. They do no work. They take no risk. They handle no paper other than once in a while when

a cheque is posted to them by way of dividend. Under the proposals agreed to by the Government the companies will be receiving some $5,000,000 in the course of the next three years for doing absolutely nothing. It is not a criticism of them. They cannot do anything, because there is no part for them to play.

Theoretically, if the fund becomes bankrupt then the companies can be called upon to make some contribution, but whilst there is a premiums committee which goes through the process of making increases of 25 per cent., 40 per cent., or some other figure, that situation can never arise.

Why does not the Government guarantee the fund; that is, the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust? Experience shows that over the past 20 years there would not have been occasion for the Government to have subscribed $1. If the Government is afraid of that, then I have another suggestion to make. I have to take somebody else's word for this, but I believe it is possible to insure against loss over a certain amount. It is called an excess-of-loss cover and would seem to be the solution if the Government is nervous. I believe it costs approximately $1 per $1,000 to obtain this cover, which would be snapped up by insurance companies.

These are some of the matters which should be examined. I think it is a scandal that motorists are being asked to pay $5,000,000 in a period of three years to insurance companies when these companies do not and cannot lift a finger in connection with third party insurance transactions. The companies do not handle anything and they cannot handle anything.

The most I can say to those members who were in the Parliament at the time —and I was one of them—is that this was experimental legislation. It was introduced for very good reasons and for a good purpose. There was a certain measure of nervousness about it, but experience has indicated something to us. Nevertheless, Governments have gone on and on merely making adjustments to the premiums and doing virtually nothing else. I qualify that statement to say that the set-up has been altered in respect of the tribunal. That alteration is of comparatively recent vintage. However, so far as the machinery, the method of operating, and the financial aspect are concerned, I venture to say that there has been no thorough examination whatsoever.

Perhaps from the point of view of political philisophy the Government feels that the dividends to the companies are warranted. I can think of no other reason, but I would like to be corrected if I am wrong. If the Government does feel that the dividends are warranted for this reason, then I ask the question—

Is the present 5 per cent. warranted? How can we justify an amount in excess of $500,000 in the coming year to be paid by motorists to the insurance companies which cannot and do not play any part in connection with the scheme? It is ludicrous and almost unbelievable.

I had drawn conclusions somewhat akin to this on my own investigations. Then I spoke to those who have spent a lifetime in insurance and who have been associated with motor vehicle third party insurance. These people have their own facts and figures in addition to the copies of the document which was laid upon the Table of the House on the 26th March, 1969. They were able to substantiate in an analysis—which, up to then, I was incapable of making—that what I have been saying tonight is completely in accordance with the facts.

No Government with any sense of responsibility would allow that situation to continue. If it irks the Government to agree to a proposition which might appear, or be construed to be a criticism of it, I would be prepared to withdraw the motion upon an intimation by the Government that it would be prepared to look into the matter, make some examination of what I have said and the case generally, and undertake an inquiry if it is found that there is some basis for my allegations.

I have made that statement, because it would appear to be somewhat doubtful at this stage whether the motion I am moving will be finalised in this session for reasons in connection with which I do not intend to criticise the Government.

The increases which have been agreed to by the Government will add about $130,000 to the insurance companies payment in respect of present motorists. I have worked this out on the basis of 5 per cent. of $9, which is 45c, over some 375,000 vehicles. Consequently the companies, without doing anything and without having any strain or burden imposed upon them, are to be given an additional $130,000 annually. Of course, they will also be receiving the additional amount in respect of any increase in the number of vehicles which are licensed.

The second point to which I made some reference earlier is that all of this money, which represents hundreds of thousands of dollars a year, to be paid to the insurance companies is distributed in proportion to the amount of business that they were doing as at the 30th June, 1949. If the Apex insurance company was doing 10 per cent. of the business at that time, it will receive 10 per cent. of, say, $600,000 dividends due for a year—in other words, $60,000. If the XYZ company was doing half of the business in 1949 then it will receive $300,000 in 1969.

The basis of allocation bears no relationship to anything other than the state of affairs in existence some 20 years ago when matters were totally different. Surely this

requires examination. If the Government decides to retain the insurance companies, I ask these questions—

(a) Is 5 per cent, the right figure? Should it be less; because, after all, the Act says, "an amount not exceeding 5 per cent."?

(b) Does the basis of distribution add up to common sense, rhyme or reason?

Of course, it does not.

The next question I submit is—

Is the burden following upon these increases too great on pensioners and others on low incomes, and those who travel infrequently and for short distances only, measured against those who are always on the road?

I follow on from there by asking—

Is it possible or desirable to place motorists into categories?

Is it possible that pensioners can be charged a certain premium; that a figure slightly higher can be paid by the owners of private motor vehicles; that a higher figure again shall be payable by the owners of those vehicles which are used partly for private purposes and partly for business; and a still higher premium for the owners of those vehicles which are used exclusively for business purposes?

In my view, a flat rate is totally unfair. An honourable member, I think from this side of the House, asked a question only the other day and the reply came, I think, from the Minister for Police to the effect that the likelihood of accidents occurring is not necessarily related to the distance that is travelled. That might be a debatable point. I suppose if I am to have an accident some time, I am more likely to have it during a journey of 10,000 miles than I am during a journey of, say, one mile.

However, some people who own vehicles use them only on odd occasions; perhaps to do their shopping, or perhaps to make a short run on Sunday afternoons, or for something of that nature. Such vehicles are hardly used. Is it possible—I do not think it is impossible—to put motorists into two, three, four, or half a dozen different categories and, accordingly, have a scheme for payment of graduated premiums?

I ask another question—

Is it possible and desirable to arrange for some concession or discount for those motorists from whom no claim is made over a period?

The period may be five, seven, or 10 years. We must always bear in mind that the claim is made only in the event of negligence being established. Therefore, the motorist is at fault to some degree, because that is the whole purpose and the whole basis of the legislation.

So if a person escapes being involved in an accident over a period, or, in other words, does not make any claim in respect of his vehicle over a considerable period of years, or a period to be defined after examination, should he not perhaps receive a slight discount?

Mr. Evans: A no-claim bonus.

Mr. GRAHAM: That is so; it could be modelled on the basis of a no-claim bonus.

The next question is a counter to the one I have already asked—

Should there be a loading on, say, a person's driver's license if he, being a negligent driver, has had a claim made against him which has been sustained?

Surely there is some warrant for this, because if I be the negligent driver involved in an accident for which the trust is called upon to pay $50,000, no penalty whatsoever is imposed on me. I go on my sweet way and I pay exactly the same premium as I did before I was involved in the accident. If a similar accident or crash occurs next month, the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust is compelled to pay out once again.

The Treasurer, in an endeavour to justify these new rates, stated that in his view the increased premium could have the effect of bringing home to the motorist, in a financial sense, the seriousness of the consequences of accidents or negligent driving. That might be so as far as the whole of the motoring public is concerned, but it does not have any direct impact upon the person who is responsible for the drain upon the trust's funds; and for that reason I think some consideration may be given to a loading—perhaps $5 per annum—on the driver's license fee to serve as an annual reminder that he is paying something extra on account of the accident that took place last year, or last month. Of course, this additional money or surcharge payable on his driver's license will go into the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust Fund.

