

The Hon. D. K. DANS: It is not specifically mentioned in the Bill. I remind the Minister of the letter from the Acting Secretary for Railways to the General Secretary of the Railway Officers' Union, where he indicated that a fee of \$26 a year would be charged to employees and that there would be no rebate for periods of leave; he also said that some employees may wish to use the parking facility while on leave.

What I am getting at is that the Government is creating a situation where, initially, only employees working at the East Perth terminal will be charged a parking fee. However, the legislation is so framed as to permit the Commissioner of Railways to extend the parking fee to all other railway stations and to apply it to the general public.

During a period when we are asked to contain costs, the Government is using another method whereby it can raise taxes; in a period when we are trying to encourage people to use the public transport system, the Government is making it harder for the public to do so; and not only is the Government to make it harder; it is also threatening to tow the vehicles away.

These vehicles will be towed away and hidden in some place until such time as the prescribed charges are paid.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Do you really think that?

The Hon. T. O. Perry: Does the Bill say "hide"?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: It does not say "hide", but it does not say where the vehicles are to be put, and I presume they are going to hide them.

The Hon. J. Heitman: What makes you presume they will be hidden?

The Hon. D. K. DANS: It is something like wringing the necks of possums.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: That is illegal, too.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I believe this Bill should be re-examined. It is another one of those things which puts a charge on the general public and certainly is not designed to encourage people to use the public transport system. The Bill does not tell us how much the parking fee will be, or what penalties will apply. It does not lay down how much it will cost a person to recover his vehicle. Above all, neither the Bill nor the second reading speech gives any reason for imposing such a fee.

I have quoted from the RAC bulletin. In addition, opposition is expressed in a letter written by the WA Amalgamated Society of Railway Employees Union, which is worried not only about having to pay parking fees but also about the effect such legislation may have on the use of our rail facilities. I have a lengthy letter from the West Australian Locomotive Engine

Drivers', Firemen's and Cleaners' Union, also expressing opposition to the legislation.

I could just about read like a book what could happen once this legislation is enacted. Firstly, there will be a claim for an increase in margin to cover the cost of parking to be subtracted from employees' pay packets; secondly, the general public will not like the proposal; and, thirdly, once the scheme gets under way it will be found that it will not be profitable for the Railways Department to operate the parking areas and, similar to the situation at Perth Airport, the parking franchise will be offered to a private company.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Does the Bill provide for any power of that nature? Of course it does not.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Again, the Minister has not been listening; I said that this is what could happen. This is Parkinson's law; it will be found that the Railways Department cannot handle the scheme because it will not be profitable and it will be handed over to a private operator who, in turn, also will find it unprofitable and, in order to make it reasonably attractive to the private operator, the scheme will be extended to cover other suburban railway stations.

I oppose the Bill on the basis that it is unnecessary. It will impose another charge on the people and will increase the inflationary spiral, at the same time doing nothing to attract people to the public transport system. In fact, if the parking fees are implemented this legislation will do plenty to drive the people away. I also oppose the Bill on the grounds that it will impose a charge on railway employees and in some cases may lead to industrial disputation.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. V. J. Ferry.

House adjourned at 5.58 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, the 14th October, 1975

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

QUESTIONS (27): ON NOTICE

1. APPRENTICES

State Housing Commission Contracts

Mr HARMAN, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) How many apprentices are employed by the State Housing Commission?

- (2) Why has he not introduced a scheme similar to the Public Works Department whereby contracts are approved upon consideration of apprenticeship employment of tendering contractors?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Seventeen painting apprentices plus one bricklaying apprentice transferred to the Housing Commission under a special Commonwealth scheme to further the training of displaced apprentices.
- (2) The Public Works Department scheme was not considered appropriate to Housing Commission operations. As announced last week it will be a condition of awarding State Housing Commissions contracts as from 1st January, 1976 that the contractor alone or through his subcontractors employs apprentices in the ratio of not less than one apprentice for each five units of annual production.

2. PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Health Screening Scheme

Mr DAVIES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Referring to question 19 of 13th August last regarding the pre-school health screening team, have all appointments now been made?
- (2) If so, what programme has been conducted by the team?
- (3) If not—
 - (a) what appointments have yet to be made;
 - (b) what work is being undertaken by those already appointed?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Answered by (1).
- (3) (a) Speech therapist.
- (b) At present appointees are undergoing a training programme and expect to start work in day care centres and pre-school centres within the next month.

3. JOHN FORREST HIGH SCHOOL

Gymnasium: Collapse

Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Has the reason for the collapse of the John Forrest Senior High School gymnasium yet been determined?
- (2) Who was responsible for the construction that proved faulty?

- (3) Who is responsible for the re-building of the faulty section?
- (4) What additional cost is anticipated in replacing the faulty section?
- (5) Has any previous failure occurred in this type of structure?
- (6) Are there to be any additional supervision precautions taken in similar structures erected for Government departments in the future?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The contractor and the architect are currently being held jointly responsible.
- (3) Until the degree of responsibility of the parties is determined, it is the department's intention to finance the re-building of the gymnasium and take action to recover costs.
- (4) Costs of re-building are as yet undetermined.
- (5) This type of structure has not been used previously on departmental projects.
- (6) Yes.

4. CONSUMER OR PURCHASE TAX

Legal Opinion

Mr T. D. EVANS, to the Treasurer: Would he please table or make available otherwise to me so that I may refer to it in Parliament, a copy of an opinion obtained by the State Government in 1971 from Professor Geoffrey Sawer of the Australian National University as to the validity of a State Government imposed "consumer or purchase tax"?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

A check is being made of the relevant files on this matter.

I shall then be in a better position to answer the Member's question.

However, he will appreciate it is not normal to make such opinions available, especially where a Government could be involved in litigation or in other ways involved, in respect of a matter covered by an opinion.

5. NORTHAM SCHOOL

Backward Pupils Class

Mr McIVER, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is it the intention of the Education Department to discontinue the special class for backward pupils conducted at Northam Primary School in 1976?

- (2) If so, what are the grounds for the class to be discontinued and on whose recommendation?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) Yes.
(2) On the advice of the District Superintendent and the District Guidance Officer a policy of integration is being attempted. This policy has the support of the Northam School Principal. This is also in accord with the principles outlined in the most recent report of the Australian Schools Commission.

6. MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Tour of North-West

Mr MAY, to the Premier:

With a view to maintaining continuity of visits to the northern areas by Members of Parliament to enable inspections of the various projects, will he advise if a further visit is envisaged between the autumn and spring sessions of Parliament in 1976?

Sir CHARLES COURT replied:

No decision has been made, but in view of the new travel concessions to Members, organised tours to the more remote areas do not have the same significance as in the past.

If there is, from time to time, some special circumstance, the matter will be considered.

7. TOWN PLANNING

South-West Coastal Strip: Study

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

Further to part (4) of question on notice 29, asked on 27th November, 1974, is it the Government's intention to publish or otherwise release the other data assembled during the study of the south-west coastal strip by the Town Planning Department, particularly since interested public citizen groups, like the Leeuwin conservation group, contributed input when this was solicited by the department?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

It is not the Government's intention to publish data assembled during the study of the south-west coast by the Town Planning Department, part of which derives from correspondence with interested citizen groups.

As I stated in answer to question 29, asked on 9th October, 1975, further action is being co-ordinated by the Environmental Protection Authority.

8. MINERAL CLAIMS 700H AND 1527H

Bussell Highway and Railway Realignment

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Minister for Mines:

Further to question on notice 34 asked on 15th August, 1974, was the Mines Department involved in discussions concerning proposals to mine on mineral claims 700H and 1527H in the vicinity of Bussell Highway and the railway between Capel and Ludlow, and involving proposals to relocate both the highway and railway?

Mr MENSAROS replied:
Yes.

9. DRAINAGE COMPENSATING BASINS

Environmental Examination

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) As the T. S. Martin report on the south-west corridor indicates that the Metropolitan Water Board has proposals for utilising a number of the metropolitan lakes as drainage compensating basins, have such proposals been referred to the EPA for examination?

- (2) If not, why not?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) No.

- (2) Firm proposals have not yet been developed. Matters relating to the use of these wetlands are being considered co-operatively by the Metropolitan Water Board and, amongst others, the Department of Conservation and Environment.

10. EDUCATION

Television Programmes

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Adverting to question on notice 28 of 7th October, 1975 concerning the recording of television programmes by schools, will the Minister reconsider his answer to part (5) ("not applicable") because there clearly are limitations as indicated in his answer to part (1)?

- (2) Will he make inquiries of Queensland and discuss the matter with Crown Law and make any other inquiries which may be efficacious to see if the problem can be overcome, because quite clearly there are many programmes not intended for "educational purposes" which are of considerable educational merit, given the tenets of modern educational theory?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) and (2) Inquiries will be made.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Bindoon: Department of Defence Area

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) Further to question on notice 25 asked on 3rd September, in regard to part (4), is the Conservation Through Reserves Committee to consider the proposed extension of the Australian Army's Bindoon training area?
- (2) Will that committee also visit the area with representatives of the Department of Defence?
- (3) Is the training area near the Julimar State forest area, which is referred to in the 1962 Australian Academy of Science Committee's W.A. subcommittee's report on national parks?
- (4) Has the Conservation Through Reserves Committee commenced its review of conservation areas in the Darling system?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) and (2) No.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) No.

12. LAND

Marina: Waterman-Two Rocks

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Minister for Lands:

What proposals for leasing and occupancy arrangements have been made in regard to any marina proposals between Waterman and Two Rocks?

Mr RIDGE replied:

The only marina proposal of which I am aware is at Ocean Reef, Mullaloo, and I understand studies of this proposal are proceeding.

13. LAND

Two Rocks Foreshore

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Prior to the lease of land for the marina at Two Rocks what was the status and control of the foreshore and the aquatic area?
- (2) What is the status of this land now?
- (3) If the land is leased, what is—
 - (a) the reference number, area, purpose and period of the lease;

- (b) the name of lessee and terms, conditions and payment of the lease?

- (4) Under which provisions of which Act was the lease granted?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) The foreshore comprised portion of reserve No. 20561 "Recreation and Purposes incidental Thereto" vested in the Shire of Wanneroo with power to lease, and the aquatic area was part of the Indian Ocean. An area of about 3 hectares was excised in September 1972.
- (2) Portion of Swan location 8796, which has an area of 23.0347 hectares.
- (3) (a) Reference number—Special lease 3116/5595, Crown lease 82/1975.
Area—23.0347 hectares.
Purpose—Yacht harbour.
Period of lease—21 years, commencing 10th November, 1972.
(b) Name of lessee—Yanchep Estates Pty. Ltd. and Bond. Corporation Pty. Ltd.
Terms, conditions and payment of the lease are as expressed in Crown lease 82/1975 issued to the Office of Titles on 24th July, 1975.

- (4) Section 116 of the Land Act.

14. TOWN PLANNING

North-West Corridor: Studies and Plan

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

- (1) Further to questions on notice 11 asked on 22nd April, 1975 and 54 asked on 12th August, 1975, what similar future strategy studies have been initiated for the north-west corridor, apart from those mentioned in his answer to question 36 of 8th May, 1975?
- (2) Has an outline plan been prepared, or is one in preparation for future development in the north-west corridor?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Professor Gordon Stephenson has been retained to prepare plans for the Joondalup sub-regional centre in the north-west corridor.
- (2) An outline plan of the north-west corridor is being prepared.

15. TOWN PLANNING

Corridor Plan: Royal Commission Recommendation

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

What consideration has the Government given to recommendation 12.3 of the Honorary Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Corridor Plan for Perth, that specific representation of the Environmental Protection Council be made on the MRPA, bearing in mind that Dr O'Brien is the representative of the Environmental Protection Authority?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

The Environmental Protection Council is represented on The Metropolitan Region Planning Authority by—

Dr B. J. O'Brien;
Dr I. D. Carr;
Mr A. A. Mills.

16. TOWN PLANNING

Corridor Plan: Royal Commission Recommendation

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

What consideration has been given to recommendation 12.24 of the Honorary Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Corridor Plan for Perth?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

I am not aware of any action taken by my predecessor. A review of planning procedures is now being undertaken by a committee appointed by the Government. It would be more appropriate to consider the recommendation in 12.24 when that report is completed.

17. JUMBO STEELWORKS

Approaches to Local Authorities

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

In view of the Government's earlier action in ascertaining the attitude of the Rockingham and Kwinana Shire Councils to the possibility of siting a jumbo steel plant at Cockburn Sound or further south has a similar approach been made to the Yanchep and Gingin Shire Councils in regard to the possible development of a port in the Yanchep-Two Rocks area or further north?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

The councils in question (Shires of Wanneroo and Gingin) have been kept fully informed of the present studies being carried out in the area.

18. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

North-West Corridor: Studies and Plan

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) Have the Conservation and Environment Council and the EPA both been fully informed in writing of the nature and scope of the port development concept for the north-west corridor extension of greater Perth?
- (2) In view of the controversial nature of land rezoning for urban development at both Whitfords and Yanchep Sun City, what consideration has been given to recommendation 12.4 of the Honorary Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Corridor Plan for Perth?
- (3) What consideration has been given, in line with the Government's policy of open government and the MRPA's publicised policy of "P.P." (public participation) to producing an informative position paper regarding proposals and investigations current in the north-west corridor?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) Discussions have taken place.
- (2) This question is best addressed to my colleague the Minister for Town Planning.
- (3) I refer the Member to the 1973 annual report of the Environmental Protection Authority.

19. PORT
Yanchep

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) (a) Between which localities is a port feasibility study presently being undertaken in the Yanchep Sun City area;
(b) what length of coastline is involved;
(c) could a map showing the study area be tabled?
- (2) Up to what DWT vessels are covered by the scope of the study?

- (3) At what stage is the study at the present time and when will it be finalised?
- (4) Does the port development concept envisage extensive basin excavation, both behind the shore and in the adjoining marine area, with disposal of large quantities of spoil in the sea nearby?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) (a) Between Two Rocks marina and a point just north of the mouth of the Moore River.
(b) About 13 kilometres.
(c) Yes.
- (2) Up to 135 000 tonnes.
- (3) In preparatory stage. A full report is expected to be produced by 30th June, 1976.
- (4) No development concept is possible until the feasibility study is completed.

The paper was tabled (see paper No. 461).

20. TOWN PLANNING

South-West Corridor: Population

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

- (1) Are the demographic growth rates reported on in the section headed "Economic Background" in the T. S. Martin report on the south-west corridor, cumulative rates?
- (2) The report also comments on the imbalance in population and growth in employment in each major area of Perth which has created a greater dispersion between geographic distributions of population and employment. Since this has been one of the problems disclosed by a preliminary examination of the Kwinana-Rockingham area by the EPA's Demographic and Environmental Resources Committee (Tabled Paper 188, 1974) and a problem that the corridor plan is supposed to overcome, what consideration has the MRPA given to this committee's proposed detailed study of the Kwinana-Rockingham area?
- (3) What studies have been initiated to determine the impact, particularly the social impact, of high metropolitan population growth rates, like 3.75% per annum, as might occur if there is a major impetus to growth?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

- (1) Yes.

- (2) Although no specific consideration has been given to the committee's proposed study, the MRPA is currently examining the implications of the T. S. Martin report. The authority is also continuing its investigations into the sub-regional centres detailed in The Corridor Plan for Perth.
- (3) Varying growth rates have been considered by the authority from time to time depending on the economic circumstances of the day. Reports which envisage high regional growth rates include:
 - (a) The Corridor Plan for Perth, 1970.
 - (b) Perth Regional Transport Study, 1970.
 - (c) The Perth Central City Railway Feasibility Study.
 - (d) The South-West Corridor Report.

21. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Ports: Yanchep and Cockburn Sound

Mr A. R. TONKIN, to the Minister for Conservation and the Environment:

- (1) Has the EPA and Conservation and Environment Council been fully informed in writing of the port development concepts and feasibility study for a proposed port in the Yanchep Sun City area?
- (2) (a) Is the EPA satisfied that it is being involved at an early enough stage in such proposals;
(b) if not, what recommendations has it made to ensure that such involvement is satisfactorily undertaken?
- (3) (a) Has the EPA had an adequate opportunity to comment on the development of port concepts and on the study before it was initiated;
(b) what recommendations has the EPA made?
- (4) (a) Have the EPA and Conservation and Environment Council been fully informed of port development concepts and studies relating to Cockburn Sound;
(b) is the EPA satisfied with the opportunities being provided for it to comment on such proposals?

Mr P. V. JONES replied:

- (1) I am advised that the Environmental Protection Authority is not aware of a port development proposal in the Yanchep Sun City area.

- (2) (a) Not always.
(b) Discussions and gradual improvement in necessary liaison are continuing.
- (3) (a) and (b) Answered by (1).
- (4) (a) and (b) Yes.

22.

MINING BILL

Country Party Submissions

Mr MAY, to the Speaker:

In connection with part (5) of question without notice asked of the Minister for Mines dated Wednesday, 8th October, 1975, will he advise if this particular part expresses a hypothetical opinion and whether, if notice had been given of the question, would he have allowed it?

The SPEAKER replied:

In reply to the Member for Clontarf, I advise that part of the question does to my mind express an opinion which, technically, would disallow it in the original form.

23.

HEALTH

Overseas Medical Qualifications

Mr DAVIES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) What is the current position of moves made over the years to set a standard for recognition of overseas medical qualifications within Australia?
- (2) What committee, if any, is currently considering the matter?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) Progress has been made in determining—
 - (a) the qualifications acceptable throughout Australia; and
 - (b) the type of examination for doctors holding other qualifications.

It is expected that final agreement will take some time.

- (2) A committee on overseas professional qualifications responsible to State and Federal Ministers for Immigration has set up an expert panel to consider the acceptability of overseas medical qualifications.

24.

MINING BILL

Country Party Submissions

Mr MAY, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Has he read the article in *The West Australian* dated 8th October, 1975 submitted by Mr S. A. J. Fletcher, General President, National Country Party of Australia (W.A.) wherein it is stated

that he has appointed a top level committee to confer with his parliamentary members to determine whether the Mining Bill can be amended to make it acceptable to the mining industry generally?

- (2) Have the NCP Members of Parliament met with the top level committee appointed by Mr Fletcher?
- (3) If so, when is it expected that submissions will be forwarded to the Mines Department?
- (4) If not, when is it anticipated that the proposed meeting will take place?
- (5) Has he received an assurance from the Minister for Mines that consideration of the Bill will be deferred pending the receipt of submissions from the NCP?
- (6) Has the NCP previously forwarded submissions to the Mines Department re the present proposed Mining Bill?
- (7) If so, what was the date of the submission?

Mr OLD replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No.
- (3) Answered by (2).
- (4) When a request is received.
- (5) No approach has been made to the Minister.
- (6) and (7) The NCP has not made a submission, but members have made individual representations.

25.

MIDLAND JUNCTION ABATTOIR AND WA MEAT EXPORT WORKS

Sales and Trading Results

Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What quantities of beef, lamb and mutton were sold by—
 - (a) Midland Junction Abattoir Board;
 - (b) West Australian Meat Export Works,in each of the past three years?
- (2) Of the quantities stated in reply to (1), how much was sold by each of these institutions—
 - (a) in its own right as a trading concern;
 - (b) as an agent for an exporter, wholesaler or packer?
- (3) What amount of trading profit or loss has been sustained by—
 - (a) Midland Junction Abattoir Board;
 - (b) West Australian Meat Export Works,in each of the past three years?