Mr. O'Neil: A big problem is that only a very small percentage of the drivers cause a drain on the fund. I think it is only about 5 per cent. So the loading on the remainder would have to be considerable to benefit the majority.

Mr. GRAHAM: That could be so. However, I am not thinking only in terms of dollars and cents. I am also following up on what the Premier said to encourage a motorist to be a little more careful. If he gets this reminder every year by paying something extra on his driver's license fee for, perhaps, a limited period, it could have a salutary effect upon him. After all is said and done, most of the laws of the land have a direct impact upon a minute portion of the public, whether the law be for drunken driving, or anything else. Most adults imbibe alcoholic liquor from time to time, but only a minute fraction

of them drink to excess, and yet it is felt that, because of the overall effect of these restrictions, cancellation of licenses, and all the rest of it, the offender would have learnt his lesson and that a salutary warning is given to others as to what might happen to them if they do not behave themselves as they should. So I say there is no penalty or deterrent whatsoever upon those who have been responsible for a drain on the resources of the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust.

I submit to the Premier that he might give consideration to another aspect, too. In 1962, he introduced legislation which imposed a surcharge of $2 on all third party insurance policies. By and large, the reasons submitted by the Premier were that we were a claimant State; that similar legislation had been introduced in Victoria in 1959; that Western Australia would be likely to be penalised by the Grants Commission if it did not measure up to the situation. On pages 2025 and 2026 of volume 3 of the 1962 *Parliamentary Debates*. Mr. Brand is recorded as having said the following:—

> The tax proposed in this Bill was first introduced in Victoria, in 1959, and was initially imposed until the 1st December, 1960. It has now been made permanent. As Victoria is one of the standard States against which this State's revenue-earning efforts are measured, it follows that our adjustment for the relative severity of taxation, calculated by the Commonwealth Grants Commission, contains an unfavourable adjustment for third party insurance surcharge.

The Premier went on to confirm this in the following words—

> In introducing this Bill I would emphasise that this surcharge is payable into the Consolidated Revenue Fund and in no way increases the income of the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust. Its purpose is to reduce, in some measure, the burden placed on the Consolidated Revenue Fund by motor vehicle accidents and the cost of traffic supervision and control; and to remove the financial effects of the adjustment for relative severity of taxation imposed by the Commonwealth Grants Commission on account of the third party surcharge levied in Victoria.

The position is that we are no longer a claimant State, and therefore it is not possible for the Commonwealth Grants Commission to penalise the State.

In addition to that, since 1962 there has been a complete change—which is related to what I have just stated—which is revealed in answers to questions by the member for Belmont yesterday; namely, that the Government's expectation this financial year of royalties to be received from the mining industry is, in round figures, $10,000,000.

Surely then, particularly as we are informed that this $10,000,000 is but the beginning, and having regard to the fact that there can be no penalty imposed on Western Australia, the Government could well make an adjustment to the extent that this $2 could be transferred to the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust Fund, or be abolished altogether and absorbed in the $9 additional amount which motorists are being called upon to pay.

It is now financially possible for the Government to do this without imposing a strain on the revenue account of the State. Surely there must be a limit somewhere, though goodness knows where it is, to the amount of burden that can be borne by the motorists and the transport industry generally.

Mr. Brand: Is not this argument of yours applicable to many situations in which we as a Government could forego certain taxes for easement of costs in various directions, particularly since the time costs have continued to go up—

Mr. GRAHAM: What costs?

Mr. Brand: The general costs of administration; as I said when introducing the measure, the increasing costs to the State of hospitalisation, of policing the roads, and of the whole effort generally.

Mr. GRAHAM: At the time the Premier indicated where there was a need and the money could go accordingly for that purpose; but the prime reason for introducing this tax on third party insurance—which goodness knows is high enough in itself; in fact it is too high—was in order to match Victoria, so that this State would not be penalised.

In any event I have initially posed this as a question: Could not the $2 penalty imposed in 1962 be abolished or incorporated in the premium, because in the present circumstances this imposes a burden of some $750,000 on the motorists of Western Australia.

The next question I ask is whether we need legislation such as there is in the State of Queensland. My attention was drawn to this by somebody engaged in insurance in the State and I will indicate his concern in a moment. It is interesting to quote from the Insurance Act of 1960 which was passed by the Parliament of Queensland and which relates to all forms of insurance other than life assurance; in other words it relates to fire, accident, marine, motor vehicle, household, and so on. I would now like to quote from section 16 leaving out the unnecessary words. Section 16 of the Queensland Insurance Act reads—

> Every insurer . . . shall from time to time furnish . . . such returns . . . as the commissioner may require.

It then refers to the rates of premiums, and says—

> Rates shall be deduced by the commissioner from such returns and shall be the maximum rates of premiums for the several classes of risk.

In other words, in that State the commissioner constituted under the Act fixes a maximum rate and up to that level the companies can make charges for their premiums as they think fit. The Act continues—

> With respect to and before making under this section any computation of maximum rates of premiums the commissioner shall confer with a representative of insurers licensed under this Act.
>
> Such representative shall be a person appointed as such in writing signed by or on behalf of the majority of such insurers.

It then goes on and states—

> The commissioner may make under this section any computation of maximum rates of premiums without first conferring with a representative of the insurers licensed under this Act, if they fail to appoint such representative within 30 days after notice by the commissioner of his intention to make such computation.

In 1960 there was a Country Party-Liberal Party Government in Queensland but here we have a Liberal-Country Party Government.

This matter to which I have referred may require some examination, particularly in view of the fact that I have been informed that as from the 1st May the insurance companies in Western Australia intend, and have decided, to increase the charges for all forms of insurance, under the heading of administration, from 3 per cent. to 6 per cent. That is from the 1st May next, which is in a few weeks' time, and is in respect of all new business.

From the 1st June next they propose to increase their charges similarly in respect of renewals which cover fire, accident, marine, motor vehicle, and household insurance. I understand it does not cover life assurance. Accordingly, here is a further impost from the insurance companies which, as I said, are without warrant being paid in excess of $500,000 in relation to third party insurance and, on top of that, they will receive extra amounts because of this decision of theirs to become operative in the next few weeks: not in the areas where it is required but in respect of all insurance.

The final point which ties in with what the Premier said is: What further steps can be taken in order to improve the shocking accident pattern we have in Western Australia, so that there will be fewer calls made upon the funds of the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust?

I have posed these questions. I have spent a great deal of time on my researches to the neglect of other work, and I only wish the information which I sought by way of question had been available to me. I trust the information will be forthcoming tomorrow, because the Government could, based on that information, make its own study when it will have revealed to it just how appalling the situation is; how insufferable the situation is when hundreds of thousands of dollars, at an ever-increasing rate, can be passed out to people who are playing no part in the scheme of things—to people who can never play any part—because whenever it would appear that the fund is in danger of not being able to meet its commitments, and if we cannot effect economies, we have a Premiums Committee which can recommend an increase of premiums.

So the worst the companies can suffer is that they may have to wait a year or two, or more, until they receive their ever-increasing dividends. Every time the fund finds itself in difficulty and the amount of premiums is increased, that results in an additional bonus to the insurance companies, which, once again, I say are performing no part whatever in the scheme of things.

Mr. Court: Our problem is to keep companies in the scheme, because they want to get out. It cannot be very attractive if they want to get out.

Mr. GRAHAM: I do not want to get controversial in connection with this matter, but as I have already indicated, in the last 12 years only one dividend has been paid.

Mr. Court: That is right.

Mr. GRAHAM: The return is 5 per cent. The Minister for Industrial Development would well know from personal experience, should I say, that it is possible to get a much better return than 5 per cent. on investable funds. The only difference is, of course, that here the 5 per cent. is coming from an investment of no funds.

Mr. Lapham: And with no risk.

Mr. GRAHAM: There is no risk attached to it. It is not a very high percentage, and in many cases they have been waiting a long time.

Mr. Brand: How does the premium in Western Australia compare with those in the other States?

Mr. GRAHAM: I do not know; neither do I care very much. Even if our premiums, with the increase, are less than those of the other States—and I do not believe that is so—if it is possible to reduce them, instead of increasing them, then we should do that.

Mr. Brand: Of course.

Mr. GRAHAM: That is why I ask the Government to look at these figures and at the millions of dollars that are involved. If it does I am certain it will see there is no necessity for any increase whatsoever, but on the contrary there can be a reduction in the premiums.

Mr. Brand: You have made many suggestions tonight all of which, I understand, the subcommittee of Cabinet discussed with the Premiums Committee before a decision was made.

Mr. GRAHAM: Unless the Premier or one of his Ministers can answer me to the contrary, I say there is no warrant for paying even a cent to any insurance company under the existing arrangement.

Mr. Court: The fact is they underwrite the scheme and we relieve the taxpayer, who is the Government, of the need to stand behind the scheme. You said they have only received one dividend in the life of the scheme.

Mr. GRAHAM: I did not say that. From the information set out in the report of the Premiums Committee to the Government it would appear that the projection of income and expenditure as assessed by the committee in 1965 had intended that all arrears of dividends to participants should be met, but the only dividend that has been paid since the year 1956-57 was that for the year 1964-65. Why the year 1964-65 was plucked out from the period, instead of some other year, I do not know.

I sincerely hope and trust that the Minister for Industrial Development and his ministerial colleagues do not go in for this sort of arrangement: that theoretically the insurance companies are standing behind the scheme, so that if anything does go awry there will not be any obligation on the Government to provide the funds. I hope they will not say that the companies are standing with their shoulders to the wheel, because that is completely unreal. The experience of 20 years has shown that it is not necessary for them to contribute anything whatsoever.

Mr. Court: The fact is they underwrite the scheme. I am not quarrelling with that, and we are very pleased that you brought this matter forward. What you are doing is a service to Parliament and to the public. You are highlighting the very points the Government has studied, and in respect of which it has tried to find ways to bring about a reduction in premiums.

Mr. GRAHAM: The Minister is sidestepping the issue of the insurance companies and the payment to them of hundreds of thousands of dollars a year. It is possible to avoid such payments, because the risk to the State is exactly nil. The Government is in command of the situation, and it can order the Premiums Committee to get on with the job if the Government wants it to. Without studying the matter closely, I think the Government can declare a higher premium without having to wait for the Premiums Committee; so if it appears that the funds are being endangered the Government can take appropriate action. Therefore it is possible, without any risk attached to the proposition so far as this Government is concerned, to escape this obligation of paying something over $500,000 per annum to the companies under the existing scheme —an amount which is increasing substantially every year.

I suppose we are obligated in respect of the $3,000,000 up to the present time, although there is a maximum of 5 per cent.; but who decided that 5 per cent. should be paid and that this amount is, in fact, owing to these companies? Why should it not be 2, 3, or 4 per cent. having regard to the lack of obligation and risk involved?

I do not want to argue these matters with the Government. I am sincere in submitting these views in the hope that the Government will, in the interests of the motoring public and the people of Western Australia generally, take some heed of what I have said. I have not advanced these matters irresponsibly; I have advanced them after consultation with people who are as highly qualified as any in this State to analyse and express views on the returns that have been submitted, including the annual report of the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust and this most recent report of the Premiums Committee which was the basis of the Government's decision.

I conclude on this summary: In 1949 motorcars in the metropolitan area had to bear a premium of $3.60, but now it is $34.20; in the country a car had to bear a premium of $1.80, but under this arrangement $34.20. After 20 years of this scheme, after the situation which I have endeavoured to outline has come to pass, and after hundreds of thousands or even millions of dollars needlessly have been paid out, surely there is now a duty and obligation on the Government to examine carefully and minutely the proposition that I have advanced deliberately in the form of questions, because I have endeavoured to avoid the "I am on this side and you are on that side attitude." I want the matter to be examined impartially. I have not sought to make any accusations against this Government, or to give undue commendation to Governments of a different political colour. I have endeavoured to involve myself as one responsible in government for half a dozen years for perhaps being recreant to our trust in this regard, although no Government can attend to everything. It was just as important from 1953 to 1959 to do something about this matter, as it is in 1969.

The proposition having been brought fairly and squarely to the Government—and I am very largely the medium for making these submissions which come from people far more experienced in these matters than I am—this surely is the time and occasion for the Government to do something about it. I hope and trust it will treat this motion in the spirit in which it is submitted and will carry out the examination suggested. I am confident that this will result in a better deal for the people, and I trust the motion will be passed.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Court (Minister for Industrial Development).

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Travel Concessions: Motion

MR. JAMIESON (Belmont) [9.49 p.m.]: I move—

> In the opinion of this House travelling concessions for Members of the Parliament of Western Australia should be provided for travel within the State on a similar basis to those applying in the States of New South Wales and Queensland for the benefit of the members of these respective Parliaments.

I brought this motion forward after I had tried for a long time to get the Government to take some interest in the situation that now exists. It is an unusual step, because normally these concessions are granted by negotiation, one way or another, between the Government and members; but the Government seems to be very loth to take any steps that might improve the situation.

During the course of my address I intend to show that it has not been without a great deal of thought and without the expenditure of a lot of time on this question that I have finally taken the step to attempt to place Western Australia and its members of Parliament on an equal footing with all other States and their members.

I would like to say at the outset that most of the people in the community assume that members of Parliament already enjoy these concessions, because they base their thoughts on privileges enjoyed by Federal members. We know that Federal members enjoy rather unlimited travel concessions, particularly within the Commonwealth and to some outside territories. Unfortunately, State members of Parliament seem to be placed in the same category as those members and the public seems to think we possess a magic wand that will spirit us to anywhere within the State and the Commonwealth.

To a degree we enjoy such concessions, although they were established on a more equitable basis in the early part of the century, before the advent of air and other modes of travel. In those days Commonwealth members had only a gold pass which enabled them to travel to the Eastern States and around Australia, wherever there were trains; and State members had a similar privilege which gave them travel rights.

Extra rights have always been associated with Federal members as, since Federation, those rights have been quite rightly extended to their wives. That is a privilege which did not rightly belong to a State member. The attitude of the public at large is as I have stated, and if one cares to question any group one will be told that State members of Parliament possess the privilege of going hither and thither with reckless abandon.