Mr OLD replied:

I am informed as follows by the managements of the abattoirs—

(1) (a) Midland Junction:

Year ended June 30th	Beef	tonnes Mutton	Lamb
1973	320.8	773.7	18.7
1974	231.0	288.9	1 414.7
1975	13.8	5 055.9	Nil*

(b) WA Meat Exports:

Year ended June 30th	Beef	Mutton	Lamb
1973	Nil	Nil	11.3
1974	Nil	Nil	43.7
1975	Nil	Nil	Nil*

* Function taken over by Lamb Marketing Board.

- (2) In relation to the Midland Junction Abattoir Board all of these quantities, with the exception of the lamb sold in 1973-74, were sold by the board in its own right. The 1 414.7 tonnes in 1973-74 represent a sale by the board as agent for the Western Australian Lamb Marketing Board.

In relation to the W.A. Meat Export Works, all of the quantities referred to were sold by the works in its own right.

(3) (a) Midland Junction:

Year Ended 30th June—
1973—\$27 584 profit
1974—\$66 092 loss
1975—\$158 689 loss

(b) W.A. Meat Export Works:

Year Ended 30th June—
1973—\$580 profit
1974—\$16 200 loss
1975—No sales on export market*

* Activities confined to service operations for Government institutions only.

26. KWINANA, BUNBURY, AND MUJA POWER STATIONS

Generation Costs

Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

Figures supplied to me in question 17 of 10th September, 1975, revealed the following power production costs—

- (a) Muja, June to December, 1974, 0.606 cents; January to August, 1975, 0.755 cents;
(b) Bunbury for the same periods, 0.884 cents and 1.079 cents;
(c) Kwinana for the same periods, 0.691 cents and 1.555 cents.

In view of the high increases would he please supply the individual reasons for the increases at each power station?

Mr MENSAROS replied:

The production costs in c/kWh supplied on the 10th September, 1975, are made up of the costs of fuel and the costs of operation and maintenance.

(a) Muja power station:

The cost of coal delivered to this station increased by more than 15% during the two six-monthly periods. The number of staff was increased by 8% to carry out the increased maintenance necessary to maintain this station at a high load factor on top of which the average wages per employee rose about 2.5%. The costs of replacements for wearing parts, particularly for coal handling plant, rose sharply between the two periods.

(b) Bunbury power station:

The cost of coal loaded on to rail for this station increased by more than 15% on top of which rail freight rose by 16%. The number of staff was increased by about 5% for reasons of increased maintenance on top of which the average wages per employee likewise rose some 2.5%. The cost of replacements for wearing parts similarly rose sharply as for Muja power station.

(c) Kwinana power station:

The cost of fuel oil used by this station increased by 150% between the two periods and was the main factor leading to the increased cost of generation. There was no increase in staff although average wages per employee rose by about 2.5%. The increased cost of replacement parts was relatively insignificant.

In the six-monthly periods referred to in the previous question 17 of the 10th September, 1975, there are some variations due to difference in the times plant was out of service for overhauls and which has some bearing on the production costs. However, the items listed above are the main factors that influence the cost of production.

27.

HEALTH

Whalemeal: Mercury Contamination

Mr BRYCE, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that scientists working with the Victorian State Government's Department of Agriculture have recommended that—
 - (a) whalemeal and whale solubles and mercury contaminated fishmeal concentrates incorporated into animal foods should be used with caution if fed to laying hens (Bulletin of Environmental Contamination and Toxicology Vol. 13, No. 3, 1975);
 - (b) the use of whalemeal and whale solubles in pig rations is not recommended (Australian Journal of Experimental Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Vol. 15, 1975)?
- (2) Does the Minister intend safeguarding the public health by gazetting recommended levels for the inclusion of whalemeal and whale solubles in animal feed rations as has been done in Victoria?
- (3) In view of the fact that departments of agriculture in other States discourage the use of whalemeal and whale solubles by farmers except where they are part of prepared rations not exceeding gazetted levels, will the Minister take the appropriate action to prevent the direct sale of whalemeal and whale solubles to farmers in this State in an attempt to obviate the possibility that rations prepared by such farmers may involve more than the recommended safe levels of these two commodities?
- (4) Will the Minister make all information on mercury contamination of whales and whale products compiled by his department available for public scrutiny, and will he make efforts to have information relating to this matter held by the Department of Agriculture also made available?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) (a) and (b) Yes.
- (2) There is no evidence of a public health risk. The matter is being investigated.
- (3) This is also being investigated.
- (4) Information on mercury contamination of whale and whale products has already been submitted to Parliament. It is understood that information held by the Department of Agriculture will be published shortly.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS AND PROVINCES

Enrolments

Mr O'NEIL (East Melbourne—Minister for Works): Last Tuesday the Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked the following question—

- (1) What was the enrolment for each Legislative Assembly division and each Legislative Council province as at the 30th September, 1975?
- (2) (a) Are the figures now available for each of the three defined areas under the recent amendments to the Electoral Districts Act?
- (b) If not when is it anticipated that they will be available?

I undertook to table the figures when they were available, and I do so now.

The paper was tabled (see paper No. 462).

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

Tabling

THE SPEAKER (Mr Hutchinson): I have for tabling the report of the Auditor-General under the Audit Act, together with statements of the Public Accounts prepared by the Treasurer for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1975.

The report was tabled (see paper No. 457).

GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 11th September.

MR T. H. JONES (Collie) [4.49 p.m.]: This is a very small Bill and, when introducing the second reading, the Minister for Works, acting for the Minister for Transport, said—

There is a five-year limitation in the term of any contract entered into by the Commissioner of Railways in respect of collection and delivery of goods outside the limits of the railway and to set the rates and charges for such services.

The Minister indicated that companies which had invested in rolling stock required a greater guarantee than the current specified period of five years. We on this side of the House appreciate the need for the amendment. Safeguards are to be provided in that any amendments to the regulations involving contracts for a term greater than 20 years must be tabled in Parliament; this will give members the opportunity to debate the contracts and, if necessary, disallow them.

This is only a small Bill, and we on this side do not wish to go into it in great depth. On behalf of the Opposition I indicate that we support it.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

ACTS AMENDMENT (WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MEAT COMMISSION) BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 7th October.

MR H. D. EVANS (Warren) [4.53 p.m.]: The purpose of the Bill which was introduced a week ago by the Minister for Agriculture is to consolidate the powers of five existing Acts into one piece of legislation. The Acts involved are the Abattoirs Act, 1909-1971; the State Trading Concerns Act, 1916-1972; the Marking of Lamb and Hogget Act, 1967-1973, or portion thereof; the Government Stock Saleyards Act, 1941; and the West Australian Meat Export Works Act, 1942.

The long title does give an indication of the complete intention of the Bill, and it sets out almost a summary of that intention and the content. The Abattoirs Act, which is the principal Act referred to in the Bill, established the Midland Junction Abattoir Board which comprises three members.

The first is a chartered accountant, and I think the reason for the appointment of such a person to the board is fairly obvious. When we are dealing with a works which has a gross turnover of the magnitude of that of the Midland Junction Abattoir, it is understandable that a chartered accountant would be a very useful person to serve on a board of this sort. This member is responsible also for looking after the interests of the consumers.

We therefore have on the board one member who shall have regard for the consumers of meat and who looks after the interests of those consumers. Another member shall have regard for the interests of the butchers; and the third member of the board is the representative of the producers.

In this instance the board has been served by some very capable persons, and they have weathered some difficult times. It is to their credit that the Midland Junction Abattoir Board has continued to render service to the State in quite an admirable fashion.

There are some criticisms with regard to the overall policy which I will level later on. This does involve the Midland Junction Abattoir Board, but not in relation to its administration of the total policy of the service abattoirs of the State.

Under the present structure, the board is answerable to the Minister. The board is directly under his control, but I feel that the powers are better encompassed by a commission of the sort envisaged in the Bill.

By contrast, the West Australian Meat Export Works is a trading concern which was set up under the State Trading Concerns Act, a section of which provides that the Minister shall be a corporate body with perpetual succession. This is always a difficult type of structure, and it must necessarily be so. In effect, the general manager becomes directly responsible to the Minister for the administration of the works.

I feel that the difficulties confronting abattoirs, in particular service abattoirs, are not fully appreciated by the public at large; indeed, even the producers are not aware of the full range of difficulties that are encountered in service abattoirs.

As the Minister rightly pointed out, and I think rather fittingly, the West Australian Meat Export Works recognises that the management which has been applied at Robb Jetty over the years deserves commendation. In this case the management goes back to an individual, and for that reason a great responsibility is thrust upon that individual.

It could be a difficult situation for a Minister in cases where he has no intervening consultative body to which he may refer problems. It is for that reason the proposed meat commission could well prove to be of advantage in the overall administration of the service abattoirs of the State.

It was pointed out that the extent of the financial loss sustained by the Midland Junction Abattoir Board in 1974-75 was very substantial; and by contrast the West Australian Meat Export Works was able to operate at virtually the break-even level. It was able to achieve a higher throughput in relation to slaughtering capacity than was possible at the Midland Junction Abattoir.

The problem at the Midland Junction Abattoir arises substantially from the fact that it is a service abattoir. The State has to reconcile itself to the fact that to a very large extent a service abattoir is a necessity, and it is a service for which the State has to pay. If there are no service abattoirs to undertake the essential slaughtering of animals in an assured manner for the metropolitan area, it will be left to the whims of private abattoirs and the necessary degree of security would not be present. The repercussions would be felt by the producers who would not be able to have their stock killed when it was necessary for that to be done.

Being a service abattoir, it means that the losses must be carried by the Midland Junction Abattoir, and these losses private abattoirs would not be prepared to accept.