I now propose to go back to 1963, even though I raised this matter in the Parliament long before that time. Members of long standing will recall that on many occasions during the Address-in-Reply, or during the course of the Budget debate I have raised the issue of restricted travel concessions that apply to members of this Parliament, requesting that some action be taken by the Government of the day in regard to this problem. In 1963 I wrote to the Acting Premier, as the Premier was overseas. This letter is to be found on page 694, of *Hansard*, 1963, and I had this to say—

> I draw to your attention the ever-increasing number of parliamentarians visiting the Ord River-Kununurra projects, the one anomaly about this being, of course, that with the exception of a few privileged persons from this State Parliament, these members are either interstate Federal members who because of their travel vouchers are able to make this journey without cost to themselves, or State members sponsored by various committees of their Parliaments, such as works and planning, etc., under the guise of obtaining experience and information for matters concerning their State.
>
> Mr. Nalder: Did you get a reply?
>
> Mr. JAMIESON: Yes; I am going to read that, too.
>
> Mr. Nalder: It was a little bit different from that sent to the member for Pilbara.

That was a bit of byplay I do not remember. The letter continues—

> Under these circumstances, I feel it is high time that your Cabinet gave thought to allowing each State member the privilege of visiting a remote area each year, which is not on the normal Gold Pass travel concession routes.

This, besides allowing State members to receive an on-the-spot indication of what is going on in the Ord River project, would also permit many to widen their field of knowledge as to the many problems of other remote areas in this State, and by so doing, they would be in a better position to make determinations in the Parliament of the State.

I trust that you and your Cabinet will give very early consideration to granting this suggested concession.

The Acting Premier replied on the 11th July in the following terms:—

Dear Sir,

I have for acknowledgement your letter of the 27th June, in which you suggest that Cabinet should consider allowing each State member the privilege of visiting a remote area each year not on the normal Gold Pass travel concession routes.

As you will probably be aware, there is a concession already in existence whereby Members of Parliament are entitled to travel free within the State on a State Shipping Service vessel once in three years, subject to the requirement of the payment of 30s. per day sustenance.

In this direction a check indicates that for the years 1959, 1960, and 1961 only five Members of Parliament, other than yourself, availed themselves of this concession. Based on these figures, it does not appear that there is an increasing demand for further concessions.

The matter, however, will be kept in mind and will be discussed further on the return of the Honourable Premier.

On that occasion I went on to enlarge upon the situation that if one wanted to go as far as Wyndham and back a whole month was taken out of the year; and that is far too long for a person who is required to look after an electorate to be away. As a consequence, the comment of the Acting Premier that people do not avail themselves of the concessions available and that therefore further concessions should not be granted, was not a very good one. However, at the time, I suppose it was an answer.

As a result of that earlier letter, on page 3832 of *Hansard*, 1963, there is a question in my name regarding visits to remote areas of the State. I asked the Premier—

> Have any further considerations been given to my suggestion in writing earlier this year to the granting to private members at least one journey to remote areas of the State during the course of each parliament?

Mr. NALDER (for Mr. Brand) replied:

> No decision has yet been made on this matter.

A few years were allowed to pass, and then I constantly chirped about this matter during the 1965 session. On the 5th August, 1965, I again asked the Premier a question under the heading, "Members of Parliament—Transport concessions" as follows:—

> (1) Is he aware that New South Wales private members of Parliament are allowed three return air fares to any destination and return in New South Wales each year?
>
> (2) Has he given any further thought to transport concessions being made to private members of this Parliament for travel to remote areas within the State?

Mr. BRAND replied:

(1) Yes.

He knew these concessions applied in New South Wales in 1965. Continuing—

> (2) This matter, along with other requests for transport concessions, is still under consideration.

The matter has certainly received a lot of consideration, as it has been considered for a number of years.

Now I come to the Wolff report of 1965, which contained a draft of recommended salaries. During the course of submissions, requests were made for improvements in what might be called fringe benefits and, as a result of these submissions under the heading of "Air Transport," on page 24 of the report appears the following:—

AIR TRANSPORT.

> In the submission made by the Hon. Mr. F. J. S. Wise on behalf of the North-West members (Australian Labor Party) he contended that the five return air trips to and through their electorates at present allowed members on the regular airline service were not sufficient and that they should be increased. We agree that they should, and recommend that provision be made for three more such air passages and that once in each calendar year and also at election time a member should be entitled to take his wife with him and that a similar air fare be provided for her. We consider that these additional privileges (for a member and a member's wife) should extend also to the members for the South-East Province and the Electoral District of Boulder-Eyre, and that the members representing the Lower North Province and the Electoral Districts therein should have the facility extended to Perth.

That was a clear indication that the submissions made to the Wolff committee in 1965 received the committee's support. However, not very much was achieved, bearing in mind that the Leader of the Opposition had not, up to this time, been accorded any air transport concession.

Before dealing with the Jackson report I would like to deal with the present position, which also prevailed prior to the Jackson report, and the air concessions which are now available to members of the Parliament of this State. The following information is contained in a letter from the Premier's Department, dated the 16th July, 1968. It will be evident that little notice was taken of the Wolff report to increase the number of air trips allowed. The letter reads—

(1) Members of Parliament representing the North Province or the Kimberley, Pilbara or Gascoyne Electorates shall be entitled to five return trips per calendar year to and through their constituencies.

(2) Members of Parliament representing the Lower North Province or the Murchison-Eyre Electorate shall be entitled to five return trips per calendar year to and through their constituencies, except between Kalgoorlie and Perth.

(3) Members of Parliament representing the South Province and the Roe Electorate shall be entitled to five return trips per calendar year to Esperance.

(4) The Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly shall be entitled to six return trips per calendar year to any part of the State.

A concession not utilised in one year may be accumulated and used in any subsequent year within the life of the same Parliament, the life of the same Parliament being deemed as from the 1st January, 1968, for this purpose only, to be from the date of the general election last held prior to the commencement of that Parliament to the date of the general election first held subsequent to the expiration of that same Parliament.

Provided that where two or more Parliaments are constituted in the one calendar year a Member shall not be entitled to more than five, and the Leader of the Opposition shall not be entitled to more than six concessions in that year.

How well it was tied up by the Premier's Department. It would be a pity if there happened to be a couple of elections in a year and the present Premier happened to be the Leader of the Opposition. I imagine he would be rather hog-tied. To continue—

Provided further that a Member or the Leader of the Opposition who is elected or appointed after 30th June in any calendar year shall be entitled to three concessional trips only during that year.

(5) Members of Parliament residing at Geraldton shall be entitled to a single journey either from Geraldton to Perth or from Perth to Geraldton once each week while the House is in session.

(6) Members of Parliament residing at Esperance shall be entitled to a single journey either from Esperance to Perth or from Perth to Esperance once each week while the House is in session.

(7) The wives of Ministers and the wife of the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly shall be entitled to one return trip within Western Australia per calendar year.

(8) The wives of Members of Parliament representing the North and Lower North Provinces and the Kimberley, Pilbara, Gascoyne and Murchison-Eyre Electorates shall be entitled to one return trip per calendar year to and through the husband's constituency, subject to the concession being granted as an alternative to any concessions on the Western Australian Coastal Shipping Commission vessels allowed to the wives of Members of Parliament.

That was a very small concession which went somewhat along the lines of the recommendation of the Wolff report.

Mr. Hall: Doesn't Albany get a mention?

Mr. JAMIESON: No, Albany does not get a run at all.

Mr. Brand: They do very well there.