Indeed, the private abattoirs would not be called upon to accept such losses.

The difficulty experienced with stock being sent to the abattoir at Midland for slaughter is that an even flow cannot be achieved. There are periods of gluts and of dearths; as a consequence, the service abattoirs have to accept this situation, particularly each spring when there is a flush in supply. The abattoir must bring its operations into gear to cope with the additional numbers of stock.

At the present time the Midland Junction Abattoir is experiencing just that. It has to gear up after a period of comparative slackness. Many slaughtermen left of their own accord in the previous months, the reason being that during the slack period—as from late autumn onwards—many skilled slaughtermen are offered labouring jobs only, which are not acceptable. So in the main, they leave of their own volition, and are often lost to the industry or they go into private abattoir employment. That is a fact of life as far as abattoirs are concerned and, as a consequence, it comes back to the fact that service abattoirs have to retrain slaughtermen to ensure that their operations—that is, operations to the maximum capacity of the abattoirs—can continue. That, virtually, is happening at the Midland Junction Abattoir now; the trainees are gradually reaching a stage of proficiency where they will be able to meet the demands placed upon them and ensure that the daily capacity of the abattoir is reached. But it will be at a cost and as a consequence we face loss figures, and we have been facing loss figures over a period of time, especially at the Midland Junction Abattoir.

That, of course, is the inherent reason for service abattoirs having to confront this situation annually, and it has to be overcome. The situation can be varied, to a certain degree, in different ways. During the slack periods many employees are able to take their holidays; they are sent on leave and the leave which is due to them is taken. Some of the slack period is used up in this manner, but not all of it.

The Midland Junction Abattoir was expanded in 1970 in order to overcome a chronic shortfall in slaughtering capacity at that time. That statement was made by the Minister in his introductory remarks. I do not know whether or not the Minister is aware of it, but what he said was a classic understatement—that the Midland Junction Abattoir was expanded to overcome a shortfall in capacity.

The abattoir story in this State is a rather disgraceful one, and it goes back to before the time of the present Minister. I am not suggesting that any blame at all is attachable to him, but at any time this issue is raised, in any context, I think the record ought to be put straight. The story

goes back to 1967 when a group of representatives of the industry met with the three responsible Ministers at the time. They were the Minister for Agriculture, the Minister for Industrial Development, and the Premier. The representatives of the industry pointed out to each of those three Ministers that a very serious situation was developing. The prognosis was not a very optimistic one but they were not able to convince the Government of the day that immediate expansion of abattoir facilities was necessary.

Disaster struck the industry in the drought years of 1968-69. The question of the Midland Junction Abattoir was referred to two individuals—Messrs Towns and Austen. Those two gentlemen acted as consultants in this matter, and they examined the abattoir situation as far as Western Australia was concerned.

Two interesting recommendations were brought down in the Towns and Austen report. The first appears at page 11 of the report, item 5C. The question asked of the consultants was when an additional abattoir should be made available in Western Australia. We must remember that this occurred in May, 1970, and the answer was that it should be made available for the summer season of 1970. The consultants simply confirmed what the representatives of the industry had been propounding. Those consultants, in their expert capacity, indicated that a major abattoir would be required in this State within a period of five months.

At page 10 of the report, item 4A, the consultants were asked whether the future additional needs of the State should be met by expansion of the existing facilities at Midland. Their answer was a firm negative—not just “No”; but a firm negative.

Unfortunately, the Government of the day did not contain the Midland Junction Abattoir to its 8 000 head, and the Robb Jetty works to 6 000 head as recommended: it embarked on a policy of expansion at the Midland Junction Abattoir which was contrary to the advice of the experts. The views of the experts were ignored and a major expansion programme was undertaken at the Midland Junction Abattoir whereas a modern abattoir complex could have been established at that time. A golden opportunity to do something existed, but it was thrown away. It was not thrown away because of a lack of advice or the fact that the requirements were not known to the Government. The requirements were well known and had been expressed by representatives of the industry and, again, in the report of the experts who were engaged to examine the situation in detail.

So, the Midland Junction Abattoir was expanded with a twofold result. First and foremost, as a result of the drought years, there was an influx which could not be handled. The abattoirs could not cope because of its lack of capacity. It is estimated that the producers lost about \$3 per sheep

at that time. When regard is had for the two seasons during which that situation pertained the cost to producers ran into many millions of dollars.

A second aspect of the expansion of the Midland Junction Abattoir was that the State was denied a modern facility which it could well have used and it would have served the primary industries in this State very well.

On the question of expenditure, I would point out that in the 10-year period from 1959 to 1969 the total expenditure at Midland Junction was \$1 249 186. During that same 10-year period, from 1959 to 1969, the expenditure at the West Australian Meat Export Works was \$799 000. That was the expenditure up till 1969, when the crucial drought years commenced.

In the subsequent four-year period the expenditure at the Midland Junction Abattoir was \$9 191 000, and during the same period the expenditure at the West Australian Meat Export Works was \$2 941 000—nearly \$3 million. A total of \$12 million in all had been expended in a four-year period, whereas just under \$2 million had been spent in the previous 10-year period.

That is the chronic shortfall and the expenditure which the Tonkin Government inherited, and it is only one of the many problems which confronted that Government when it came into office. The increased capacity of other export meatworks, and the loss of some overseas meat markets resulted in a major shortfall during the past year.

There is no doubt that the utilisation of abattoirs to their capacity is the key to economic operation. The management of the Midland Junction Abattoir has found that to be the case and over the years it has endeavoured to take certain action to alleviate the situation.

The Midland Junction Abattoir needs to operate at something like 70 per cent of capacity to reach a break-even point. The inherent problem associated with meat is its lack of keeping qualities. In the case of wool or grain, storage difficulties are not the main problem, but in the case of meat, where there is a need for cool storage, there has to be a continuous flow. It is a difficulty associated with a commodity which does not lend itself to lengthy periods of storage, and that is the situation as far as meat is concerned. Once the available storage capacity has been filled production, of course, has to be cut back. That problem, together with seasonal fluctuations, confronts the meat industry.

At various times the processing of goats has proved to be very useful. It has provided an opportunity for pastoralists to obtain ready cash by disposing of goats in this way, and it has kept the Midland Junction Abattoir working to a nearer-capacity level than otherwise would have

been the case. Similarly, there have been occasions when sheep have been imported from South Australia to provide that additional capacity.

When loss figures are looked at, in terms of operating costs associated with the Midland Junction Abattoir balance sheet, they reveal that much more should be measured against the existing situation—the situation, firstly, of providing a service abattoir which otherwise would not be available to producers and consumers; and, secondly, the utilisation of the works to capacity. I am not talking of a profit margin but of an operational margin. This matter has to be related to the total balance sheet when it is looked at critically.

I come now to the proposed reorganisation referred to by the Minister in his introductory remarks. It should be noted that the Meat Industry Advisory Committee, at page 143 of its report, alluded to the setting up of a Western Australian meat commission with trading powers. The commission would assume responsibility for the overall management of the existing State abattoirs which already have power to trade in the interests of safeguarding Government investment as well as ensuring abattoir co-ordination and rational development between the two meatworks.

The composition of the proposed commission, as set out in the report, is very significant and of great importance. The report states that the composition of the commission would, in view of its wider responsibility, be different from that of the existing Midland Junction Abattoir Board which it would replace.

The recommendation there is clearly that a commission should be set up to embrace the responsibility of the Midland Junction Abattoir Board and the WA Meat Export Works at Robb Jetty. The recommendation is one which we, as an Opposition, would endorse. We agree that this is a logical stage in development and we have no objection to the concept and principles involved. The intention is that the Western Australian meat commission could compete with private enterprise and develop markets for Western Australian meat which might be unattractive to private enterprise.

The report recommended that the interests of the meat industry would be best advanced by setting up a commission in this manner. It must be remembered that two of these concerns—Robb Jetty and Midland Junction—have powers to trade at this stage. It is necessary to look at the way in which these powers have been used, and perhaps several questions will arise on this particular feature.

There is no doubt that this action would have been taken by the Opposition had it been in other circumstances, and probably one of the reasons that the Meat Industry

Advisory Committee was set up was the fragmentation of the meat industry and due recognition of the need to reorganise it to a very large degree.

The composition of the commission must be closely examined because it contains at least one aspect which is not very acceptable. The commission will replace the Midland Junction Abattoir Board and it is hoped the establishment of a single board which is responsible for the administration of both abattoirs will enhance their operating ability for the reasons given in the Minister's second reading speech, which are—

... because savings will be achieved by co-ordinating the operations of the two works, particularly during the off-season, and by amalgamation of such functions as accounts, sales, and other administrative activities.

It is a little difficult to foresee at this stage to what extent and in what way co-ordination of the administrative kind mentioned in that remark would be possible. The Minister continued—

This would have particular application to capital investment and the most efficient utilisation of facilities.

I suppose it would be possible at a particular point in time to direct stock to one abattoir or another, and this might have considerable merit. There is a degree of liaison between the two abattoirs at the present time. I understand there is daily contact between the management of both institutions and they work harmoniously and in the interests of the stock industries. As the Minister says, this would have special application to capital investment and the most efficient utilisation of facilities.

The reference to capital investment rather intrigues me. I hope not very much more will be spent on either abattoir because the amounts required would be rather colossal. I am hopeful a third abattoir will be set up when required on the site at Baldi which was reserved in December, 1972. That seems to be perhaps the most hopeful approach, and I trust it is in that context that the reference to capital investment was made.

As indicated, it is proposed to restructure the Midland Junction Abattoir Board and its title will be the "Western Australian Meat Commission". The trading powers of the concerns it will replace will be vested in the commission. The Government Stock Saleyards Act is one of the Acts involved in the reorganisation of the relevant legislation. That Act is to be repealed and its provisions have been incorporated in this amending legislation. Nobody could deny that is a logical and reasonable move and is probably overdue.