Mr. JAMIESON: The next was the 1968 Jackson committee report. As members are aware, this committee was set up under the provisions of the Parliamentary Salaries and Allowances Act of 1967. Paragraph 33—Facilities and "Fringe" Benefits—on page 10, reads—

Reference has already been made to these—see paragraph 8. They fall within the scope of the 1967 Act only in so far as they represent "remuneration" paid or payable to a Minister, officer or member of Parliament. Thus, the postage allowance, being payable in cash, is within the Act; but, provision for rail, sea or air travel concessions or for the use of official cars, or for a general scheme of accident insurance (as in South Australia) are

not within our jurisdiction to determine. The Rights and Privileges Committee put forward a strong claim for improved air travel provision for members both within the State and elsewhere in Australia; and this was advocated also by many members. But as the Act stands, this is a subject which must be left to the Government to determine.

Now I would like to indicate the situation in other States, disregarding the Federal concessions. For obvious reasons, we could never hope to obtain concessions similar to those granted to Federal members. Western Australia, as we all well know, is by far the largest State in area. It is followed by Queensland which is approximately two-thirds the size of Western Australia. It is therefore interesting to compare the conditions in Western Australia with those applying in Queensland.

I now wish to refer to the Done committee report. This committee was set up under the Statutes of Queensland to deal with the salaries and allowances of members of the Queensland Parliament, and the report is dated the 8th November, 1965. The following appears on page 22:—

Air Travel—General

3.3d At present certain Members are issued with air warrants for thirty-six single journeys between the Member's electorate and Brisbane. The Committee does not recommend any change in this number but is recommending that Ministers should also be allowed a similar number of journeys (see paragraph 3.3h).

The air travel suggested in the three following paragraphs (3.3e, 3.3f, and 3.3g) is intended to be an additional concession.

Air Travel—Within Electorate

3.3e In country electorates of above 2,500 square miles in area where charter and/or scheduled airline services are available, within the electorate, Members could be issued with air warrants to enable them to move speedily over their electorates and to reduce car travel, enabling more profitable use of a member's time.

The Committee recommends an annual expense limitation on this air travel dependent on the area of the electorate.

The limits for larger electorates do not rise progressively in proportion to area. In developing these recommendations, the Committee took the following points into account:—

(i) The largest electorates have the benefit of some scheduled airline services operating between some centres in the electorate and these services cost less per air-mile than air charter.

(ii) The largest electorates have some relatively or totally uninhabited areas, which do not require visits; therefore area alone is an inadequate basis for assessment.

(iii) Some intermediate-size electorates have a relatively greater concentration of population and also more airport facilities.

Air Travel—Outside Electorate

3.3f There is a need for Members to study conditions throughout Queensland, so that more informed opinions can be developed for reviewing legislation. This justifies the issue of air warrants for two return flights each year for each Member to any part of Queensland. The Committee in its recommendations makes provision for travelling expenses up to ten days each year for this specific purpose.

It is not inferred that two air warrants each year would enable every Member to visit and evaluate every problem within the State and it is not anticipated that every Member would have the time at his disposal for such visits. But by arrangement between Members, a good coverage of the State could be expected and first-hand advice could be available to Parliament.

Air Travel—Restriction

3.3g It is recommended that the use of the air warrants referred to in paragraphs 3.3e and 3.3f cease from the date of issue of the writ until the declaration of the poll when any election is held.

These were the conclusions that were arrived at and it is interesting to see exactly what was recommended. The recommendations were on page 26 of the report, as follows:—

4.2b That, if at any future time air warrants are granted for travel between Brisbane and any electorate additional to those electorates entitled to such warrants at present, a review and reduction of the electorate allowance be made.

4.2c That Members for country electorates of above 2,500 square miles in area, where charter and/or scheduled airline services are available within the electorate, be allowed air warrants for flights to any place within the electorate and so that the total

amount expended each financial year does not exceed the following:—

Area of Member's Electorate Square Miles	Amount per annum £
Up to 2,500	Nil
2,500 to 5,000	50
5,001 to 10,000	100
10,001 to 25,000	150
25,001 to 50,000	200
50,001 to 100,000	250
100,001 and Over	300

4.2d That each Member of Parliament be allowed air warrants for two return flights each financial year to any part of Queensland.

4.2e That, whilst absent from his home overnight in connection with journeys undertaken as a result of the recommendation contained in paragraph 4.2d, each Member be allowed a travelling allowance at the rate of £5 per day of 24 hours, such allowance to be limited to a maximum of 10 days each financial year.

4.2f That the free air travel and travelling allowance recommended in paragraphs 4.2c, 4.2d, and 4.2e be not allowed to any Member from the date of issue of the writ until the declaration of the poll when an election is held.

Those were the recommendations, and the Premier might be interested to know what became of them. I have here a letter which I will read in part, from the Clerk of the Parliament in Brisbane (Mr. Dunlop). He wrote the letter to Mr. Ashley, who had been handling matters. I am very grateful to Mr. Ashley for having loaned me some of the records he has accumulated on behalf of the Rights and Privileges Committee. Mr. Dunlop writes as follows:—

> All the recommendations of the Done Committee of Inquiry were adopted with reservations in regard to paragraphs 4.2J and 4.3. Legislation was passed to cover the increases in salaries but the other recommendations were approved by Cabinet. Paragraph 4.2J relates to air warrants for country Ministers and therefore I do not know what the Cabinet decision was in this matter.

So everything was cleared up except for the matters associated with Cabinet, and they were obviously restricted to the Executive, as they were entitled to be.

So much for Queensland. The next rather decentralised State with air routes is the other State I took as a basis for the suggestion in my motion, and I will mention the conditions which apply there.

Mr. O'Neil: You are referring to New South Wales?

Mr. JAMIESON: Yes, New South Wales. That State is not nearly as big as our State. It covers 309,433 square miles. The travelling concessions, incidentally, also apply to the Legislative Council, but I will deal only with the Legislative Assembly to save repetition. The details are as follows:—

Legislative Assembly—

(a) All Members—Six (6) single journeys per annum between any two centres in the State.

(b) (i) Members representing and resident in electorates in Parts IV, V and VI of the Fifth Schedule to the Constitution Act (Country Electorates)—Forty (40) single journeys per annum between their electorates and Sydney (additional to (a)).

(ii) Wives of such Members—Six (6) single journeys per annum between electorate and Sydney.

(iii) Such Members not resident in their electorates—Twenty-four (24) single journeys per annum between their electorate and Sydney (additional to (a)).

(c) (i) Ministers representing electorates in Parts IV, V and VI of the Fifth Schedule to the Constitution Act (Country Electorates)—Twenty-four (24) single journeys per annum between their electorates and Sydney (additional to (a) and (b) (i) or (b) (iii)).

By using that scale, the Leader of the Opposition in this State, who is a metropolitan member, would be entitled to 24 flights a year to any portion of the State. That clearly indicates the New South Wales situation as it applies at the present time.

Having dealt with those two States, which I consider to be most comparable with this State, I will revert to the other States by way of comparison, because they too have better concessions than we have in this State. I find that in Melbourne air travel conditions are as follows:—

> Air travel for Members is granted on approval by the Premier on consideration of each individual request on the basis of one return flight per month from the nearest home airport to Melbourne during a Parliamentary recess, and one return flight per week during the Parliamentary session. These Members who serve upon Committees meeting during the recess are granted, on similar request approved, one return flight per week during the recess. This concession is not granted to wives or approved female relatives. Members and wives (or an approved

female relative) are granted one return visit per year to Devonport by the "Princess of Tasmania" (or alternatively, first class air travel if desired).

Incidentally, this is the only air travel that we, as State members are allowed by way of a concession from the Treasury. I refer to the journey across to Tasmania if we want to make it once in each year. In the other States, country members have special allowances. So one can see that in a pocket-handkerchief-sized State such as Victoria—which the member for Murchison-Eyre could hide in one corner of his electorate—the members receive extensive concessions on air routes which allow them to carry out much more quickly their duties in their electorates.

Let us have a look at the South Australian scene, which is a little closer to home. South Australian air travel is as follows:—

Members of Parliament representing constituencies on Eyre Peninsula or Kangaroo Island may travel to and from Adelaide without restriction during session and are reimbursed full air fares. Air travel is limited to six return trips between sessions.

I interpolate here to repeat that a member is allowed only six return trips between sessions, which, when one thinks of it, is rather restrictive. The advice continues—

The member for Frome in the far north of South Australia is allowed two return trips to Oodnadatta per annum.

Possibly that is as frequently as he would want to go there, too. It says—

Ministers of the Crown are allowed unrestricted travel on commercial or charter flights on official business, both interstate and intrastate, and the cost is borne by the department concerned.

Doubtless this would be typical of all positions associated with ministries. That would be understood.

South Australia is relatively big; in fact, it is one of the biggest States and certainly bigger than New South Wales although, possibly, it is only half the size of Queensland.

Next, I shall refer to Tasmania which is only 26,383 square miles in area. The concessions there are remarkable.

Mr. O'Neil: Members only fly from one end of the airstrip to the other!

Mr. JAMIESON: Possibly they just take off when they have to come down again. I shall read from the "Report of the Parliamentary Salaries Tribunal, 1967," at page 8 where this matter is mentioned. It says—

Members are provided with a gold pass on the railways, and free travel on transport commission buses—

It is a shame that the Minister for Transport is not in the House at the moment. The report continues—

—and intrastate airlines when attending Parliament.

This means that members of the Tasmanian Parliament are able to use these concessions as often as they wish while the Parliament is in session. It means that if a member resides in Burnie, Launceston, or Devonport, which cities are serviced by planes, he could be home for tea on Friday evening if the Parliament adjourned at 4.30 p.m. or 6 p.m. It also means that members could come to Hobart on Tuesday on the midday plane; they would be down in time for the sitting. That is only right and proper in this day and age. It is just too stupid that these concessions are not applicable to members in this State when such a small State as Tasmania sets this example.

In our own State concessions have been niggardly. I do not know why, because I am sure that excess use would not be made of any concession. After all, if a member wishes to spread himself and hurtles off into the far north, he finds that he has to pay $15 a day for a room only, without any food. Consequently, even with concessions members would not want to make too many trips because they would still be well and truly out of pocket. Of course, if a member is over zealous, it is up to him to arrange his own finance.

I suggest that similar concessions could be beneficially applied to the members of this Parliament. If they do not want to use them, they do not have to use them. It would not cost the Treasury anything in that event. However, if these concessions are used, it should be of some advantage in that, as the Done Committee pointed out, it would aid the members of the Parliament to understand their own State better and to understand the problems existing in the State.

I see nothing to prevent the Premier from giving very close consideration to this matter. It has been represented on every possible level. Indeed, it was represented by members at the last two salary inquiries. If the Premier is not prepared to make a decision, then I suggest it is possibly time for the Parliamentary Salaries and Allowances Act to be amended to give those who have the jurisdiction the right to recommend these things. In that event, members would have to lay out their cases accordingly.

As Justice Jackson has pointed out, the salaries authority does not have this right and, because of this, we must turn to some other avenue; namely, the Administration of the day. Surely if it is shown to the Government that members of this Parliament are in a singularly different position from members in any other State in Australia then some action must be taken.

There could be much more said on the subject and possibly other speakers will have more to say.

When I commenced speaking I indicated that it is an unusual motion to bring before the Parliament. Normally these types of matters are resolved by behind the scenes negotiations. As I have indicated in the course of my discussion this evening, I have been trying to motivate some action since 1963, and even earlier. Each time the Premier has said that the matter is being investigated. It must have had a thorough investigation by now and, consequently, I consider it should be highlighted and discussed by members in the Parliament. Therefore I have seen fit to move the motion.

In doing so I realise that not all the conditions which apply in either or both of the States of New South Wales and Queensland might apply immediately, but surely some start must be made and some effort taken to allow the members of the Western Australian Parliament similar conditions and concessions to those which exist in other Australian Parliaments.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Brand (Premier).

WEEBO TRIBAL GROUND

Preservation: Motion

MR. TONKIN (Melville—Leader of the Opposition) [10.28 p.m.]: I move—

> That in the opinion of this House the Government should take the requisite action to preserve inviolate the Aboriginal Weebo tribal ground.

I consider that we in Western Australia have been very neglectful over the years in trying to preserve aboriginal culture and that all we require to do in this case is to establish whether or not this remote area on Weebo Station is an area which is sacred to the aborigines. If it is a place where they have been carrying out initiation ceremonies and to where they make pilgrimages over hundreds of miles from time to time to be present on these grounds, then obviously it is a place which is sacred to them and we should do something about preserving it for them.

I readily appreciate that action has been taken in accordance with the law, application has been made to a warden's court, and a decision has been made. Any such decisions made under the Mining Act are in the nature of recommendations to the Minister who generally, but not always, agrees to the warden's recommendation.

The other evening when the Premier was replying to a question he expressed some doubt as to whether there had ever been a case where the warden's decision had not been accepted.

I interjected that there was such a case and that I had mentioned the matter in this House. I referred to a case which I raised in 1962 with regard to an application by Depuch for the granting of mineral claim 292 on the recommendation of the warden. I do not propose to read the whole of the warden's recommendation because it is very lengthy, but portion of it reads as follows:—

> I therefore respectfully recommend for the honourable the Minister's approval, subject to survey and to the excision therefrom of P.A. 284, application for mineral claim 292 W.P.

That was a recommendation of which the Minister for Mines did not approve and he gave the decision which resulted in the other party to the claim being awarded the mineral claim; or, put another way, the Minister gave a decision which was a complete reversal of the recommendation of the warden's court.

I suppose in this particular case the Minister has already agreed to the warden's recommendation, which leaves no room, of course, for his stating that he does not approve of it. However, I feel that if a case can be made out for keeping this area inviolate, then, if necessary, legislation could be introduced for the purpose if it cannot be done any other way.

The Professor of Anthropology at the University of Western Australia, who is there for the purpose of instructing students in this area of learning, must therefore be regarded as being very knowledgeable on the subject. I am told he is regarded as being a world authority on Australian aborigines and their culture. If that be so, surely his opinion on this question should be one to be respected. I have read a report of some of his utterances which support very strongly action being taken to reverse the decision that has been made on this tribal ground at Weebo.

The professor—Professor Ronald M. Berndt—has stated he is very deeply concerned at the decision which has been made and the events that are likely to flow from it. To use his own words, which I have seen published—

> This area is the focus of many myths and rites and a symbolic embodiment of basic religious values.

If that be so—and I have no reason to think it is otherwise as I do not believe a man in his very responsible position would make an utterance such as that unless he had come to that conclusion—and as Professor Berndt is supposed to be a world authority on Australian aborigines, he ought to be the first person one would consult in order to establish whether or not these tribal grounds are indeed tribal grounds and sacred to the aborigines; because all the argument I have seen so far has been centred around statements on the one hand that they are tribal grounds and statements on the other hand that they are not.