The commission will be composed of six persons, as set out in clause 18 on page 7 of the Bill. In accordance with the recommendation in the meat industry report, the

commission has substantially broader scope and embraces more aspects of the meat industry than did the Midland Junction Abattoir Board.

One of the members of the commission is to be a person having relevant marketing experience, and another will be a person having relevant experience in financial management. In a multi-million-dollar investment, that is obviously a prerequisite. In the course of the necessary expansion of service abattoirs to keep pace with the growing population, it is certainly necessary that someone with experience in financial management be involved.

The third member is to be a person having extensive and relevant experience in the meat industry. The meat industry covers a very broad span, from the retail to the wholesale aspects, into the processing aspect, and back to the producer. To find someone who has experience in all these matters would probably present something of a problem, and that member would need to be selected with great care and with regard to the unique nature of the qualifications entailed.

Two members of the commission will be persons representing the interests of the producers of meat. That is reasonable. Adequate representation of producers is written into the platform of the Opposition and we strongly stand by it.

One member will be a person appointed to represent the interests of the Government of the State. When the State Government is obliged to find millions of dollars of loan funds and to pick up the tab for considerable annual losses, obviously it must be represented.

There is no reference to a consumers' representative, and I will comment further on that matter later on.

At the present time the Midland Junction Abattoir Board comprises six members, one of whom is a person with relevant marketing experience. That qualification is similar to the qualification of the member of the proposed commission who will have extensive and relevant experience in the meat industry. The two are rather synonymous. A person with a broad and thorough understanding of the meat industry would at the same time have marketing experience. There appears to be something of an overlap, unless there is a special qualification of the marketing expert which has not been indicated at this stage. We strongly agree that a person with experience in financial management is necessary. It is unarguable that there must be two representatives of meat producers and a person representing the interests of the State Government. However, several comments should be made.

It should be noted at the outset that the balance of the composition of the commission cannot really be accepted by the Opposition or the public at large. First

of all, the comment that there is no consumers' representative was made by way of interjection by the honourable member alongside me. It is a worthy comment and deserves a great deal of thought.

When we speak of the Midland Junction Abattoir we are speaking of the place where meat prices are virtually fixed. It is on the operations of the saleyards at Midland Junction Abattoir that the prices the housewife pays are necessarily based. While that may sound a little obtuse, if it is followed back it will be found that is the situation. The saleyard and the saleyard system are controlled by what takes place in the pens at the Midland Junction Abattoir, and it flows from there into the processing and retail world. So a consumers' representative could well be appointed to a commission of this kind because meat is a very significant item in the cost-of-living index and it is a commodity in which every housewife has a real interest as far as prices are concerned. That is one area where the composition of the commission should be re-examined.

The other area where the composition of the commission should be re-examined is in representation of the Meat Industry Employees' Union. The meat industry is probably one of the most fragile areas of industrial relations, and there are many reasons for it. One way to obviate future difficulties and promote industrial harmony which suggests itself to me is the appointment of a representative of the employees to a commission of this kind. It appears to be fundamental and I am surprised provision has not been made for it.

One of the earlier actions taken by the Tonkin Government was to provide for a representative of the Meat Industry Employees' Union to be appointed to the Midland Junction Abattoir Board. That provision was passed in the Legislative Assembly but it did not survive in another place. The argument put forward by the then Opposition in another place was that the nature of the transactions of the Midland Junction Abattoir Board was not such that representatives of the union should be involved. As the scope of the operation of the commission is being expanded, it is rather difficult to justify exclusion of a representative of the Meat Industry Employees' Union on the same ground. A much wider sphere is now envisaged.

I can recall that in the debate which took place at the time it was suggested the confidential discussions of the Midland Junction Abattoir Board were not fit and proper matters for representatives of the union to participate in or even to be involved in as observers. I do not think that argument can be substantiated when the results of union participation in other parts of the world are examined. The experience in countries such as West Germany would belie that argument to a large extent. If

the Government wishes to make some real progress in the field of industrial relations it now has the opportunity to do so. It cannot be denied that one of the most important components of the operation of any service abattoir is the labour force; and this is a particularly volatile type of labour force. It is certainly very transient; slaughtermen and meatworkers are coming in and going out of the industry all the time.

They work in a situation that is never very palatable. The type of work lends itself to the fomenting of what would otherwise be trifling sorts of complaints, and we have seen this occur over the years. To gain maximum effect from an industrial point of view, when the disputes arise they occur at periods when full capacity is needed; but once a head of steam has been generated in the industrial scene there is very little that can be done about it. I am sure many of the comparatively trifling incidents that have occurred in the past could have been avoided by proper industrial relations.

I come back to the nature of the work encountered in abattoirs. To say the least it is a very repetitive type of work; that is the way it could be best described. Also, it is repetitive work in an untenable situation, and we have difficulty in getting people to accept it. I recall one dispute—and I could express some very emotive comments in respect of it—which occurred when no effort was made to alter the temperature control on the viscera tables and those around them. It is bad enough doing this type of work under the most acceptable conditions, but when the conditions are not up to standard in comparative terms, that is when tempers become frayed and matters of small moment become obsessions; and when there is a lack of appreciation at the top management level we have a situation in which the administration cannot understand or appreciate the nature of the difficulty the fellow at the bottom has to put up with. As a consequence, the situation fomented and eventually the balloon goes up.

I think the proposition I have presented in respect of balanced representation must be taken as being quite valid. To reiterate: One member is to have relevant marketing experience. The trade is to have two representatives, one representing broad meat industry experience, and the other marketing expertise.

Then we are to have two members who represent the producers, a member to represent the Government, and a member with the necessary financial expertise that such a high level of capitalisation and substantiation of loss requires. But one of the most important components has been excluded—the labour force. The other member to whom I have referred—that is, to represent the consumers—also could well be included on the commission.

As I have said, the representation is not balanced. I will leave the matter of consumer representation to the Minister, and I will be interested to hear any remarks he may care to make in respect of that. However, with regard to union representation, we have before us a great opportunity to do something about the industrial disharmony which has plagued the industry over the years. Do not let us lose another golden opportunity, like the one we lost when we could have had a new complex in Western Australia instead of building on to Midland with the attendant problems of size which have been manifested. Do not let us have a recurrence of that sort of mistake. The situation has been pointed out, and the opportunity to take a new step forward in industrial relations should not be discarded lightly.

I notice no reference was made to the manner in which the producer representation will be selected. That matter can be clarified if the Minister alludes to it in his reply. We would like to know whether he proposes to accept a panel of names from producer organisations and, if so, which organisations and what will be the extent of the panel; or whether he proposes to make an arbitrary choice and select persons whom he knows to be suitably qualified and experienced.

Once again, the selection of members of a commission of this type is most important; and if the harmony of the producers is desired I feel the precise method to be used in determining their representatives on the meat commission should be indicated at this time.

The term of office of members has been altered from five years to four years, the shorter term being considered to offer greater flexibility when appointments are made. That is probably a reasonable proposition.

The difficulty I foresee here is that of staggering the terms of office of individual members. We do not know whether all or some of the members of the existing Lamb Marketing Board are to be involved; or from what quarter of the industry the members of the proposed commission will be drawn. That is not clear. However, one thing that is clear is that the commission will commence operation on an appointed day and its members will each serve a four-year term and be eligible for reappointment at the end of their terms. In this way a hiatus may be created at some stage if a number of members retire simultaneously, and this is undesirable in the long term because continuity of experience is necessary and desirable in a commission of this kind.

The functions of the commission are set out in clause 21 and are stated in the following manner—

- (vii) to engage in trade in meat, meat products and livestock;

The SPEAKER: Is this a matter that could be dealt with in Committee?

Mr H. D. EVANS: Mr Speaker, I wish to make some general assumptions and overall observations that do not lend themselves to Committee debate. I am referring to the powers of the commission and the lack of direction regarding how they are to be used. In this respect we can draw a comparison with the Lamb Marketing Board which has resolved these matters to some extent.

I have already referred to the function of the commission in respect of engaging in trade in meat, meat products and livestock. Other functions are as follows—

- (viii) to assume responsibility for and manage salesyards; and
- (ix) to do such other things as are in the opinion of the Minister necessary in the public interest in relation to the meat industry.

However, it is the proposed powers in respect of trading which is the matter most open to question. The other responsibilities of the commission are fairly obvious and highly desirable.

When we consider the trading situation, we need to know the intention of the Government with regard to the trading policy of the commission. You will recall, Sir, that it was the Tonkin Government which gave the Midland Junction Abattoir Board trading powers; and I might add that Bill received some strong opposition in this Parliament. It was passed in this place with a great deal of reluctance, and the same occurred in the other place. At that time it was highly necessary that Midland be enabled to trade in offals in its own right; it needed to have trading powers to keep the works operating as near as possible to capacity.

The other important reason we foresaw at the time was that it brought another buyer into the salesyards and was a means by which the other bidders could be kept as honest as possible. Those were the main reasons given at the time for the Midland Junction Abattoir Board being endowed with trading powers. It was also foreseen that Midland, as a trading concern, would be developmental in the total meat marketing proposals that we envisaged in the long term. Since then the Lamb Marketing Board has become a successful selling agency, and this has given us several valuable years of experience in the marketing of meat.

Certainly it was a developmental situation; and as we have seen, the Midland Junction Abattoir Board has used its trading powers to good effect. The performance of the Lamb Marketing Board was paid due recognition in the report of the meat industry inquiry. Recognition was given to the fact that during a period of two years the Lamb Marketing Board has sold something like 2.25 million lambs at an

average return of \$8.50 a head, including culls, and that is quite a creditable performance.

However, there are still criticisms and some producers still sell outside the board. Perhaps at times they obtain better prices; but the only reason such prices are available outside the board is that the board has put a floor on the market; and had it not been for the board those producers who have been selling outside it would not have received the good deal they have received from time to time.

Therefore we have the past several years of experience to guide us. This brings me to the main problem of the moment; that is, the marketing of meats in general. I suppose beef would present the biggest problem at present, and several attempts have been made to overcome this. One was a modification made by the Government to the voluntary beef selling scheme, and another is the saleyard control that has been operating for over a week now. These attempts still have not resolved the difficult situation which pertains; but they do bring us to the broad policy problem of the extent to which it is proposed to allow the commission to engage in trading.

I raise this question deliberately because the record of the present Government as far as meat marketing is concerned is not very bright at all. Its attitude towards marketing reform has never been very bright. It has taken no initiatives; any action it has taken has been taken against a background of pressure. The reason for this is obvious, of course. Where we have vested interests which are firmly entrenched and are closely allied to a political party, the political party has a predilection towards and an obligation to support the concerns and the interests that support it.

When the amendment which gave the Midland Junction Abattoir Board powers to trade was before Parliament, concern was expressed that the board would trade too extensively. This matter was raised in the course of debate; indeed, one member of the then Opposition expressed fears that a meat hall kind of trading concern would be set up.

At that time it was not intended and, indeed, it was not tried. Instead, the development of the Lamb Marketing Board, from which valuable experience was expected to be gained, was the course that was followed. The set refusal of the Liberal and Country Parties to allow the Lamb Marketing Board to trade in sheep meats is well known. I was rather interested to hear the member for Stirling give notice of his intention to rectify this situation. It will be interesting to see exactly what is intended and the reception his move will receive.

As I have said, the two Government parties have been consistently opposed to the interests of producers in support of the operators, and the Opposition, I think,

can be forgiven for not having a great deal of confidence in the Government making a serious endeavour to reform meat marketing. Anything short of a comprehensive and far-reaching reformation will not rectify the situation.

This Bill will give to the commission the powers that Robb Jetty already has and the Midland Junction Abattoir already exercises. In that sense it is a housekeeping Bill. It introduces these powers to the administration of the two institutions, and brings in other relevant Acts. However it will certainly be dependent on the degree of latitude the commission is allowed to exercise in meat trading. As we know from experience, the recommendations that were put forward in regard to the DIA received fairly short shrift, and it is hoped the recommendations from the meat commission will not be similarly treated.

So it is most desirable that the Government should give an indication of the trading policy it proposes to allow the commission to follow. Is it prepared to give the commission free rein in trading when it sees commercial opportunities in meat marketing? It is London to a brick on that the commission will not be given such opportunities.

The Government is faced with a difficult situation in the meat industry at the moment, and no doubt it will endeavour to take credit for reforming the meat marketing system. That is fair enough.

If political advantage is to be gained, the Government is entitled to go out and chase it, but it is essential that it earns that accolade by genuine action, and if it is to receive the approbation of the Opposition it needs to bring about reforms that are meaningful. Its previous gestures with relation to the Lamb Marketing Board and the beef marketing scheme have virtually been smokescreens merely to give an illusion that something is being done; purely window dressing to give the impression in the electorate that reform in meat marketing is proceeding. However that does not fool anybody; certainly not those who are closely associated with the industry.

If the Government is to seek recognition for its work in meat marketing reform it has to earn that reputation. It cannot expect to have that reputation thrust upon it lightly, because this is probably the most important aspect of the Bill. This does have potential, but in returning to the important question we have to consider the powers the commission will be allowed to exercise. Once again we have reached that watershed; that golden moment when something can be achieved, and it should not be thrown away lightly. We have had too many examples of this. I have alluded to one—that is, the opportunity that arose when a modern meat marketing complex could have been set up at Baldavis—but that opportunity was not taken. Also, a golden opportunity was thrown away in

the dairying industry in regard to the negotiability of market-milk quotas.

We now have a third situation where extensive meat marketing reform is possible, and it is hoped the Government will take advantage of it and indicate precisely what its intentions are in regard to the policy of the meat commission. That is something I am sure the House will look forward to with considerable interest.

In the main, the remainder of the provisions in the Bill are procedural and administrative. The detail in regard to abattoir control, designations, terms, and the various duties and functions of the controller in regard to abattoirs and stock, are all set down in the Bill. Possibly these can best be referred to in the Committee stage. They are important items and they would be better dealt with at that stage of the debate.

A number of peripheral matters could properly be raised at this time and some indication in regard to them may be obtained from the Minister when he replies to the second reading debate. One of these matters is the present policy of the Government in regard to the expansion of the abattoirs. We would like to know whether or not it is intended that the Baldivis site will be used when appropriate; whether or not the existing regulations in regard to the banning of abattoirs from the prescribed area will be maintained; and whether or not the substantial investment which the service abattoirs represent will be safeguarded. We would like to know whether or not there will be any policy changes on these matters.

By way of answer to a question asked last week, the Minister indicated that this measure would not impinge upon the operations of the Lamb Marketing Board to any marked degree. I would appreciate it if he could clarify to what extent the provisions of this measure conflict with, and impinge on, the Marketing of Lamb Act, and the administrative structure within the service abattoirs. As was said, it is anticipated that considerable saving will be effected by the integration of the administration. Hopefully, this suggests it has possibilities, but how the policy will be put into effect is the important question.

Necessarily, some operations must be confined to the individual abattoir institutions, but I am not clear as to which of those operations can be diversified under a common administrative unit. That is a matter upon which some comment should be made. Also we would like to know whether documentation will be carried out and whether or not there will be general supervision over Government abattoirs; that is, the two existing ones and possibly the two that will be built in the future. We would like to know also whether those two abattoirs will be established shortly; how the supervision of administration will be achieved; and in

what way the service abattoirs will liaise. Also, what will be the avenues of communication, the changes made in staffing, interchange of duties, and the general co-ordinated movement?

Therefore in the broad concept, the Opposition supports this measure; it will have a tidying-up effect that is desirable. I am certain that no matter which party had been in office the measure would have been proceeded with, but we still return to the question that it revolves around policies. In particular, two matters that have to be closely scrutinised in this House are, firstly, the composition of the meat commission. That is vital. So, too, is the intention of the Government with regard to its policy relating to the trading powers of the commission. I look forward to hearing these matters being expanded during the course of the debate. I support the second reading of the Bill with these qualifications.

MR McPHARLIN (Mt. Marshall) [5.56 p.m.]: In giving my support to the measure before the House I wish to make a few comments and perhaps offer some criticism.

Reference has been made to the degree of the efficiency of the management of the WA Meat Export Works, and I think the same could also be said about the efficiency of the management of the Midland Junction Abattoir. In both of those works we are fortunate in having extremely good managers. The effects of increasing wages and a fall in demand on the export markets have placed many problems in the way of the Midland Junction Abattoir in particular. These are problems that are most difficult to overcome when a demand for export trading does not exist.

The Midland Junction Abattoir, in particular, has sustained considerable losses due, in the main, to a fall in demand on the export markets. It has been said that, being a service abattoir, it has to be geared to meet the fluctuations of peaks in demand and to kill stock to capacity. I understand that a great deal is involved in training a man to become expert on the abattoir chains. It is not always easy to engage men to work in an abattoir, and frequently after a man has become proficient he seeks employment elsewhere and the problem of engaging suitable labour arises once again.

However I consider the manager has made a good effort to overcome the problem with which he has been faced. The member for Warren referred to the Towns and Austen report and also to the decision made to expand the Midland Junction Abattoir in 1970. In the Towns and Austen report it was stated that there was a need to build abattoirs, and the advisers to the Minister of the day saw the need for such a facility to be provided immediately. So a decision was made to expand the Midland Junction Abattoir. A concerted effort was made at the time to

locate a suitable site for the establishment of an abattoir near the metropolitan area, and a site was eventually selected. That is now known as the Baldvis site.

At the time the Minister had many discussions with private companies which had indicated they would be interested in establishing an abattoir if a suitable site could be found. Baldvis was selected and was considered to be a very good abattoir site. However, those people who had previously indicated their interest, did not proceed with the establishment of an abattoir on the site.

Coming back to the Midland abattoir, it was very necessary during the drought year of 1969 for an immediate facility to be established to cater for the vast numbers of stock coming forward as a result of the drought conditions.

Mr H. D. Evans: Because you left it too late.

Mr McPHARLIN: Had the Government taken action to build a new abattoir it would have been several years before it was completed and the backlog would have been even greater than it was. The extensions to the Midland abattoir catered for the needs much quicker than would have been the case had a new abattoir been established.

Members will also recall that the US Department of Agriculture made certain regulations which had to be observed in the export abattoirs of Australia. The upgrading of facilities cost a great deal of money and of course the Midland abattoir was involved in this, and money had to be spent to upgrade the facilities to the required standards.

In his second reading speech the Minister said—

The commission would also assume responsibility for the overall management of the existing State abattoirs—which already have powers to trade—in the interests of safeguarding Government investment as well as ensuring better co-ordinated and rational development between the two works.

There is no argument about that, because it is desirable. However, I suggest that the power of the commission could have been widened.

Later in his speech, the Minister said—

The functions of the commission are set out in clause 21 (b) (v) as follows—

They were referred to by the member for Warren and are under the subparagraph designations (vii), (viii), and (ix).

As Minister I had many discussions with the industry and the abattoirs, and the recommendations to me were that the commission should be authorised to—

establish, maintain and manage abattoirs in any district if so required by the Minister;

trade in meat, meat products and live-stock;

That is the same as the Bill provides. To continue—

take responsibility for operating Government saleyards;

maintain general surveillance of abattoirs in which the State had a substantial financial commitment through guaranteed loans;

advise the Government on methods of improving the efficiency of such establishments in the event of inefficiency being identified.