It is only because this matter has come under notice in recent times that any thought has been given to the question of the area being a tribal ground or not. Quite frankly, when this question was first raised I was bewildered by the statements which were being made for and against action being taken. I just could not make up my mind what the situation really was; whether someone was trying to put something over in order to raise trouble, or whether there was a genuine case for action to be taken. So I read very carefully everything that came under my notice which had reference to this dispute and I endeavoured to follow properly what was being said from time to time, and slowly but surely I came to the conclusion that these grounds were indeed tribal grounds; that over the years aborigines had been travelling hundreds of miles from time to time in making pilgrimages to be present at these grounds, and they would not do that if, in fact, these were not tribal grounds.

If they are tribal grounds, and if the aborigines have so regarded them over the years and have used this area for initiation ceremonies, surely, if we have any consideration for these native people, we should do what we can to preserve this area for them so that they can continue to use it in the way they have done for a very long time, and we should not let materialism rise superior to the other considerations and decide accordingly.

I was pleased to hear the other evening that the Government appreciated the need for having these areas catalogued, or recognised and registered, so that we would know where they were and be certain that they could be authenticated. However, that has not been done yet, and if we wait for that to be done nothing will happen in connection with these grounds and we will already have done considerable damage to our relationship with the native people.

Not only are the eyes of Australia focused on what is happening here, but I am satisfied from what I have read from time to time that people in other parts of the world are aware of this situation which has developed and are watching it with interest. If we do not do the right thing —and in my view the right thing is to preserve this area—we will create a very bad impression not only in this State, but also in other States and in other parts of the world. We should avoid that at all costs, and the cost is not great.

So my motion is for the purpose of getting an expression of opinion from the Parliament in order that the Government can be strongly fortified in any action it may take in the direction I desire, and I would remind you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in case you have forgotten, that on a question of whether the Barracks Arch should be retained or not, the Premier was prepared to accept the opinion of Parliament even though the opinion was contrary to his desires. To his credit, he accepted it and acted accordingly. To my mind a decision on this question by members of Parliament is just as important as an indication to the Government as to what ought to be done, as was the motion with regard to the Arch.

Mr. Jamieson: There would be some sense if it were faced with Weebo stone.

Mr. Brand: That would be very costly.

Mr. TONKIN: So I do not believe there can be any argument on the score that it is wrong to ask Parliament to make a determination. That is all the motion does.

We have no power to direct the Government, or to take any action ourselves, but we can indicate, and I hope we can indicate by a unanimous vote of Parliament, as to what we think about it, so that the Government will act accordingly.

There is no need to prolong the discussion in connection with this matter, because I think it is clear cut. If we are convinced—and I am personally after what I have read—that these grounds are indeed sacred to the aborigines, then we can take the necessary steps to preserve them. Apparently the matter needs fairly speedy action, because the warden only allowed two months in which the stones could be removed by the aborigines. I cannot see much sense in that, myself, but that was the decision.

A good deal of this time has already elapsed. Accordingly, if it is decided to take any action then no further time should be lost in taking it, and I therefore recommend to Parliament that it should very definitely indicate its views in connection with this matter by supporting the motion.

MR. BRAND (Greenough—Premier) [10.43 p.m.]: I did intend to adjourn this debate, but in view of what the Leader of the Opposition has said, I believe I should say a few words in reply, after which the matter can be adjourned until such time as the Minister for Native Welfare is able to come into the picture.

I want to say at the outset that there are not many people who have a clear understanding of the position at Leonora, in the area we have come to know as the Weebo stone tribal ground. As the Leader of the Opposition has said, a great deal of interest has been evinced in this matter, not only locally but nationally.

I do no think there are many people who oppose the idea of taking some action to preserve the area. The two problems which stand out seem to be, firstly, whether there is a sacred ground in the area and, if so, where exactly is it situated, because this is a very vast region; a very wide area.

Accordingly, the Government has decided to take some action to obtain such information if this is at all possible. The anthropologists may well take one view,

possibly not as impartial as it ought to be; and there may be local people in the area who take other views to the effect that there is no substance in the stories about the area being so sacred.

However, I too feel that there must be some foundation to the story that there is a sacred ground in the area to which natives have travelled over many years; there must be a particular place where they have carried out their tribal ceremonies.

The Government has accordingly decided that the Minister for Mines should take such action as he can to preserve the area, at least for the time being, and to protect it sufficiently long enough for us to make some investigation. To this end the Government proposes to send a party comprising three persons. It has not been finally decided who they will be, but the party will include a member of the Department of Native Welfare, with two other people yet to be decided.

These will be people who, we feel, will have a real knowledge of the area and who will return with practical and down-to-earth ideas on which the Government can take reasonable action. There will be no need for the House to make a decision on this, unless we run into further controversy on the matter.

The Government is as keen as the Opposition, or anybody else, to discover the truth and to take some action in due course. That is all I have to say on the motion. I do not know whether I support it, but at least I agree with its objective.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Bovell (Minister for Lands).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Conduct of House: Motion

MR. JAMIESON (Belmont) [10.47 p.m.]: I move—

> In the opinion of this House the conduct and affairs of this House, where not specified in the current standing orders, should be in accord with previous practice and precedence. Reference to the practices of other Parliaments and authorities should be resorted to only where situations occur which are not covered by standing orders, established procedure, or established precedence.

Having read my motion some members may wonder what it is all about, just as you, too, Mr. Deputy Speaker, might be wondering what it is all about. I hope to enlighten you, Sir, and all members very shortly. I am sure, however, if the Speaker were in his Chair he would not be wondering what it is all about.

I have been a member of this Chamber for a considerable number of years and during that time my memory has been pretty alert, even if some of my other reasoning powers have not been quite so good. During this time I have known of the established practice for a member of this Chamber when requiring information about the Chamber, its officers, or its activities, to have the right to ask either by notice, or directly without notice of the Speaker, the question he desires to be answered. This must necessarily be so, because there is nobody else who can really give an answer in regard to the Legislative Assembly.

Ministers have their own departments of which they are the head and as such are responsible for the answers given to Parliament. If a matter of public interest arises in relation to the department of the Assembly, we cannot ask the Clerks the necessary question, because they are silent fixtures in our scheme of things. It is true that our current Standing Order on questions is very clear and states that any member can be asked. Standing Order 106 on page 86 which relates to "Questions seeking information" reads—

> Questions of which notice has been given may be put to Ministers of the Crown relating to public affairs for which they are administratively responsible; and to other Members, relating to any Bill, Motion, or other public matter connected with the business of the House in which such Members may be concerned. Notwithstanding the foregoing questions may be put to the Leader of the Government on matters pertaining to general government policy.

That one has not been used, but it might be handy some time.

It is very clear that anyone who is elected to this House can, under certain circumstances, be subject to being questioned on some matter that is likely to be raised in the House. Even when a private member introduces a Bill—it has been done in the past—he has also been able to ask the Speaker, as departmental head of this Assembly, questions pertaining to the Assembly. The Speaker must be the one to answer them. If public interest is involved he must be the one to give the answer.