The Bill provides that the commission may do such other things that, in the opinion of the Minister, are necessary in the public interest in relation to the meat industry. The words, "in the public interest in relation to the meat industry" appear to empower the commission to carry out wide-sweeping functions, but the Bill does not provide any detail as to those functions. This is an area which could perhaps be improved by the functions being listed in more specific terms.

Further on in his speech, the Minister said—

Clause 14 extends paragraph (c2) of section 6 of the Act by inserting in lieu of the words "the grading and branding of carcasses", the passage "the grading, classification and branding of carcasses". This is considered desirable since it is expected that meat classification will be introduced by the Australian Meat Board in the not-too-distant future.

We know that for some time the Australian Meat Board has been examining the possibility of establishing a meat classification system. The Meat Industry Advisory Committee, in its conclusions on page 159 of its report on submissions and discussions, states—

Producers generally support the introduction of carcass classification.

The meat trade has strong reservations concerning the usefulness of the system at the wholesale and retail level.

Of course we expect there would be some conflict between the two, but I do not think it would of such magnitude that it could not be overcome. The report continues—

Some of the advantages which a classification could provide for are:

The setting up of price schedules relative to precise and objective assessment of carcasses.

That is something on which I think we all agree. To continue—

Market reporting of price averages and ranges on a daily or weekly basis.

That is again something which the industry has been discussing for a number of years and it is thought desirable. To continue—

The relaying of information on the actual classification recorded by the producer's stock on a lot basis or if required on an individual animal basis.

This would be important in order to provide some improved communication between producers and processors. To continue—

The introduction, at some future date, of computerised auction sale of carcasses by classification where stock are purchased on an unseen basis.

That is looking ahead for some years.

The member for Warren referred to the policy in regard to marketing organisations or the marketing of stock through the saleyards. We know that the abattoirs have power to trade, and the Midland abattoir has been using those powers. Here again, further consideration should be given to some system which could function in the interests of the meat industry as a whole, not only the beef section.

I refer to the New Zealand system. If the same sort of system is followed by the Government in Western Australia we could have a very desirable method of introducing some organised scheme of meat marketing, to the benefit of the meat industry. The proposed meat commission could act as the controlling body in the meat industry, and it could apply a system similar to that applied in New Zealand. The system has operated in New Zealand for 55 years, and the board has accumulated a vast reserve fund over that period which it uses to benefit the industry.

This is an aspect which the proposed meat commission in Western Australia should look at, in order to provide some stability to the meat industry. I suggest such stability is long overdue. The Government should undertake an in-depth investigation of the New Zealand system to ascertain whether a similar system could be operated in Western Australia. If that is done it could benefit the meat producers of the State.

I support the measure before the House. I have had some previous information and participated in discussions on this matter while I was Minister for Agriculture. It is a desirable piece of legislation. When it starts to operate we should keep a close watch on the position, to see whether or not improvements can be made by way of amendments to meet the further requirements of the meat industry.

MR MOILER (Mundaring) [6.09 p.m.]: In his second reading speech the Minister commenced by saying—

The Government has a continuing responsibility in ensuring the economic

well-being and effective management of the two Government abattoirs in the general interests of the livestock industry of Western Australia.

We on this side of the House agree that the Government should be concerned with the livestock industry, but we also believe that the interests of the people of Western Australia generally should be of concern to this Parliament. We should be concerned with more than one section in our community; we suggest that the interests of the large bulk of the community—I refer to the consumers—should be of paramount interest to this Government, and it should not be concerned merely with the interests of the livestock industry.

It is in keeping with the policy of the Government to make a pretence of wanting to assist the farming community. Under the Bill it proposes to establish a meat commission to comprise six members in lieu of the Midland Junction Abattoir Board where there are three members, and in the case of the West Australian Meat Export Works there is a general manager.

The Government proposes to increase the number of members on the meat commission, hoping in some way to camouflage the fact that it has done little to assist the industry, and has done nothing to assist the consumers. In putting forward this proposal the Government wishes to cover up its inaction, and to make some pretence that it is assisting the industry.

It seems that the Government delights in fooling the farming community in general. It will certainly make a concerted effort, under the Bill, to assist the wholesalers and the major retailers. What the Government will bring about by the establishment of the meat commission is some means of pacifying the farmers, but no doubt at the same time assisting the wholesalers and major retailers.

There will be no effort on the part of the Government to assist the majority of the people of Western Australia; I refer to the consumers. Such an effort has never been made by a Liberal-Country Party Government, and never will be made.

In his second reading speech the Minister gave some reasons for the change from the Midland Junction Abattoir Board to the proposed meat commission. He stated that the Midland Junction Abattoir Board comprises three persons, one of whom is a chartered accountant who shall have regard for the interests of the consumers of meat; another shall have regard for the interests of butchers; and one of whom shall have regard for interests of the producers. That is the present composition of the Midland Junction Abattoir Board. The Minister has not levelled any criticism at this board, yet he proposes to dissolve it.

Mr Davies: He did not give that board any praise either.

Mr MOILER: He did not give it any praise; in fact, he said nothing in this regard. If we are looking for any commendation of the Midland Junction Abattoir Board we should refer to an inquiry which was conducted by a Mr Neil D. McDonald. This was an inquiry into the egg industry of Western Australia, and a very thorough investigation was carried out by this gentleman. I regard this as one of the best inquiries into an agricultural industry that has ever been undertaken in this State.

The following is what Mr McDonald had to say about the Midland Junction Abattoir Board—

The Midland Junction Abattoirs is an excellent example of a three man Board composition, representing and marketing producers' goods, and their last few years of trading has effectively demonstrated the abilities of this Board to operate efficiently and effectively.

The Midland Board covers the needs of the Producers, Wholesalers and the public . . .

He then made some comment on the three members of that board.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr MOILER: Prior to the tea suspension I was referring to the excellent job which has been done over past years by the Midland Junction Abattoir Board. I also expressed the opinion that the Minister, in his few brief comments when introducing the Bill, gave no good reason to show that the board should be dissolved in order to make way for a larger, more cumbersome commission.

Mr Neil McDonald, who inquired into the egg industry, referred to the Midland Junction Abattoir Board in his report and stated—

They have in recent years secured the services of a young, vigorous, energetic and knowledgeable General Manager with first class administrative and practical experience in the industry.

He went on to say that the general manager had done an excellent job. He further stated—

The Midland Abattoir's operation can be considered highly successful and we would recommend similar guidelines.

That statement came from a man who carried out an excellent investigation of an agricultural industry—egg production.

When he introduced the Bill the Minister said the West Australian Meat Export Works was a State trading concern and had operated successfully on the basis of a single manager in control. He said the excellent way in which those works had been operated was attributable to the manager.

The Minister went on to reflect on the Midland Junction Abattoir Board by saying that during the past 12 months the

losses sustained by the board were quite substantial because of the effect of wage increases coinciding with reduced output. He said that these conditions placed many abattoirs throughout Australia in a difficult financial position.

I would like the Minister to clarify the position and state whether or not he was implying that the losses which occurred at the Midland Junction Abattoir were due to inefficiency on the part of the board or the management, and whether or not he will accept that in the main, the burden of the heavy losses which occurred was created by the inactivity of the previous Liberal-Country Party Government when it refused to take the advice contained in the Towns and Austen report.

The Towns and Austen report strongly recommended that no further expenditure be undertaken at the Midland Junction Abattoir at that time. It recommended that an additional abattoir be established. The previous Liberal-Country Party Government was stupid in not heeding the advice of the experts, and it remained inactive until the very last minute when it made some pretence of trying to do something. It was necessary for the Tonkin Government, when there was a huge influx of stock during the drought period, to further extend the Midland Junction Abattoir. As a result, we now have a huge works which would operate far more efficiently if it were only a fraction of its present size and catered mainly for the export trade. The previous Government should have established abattoirs in country regions.

The losses sustained by the Midland Junction Abattoir Board are the result of the stupidity of the previous Liberal-Country Party Government in its attitude towards Government abattoirs in the State. The Minister claimed that the problems at the Midland Junction Abattoir stemmed substantially from its commitment as a service works which had to be geared to meet periodic peaks in demand for killing capacity. The periodic peaks are not the result of the community suddenly deciding to eat more meat; they are due to the fact that farmers cannot regulate their stock.

The farmers believe that the Government should provide abattoir facilities for their benefit at times when there is a glut, and at other times when it suits them. The farmers expect the Government to sustain the losses incurred.

I would like to know whether the proposed commission will make any appreciable difference to the present position where we have very little market for our export meat. Will the formation of a commission improve the present situation?

Mr Stephens: Have you looked at the statistics lately?

Mr MOILER: The position is that the Midland Junction Abattoir has always operated for the benefit of the farmers, and not for the community or the consumers.

Over the years—and particularly over the past few years under Mr Wilson, who is the general manager—the management has made great strides in its attempts to balance the budget. Mr Wilson has done excellent work in obtaining additional markets. The legislation introduced by the Tonkin Government, through which the Midland Junction Abattoir was able to expand its trade, enabled Mr Wilson to project the advantages of the abattoir. Even though the works made a loss over the past few years I hate to think what the loss would have been had it not been for the excellent work done by the present manager and the passing of the legislation which enabled him to operate the works a little more successfully than had been the case in the past.

Six people will be appointed to the commission. The Minister does not tell us how those people are to be selected. I imagine they would have to be in the pocket of the Premier because, to the best of my knowledge, no panels of names will be supplied to the Minister by the sections of the industry which those members will represent.

One member will be a person having marketing experience. That person will obviously come from the wholesale-retail section and will certainly represent that part of the industry. As the large wholesalers and the main retailers were responsible for contributing heavily to the funds of the State Liberal Party for the last election, I feel quite confident they will be well and truly represented. One member will be a person having relevant experience in financial management.