That has been the position for a number of years, until the regime of the present Speaker. I have placed questions on the notice paper, as have other members, but have found them being objected to; and they have been objected to on the authority of *Erskine May*. In my opinion *Erskine May* should be in the category of "when everything else fails read the instruction." It is a good guide to parliamentary practice and procedure, and nobody denies that. *Erskine May* is based essentially on the practices and procedures of the House of Commons, with certain variations; for instance, on discussion of certain matters which might occur in other Parliaments.

In the main, however, *Erskine May* deals with practices and procedures in the House of Commons.

On page 350 of the seventeenth edition of *Erskine May* the following appears:—

> Persons to Whom Questions may be Addressed
>
> Questions to the Speaker.—Questions dealing with matters within the jurisdiction of the Speaker should be addressed to the Speaker by private notice since no written or public notice of questions addressed to the Speaker is permissible. Nor can any appeal be made to the Chair by a question, save on points of order as they arise, or on a matter which urgently concerns the proceedings of the House for which he is responsible.

On the 31st October, 1961, a number of questions was asked of the Speaker in this House. That was in the term of office of the previous Speaker (Mr. Hearman). On page 1382 of *Hansard* of that year, the member for South Perth (Mr. Grayden) asked the Speaker a question relating to questions asked in Parliament, and the Speaker replied in full.

My present leader, the then member for Melville, followed up and asked this question of the Speaker:—

> Mr. TONKIN: I did not hear the member for South Perth rise on a question of privilege or of order, even though he directed a question to you, Sir. Could you tell me under what Standing Order the member for South Perth had the right to question you?

The Speaker replied as follows:—

> The SPEAKER (Mr. Hearman): I think the Speaker is always open to be questioned by members of Parliament.

The then member for Melville followed that up with another question which the then Speaker answered. This indicates that the Speaker at that time accepted that in certain circumstances, dealing with matters associated with the activities of this House, he was liable to be questioned and was obligated to give a reply.

I turn to page 127 of *Hansard* of 1959. The member for Guildford-Midland (Mr. Brady) asked a question of the Speaker without notice regarding the admission of the public to the gallery; and the Speaker replied to it in full.

Mr. Davies: Who was the Speaker then?

Mr. JAMIESON: In 1959 the Speaker was The Hon. J. M. Hearman. In the same volume of *Hansard* we find another reference to this matter, and this also, indicates that the Speaker realised that he could be asked questions. On page 274 of *Hansard* of that year, the member for Middle Swan (Mr. J. Hegney) asked this question in connection with C.I.B. officers and their presence at Parliament House—

> In view of the answer in connection with the last question, is it not a fact that the Speaker has an authority over the precincts of this House and that the Commisioner would have to seek your permission before the C.I.B. could come into this Chamber?

The Speaker replied—

> Yes.

The member for Middle Swan then asked the Speaker a further question to which the Speaker again replied, "Yes."

That is an indication that two Speakers of this House had a clear appreciation of the fact that it was the practice and procedure of the House to permit members to ask questions of the Speaker.

Going back to 1953 I, as the member for Canning, asked a question of the Speaker in relation to Parliament House and the provision of public conveniences. On page 1995 of *Hansard* of 1953 I asked—

> (1) Has the Joint House Committee given consideration to the provision of conveniences for those attending the public galleries?
>
> (2) If no action has been taken, would he undertake to raise this matter at the next meeting of the committee?

The Speaker (the late Hon. A. J. Rodoreda) replied—

> (1) Not recently, but I understand it was considered some years ago and there were difficulties as regards position, etc.
>
> (2) Yes.
>
> For the information of the honourable member I might state that there was an estimate put up a few years ago at which the cost was estimated at £2,000. It would be considerably more now.

That was the position at that time, as the Speaker very clearly indicated by answering the question on notice.

I can give other references of past Speakers answering questions, even questions without notice. I refer to another occasion in 1953—and this appears on page 629 of *Hansard* for that year—when the member for Dale (Mr. Wild) asked a question without notice of the Speaker as to the giving of notice of questions. The Speaker replied to that question. So it was appreciated by both sides of the House that the Speaker could be asked questions.

I have not pursued this further back than the regime of the late Hon. A. J. Rodoreda, but I could do so. Going back as far as I have will prove my point sufficiently, and it deserves some examination at this stage.

On page 1099 of *Hansard* for 1949 the member for Gascoyne (The Hon. F. J. S. Wise) asked a question without notice of the Speaker as follows:—

> I wish your advice in connection with the question asked by the member for Hannans, who has been requested by the Acting Premier to place it on the notice paper, such question having already been disallowed by the Clerk Assistant, I understand under your instructions. Will you advise the member for Hannans how he can now ask the question?

If members knew the member for Hannans, they would realise why his question was not understood. The Speaker replied as follows:—

> To be quite frank, I did not hear the question as read out. I could only pick out a word here and there and was not sure whether it was the same question as that referred to me by the Clerk Assistant.

Mr. Wise interjected as follows:—

> It was the same question.

The Speaker then replied again as follows:—

> The hon. member will find the question is not allowed when it is put in to be printed.

There is a clear indication right through this Parliament that the Speaker is the right person to turn to in regard to any matter of concern in the Legislative Assembly.

I think it is true that the Speaker would agree to questions in accordance with *Erskine May*, where there is some prior consultation, and the Speaker is virtually asked privately; but how would we be in regard to matters of public interest if this practice prevailed with Ministers? They would say, "Do not ask that question," and if they did not want it asked, it would not be asked.

In none of the cases to which I have referred was the Speaker humiliated in any way or put upon by members. If a question is too difficult, or needs some research, he is in a better position than a Minister, as he can leave his Chair until the ringing of the bells, in order to study the question and give an answer if necessary. He could give his answer on a subsequent date, as other Speakers have done in the past. I think this is a desirable practice, and I can see nothing wrong with it. It has stood the test of time, and no alteration should be made in this day and age.

I thought the change in our Standing Orders caused the alteration, but having compared that particular Standing Order with the one that existed prior to the adoption of the new Standing Orders, I find there is apparently no change and, as a consequence, this change has reference only to parliamentary procedure. Therefore, I feel it is desirable that members of this House should know exactly where they stand.

If the presiding officer will confer with the presiding officer of another place, he will find that in the early part of this session, the latter has had questions on notice addressed to him in respect of matters associated with his jurisdiction. This is right and proper. We have to be in a position where we can obtain these answers.

We are a little dissociated from the House of Commons where a different situation exists. We have developed our own ways of handling things in this Parliament. Up to this time they have worked all right, and I think that position should apply in the future. I am interested to hear what other members have to say, as I know some have been quite concerned.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Brand (Premier).

House adjourned at 11.5 p.m.

Legislative Council

Thursday, the 17th April, 1969

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver) took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS (7): ON NOTICE

FLOODING

East Carnarvon

1. The Hon. G. W. BERRY asked the Minister for Mines:

   (1) Was an area in East Carnarvon bounded by Finnerty Street, Gascoyne Road, and Marmion Street, under floodwaters in 1961?

   (2) Does the Public Works Department anticipate it will be covered by floodwaters in any subsequent flood?

   The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

   (1) The major part of this land was flooded.

   (2) Yes, until such time as protecting levees are constructed.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BALLET COMPANY

Subsidy

2. The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON asked the Minister for Mines:

   (1) Is the Minister aware that the W.A. Ballet Company is at present making a tour of the northern wheatbelt, and during June will also tour the north-west?