Another member will be a person having extensive experience in the meat industry. No indication is given of which particular section of the meat industry—whether the distributors or the processors. Two persons will be appointed to represent the producers of meat—one would imagine they would come from the farming community—and one member will be appointed to represent the interests of the Government of the State.

At a later stage I propose to move an amendment to provide for the appointment of a member of the Meat Industry Employees' Union, to be selected from a panel of names submitted to the Minister. I do not think for a minute the Government will accept that.

Mr Jamieson: Do not be too despondent too early.

Mr MOILER: I think I am being practical. I know the attitude of the Government and I feel certain it will not accept the amendment. The Minister says the

commission is to represent the meat industry, and the large number of people employed in the industry are surely entitled to be represented along with all these other people who make up the industry.

One of the functions of the commission, as described by the Minister in his second reading speech, is "to do such other things as are in the opinion of the Minister necessary in the public interest in relation to the meat industry". I would say the attitude of the Government would have to change for the Minister to hold an opinion that something should be done to help the consumer. Nothing this Government has done so far has assisted the consumer in Western Australia in any way at all. The Minister went on to mention several of the amending clauses; he mentioned clauses 5, 11, and 14, and then he jumped to clause 21. I wish to draw to the attention of the House clause 21 which I think is very relevant.

Clause 21 proposes to amend subsection (3) of section 15 of the Abattoirs Act which was introduced by the Tonkin Government in 1971. That subsection reads—

(3) On and after the coming into operation of the Abattoirs Act Amendment Act, 1971, to the intent that the assets of the Board and the services of the Board employees may be utilised to the maximum practicable extent consistent with the making of profits or the producing of revenue, the Board, subject to the Minister, is authorised to carry on any trade that in the opinion of the Board can conveniently be carried on in conjunction with the preparation and processing of meat.

It is proposed to amend that subsection, which allows the Midland Junction Abattoir Board to trade, by deleting the first two lines and, most importantly, deleting the last five words of that subsection, which are "preparation and processing of meat", and substituting the words "activities of the Commission under this Act". The subsection will then read—

... the Board, subject to the Minister, is authorised to carry on any trade that in the opinion of the Board can conveniently be carried on in conjunction with the activities of the Commission under this Act, whether or not that trade is directly related to the meat industry—

These are the words I wish to emphasise—

—but only in so far as that trade may be necessary in the interests of the meat industry.

Not in the interests of the public of this State but in the interests of the meat industry.

Who, in the opinion of the Premier—who controls this Government—comprises the meat industry? I am quite sure it would not be the poor old farmer. It would be that body of people who so conveniently assisted his campaign in the last election. By this move they will get their reward for their support in the past.

So a subsection of the Abattoirs Act which was inserted by the Tonkin Government is to be amended by this Government in such a way as to provide that the commission can trade only with the permission of the Minister. If we take any notice of the way the Premier has operated in the past, we can be quite sure the Minister's permission will be given only if it is to the benefit of a very select, powerful group in the community. It would not be for the benefit of the people of Western Australia, generally. The commission can trade only with the Minister's permission, and "only in so far as that trade may be necessary in the interests of the meat industry".

Who will decide that? Will it be the commission, which is heavily weighted in favour of the wholesalers, retailers, and the like? Will the commission decide whether it is in the interests of the meat industry to do something? The way the amendment is worded, we are looking after one particular section of the community. Government abattoirs are facilities which cost millions of dollars of State funds and to which considerable State funds, raised from the taxpayers of Western Australia, are given annually to balance their books. These are facilities which exist for the benefit of farmers and the meat industry only, and the cost of operation of these facilities is footed by the public of Western Australia. We are told the facilities cannot operate for the benefit of the public, generally; they must operate for this small, select group in which the Premier is so interested.

Therefore, during the Committee stage I intend to move the amendments I have mentioned.

If we are to have this commission, I believe it should have on it a representative of the Meat Industry Employees' Union. I will also ask members to agree to the deletion of all words after the word "Act" in line 31 on page 11. I will seek this amendment because I believe it is quite wrong for us to do something for one section of our community only, particularly when the operation of a facility is paid for by the taxpayer. It should not be provided for the benefit of one small select group.

This Government has refused to establish other works in the outer regions. If we listen to the Premier when he talks about decentralisation, we would feel that the establishment of an abattoir in an area where the stock is produced would be a logical form of decentralisation. The

Midland abattoir has been enlarged to such an extent that there is a big problem in disposing of waste liquids. People living in the community surrounding the abattoir have to tolerate this very offensive smell. This problem has been created by the excessive size of the meatworks, and it would not have arisen had the works not been extended to such an extent.

Mr Nanovich: It was extended 20 years ago and the smell is the same; it has not got worse.

Mr MOILER: The honourable member is quite incorrect. The expenditure of millions of dollars on the disposal of waste liquids would not have been necessary had the works not been expanded as they have been. It would have been logical to maintain the works as they were when Towns and Austen carried out an investigation and to establish other meatworks in various areas. One possibility would have been to establish separate meatworks—one for the export market and one for the local market. As the Minister has already claimed, when we have these fluctuations in the market, the effects would be minimised if we had local and export slaughtering separated.

In his second reading speech the Minister omitted to mention clause 15. This is a very important clause, and I hope in his reply he will tell us his reason for not referring to it.

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [7.53 p.m.]: I would hate to let an opportunity like this pass without my congratulating the Government on the consolidation of several socialistic enterprises into one. I always feel it is desirable to take action such as this. Sometimes bodies are set up at the whim and will of the Government, as has been the case with the Meat Export Works, the Midland Junction Abattoir Board, the other body that is to be incorporated under this measure, and the Government stock saleyards.

Mr Bertram: It all depends on who is to benefit.

Mr JAMIESON: For the time being, under the direction of the present Minister, this action may not benefit the public generally. It is all subject to the Minister, but such ventures are set up for the benefit of the people of this State and administered by those people through the various boards that may be appointed from time to time by the Minister in charge.

So I have no great objection to what the Government is aiming to do in regard to the consolidation of these socialistic enterprises. It is a very encouraging thought and leads us to hope that Government members have not given away the idea of socialism. Indeed, we would now

have quite a long list of socialistic enterprises in Western Australia. I will never forget that the Brand Government indulged in some 135 items of socialistic enterprise during its term of office. Of course, this spells out—and I am not intending to stray too far from the Bill—that socialism in its various forms is inevitable. If something is for the betterment of the people, its various functions must be controlled by the people, and this Bill sets out to do just that.

There have been certain misgivings about the administration of various organisations from time to time. Some of these have operated at a profit for a time, and some at a loss. I feel it is a pity that the Wyndham Meat Works has not been incorporated in this commission. It is unfortunate that it was given away and is not now available to the people of Western Australia.

The composition of the commission will be a matter of change from time to time. Governments come and go and Ministers come and go, and the new appointments no doubt will suit the Minister of the day. As this is a socialist enterprise, it will suit us in a different way from the way in which it suits the present Government. Nevertheless, it is an undertaking that enunciates clearly the principle of socialism in its elementary form of establishing marketing boards which can be controlled effectively by the administration of the State through the elected members. This is the way such bodies ought to be run; they should not be administered by people who are not responsible in any way to the electors of the State. When such organisations run into trouble, usually they come to the Government of the day looking for handouts, so it is far better for the Government to have the initial control over them.

I am sure members will all be pleased to know that I do not intend to become deeply involved in the debate. I support my colleague—the member for Mundaring—in his efforts to try to improve the representation on the commission. As he says, he has a remote chance only of doing this, but once the legislation is enacted, it can be subjected in the future to other changes. Perhaps it can be amended to make it something worth while.

For the present this is a good move, and I commend the Government. I did not know that the present Minister—as has been the case with previous Ministers on the Government side—had this bent of socialism in him.

Mr Bertram: Will the member for Karrinyup support the Bill?

Mr JAMIESON: It is good to see that sometimes Government members agree with what we advocate from this side, and despite the chattering from time to time, they do believe in genuine socialism. I am an admitted socialist, and I do not

try to run away from it, as the member for Karrinyup has said Labor Party members do at election time. I challenge him to front me on any platform at any time and I will still stand up to support the cause. So I have no opposition to the proposal to combine these organisations.

Mr Clarko: You are one of the few who do admit it.

Mr JAMIESON: Some of my colleagues do, but some are less vocal, and perhaps less aware of the ramifications of the movement than I, and therefore, they are not inclined to be as vociferous in its support. Nevertheless, I have never known any of them in their various activities, to run away from the principles of socialism.

Mr Young: Tell us again why you like it; I missed it the first six times.

Mr JAMIESON: I am sorry about that; the prospect of supporting this Bill seems to be making the member for Scarborough quite white inside, even though he has turned black on the outside. I hope it does him well to appreciate that the Government of the day, even under his mentorship—and no doubt he has looked after the affairs of Cabinet to the extent that the Bill has been introduced—is about to enact a Statute which will allow to be established a meat commission to administer the whole of the industry in the manner in which it should be administered.

MR OLD (Katanning—Minister for Agriculture) [8.01 p.m.]: I thank members of the Opposition and the member for Mt. Marshall for their remarks in connection with the Bill before the House. It is really a fairly simple measure, even though it includes many amendments to the Abattoirs Act. It is purely a matter of rationalising the operations of the two meatworks and the Midland Junction saleyards; and we feel very strongly that it will do much for the industry. When I refer to "the industry" I mean the whole of the industry including the producers and the consumers.

The member for Warren raised several points which I will endeavour to answer. He referred to the loss incurred at Midland. This loss is readily admitted. As I pointed out previously when speaking to this matter in the House, a service abattoir is quite unique because it is at the whim of producers, whereas a private abattoir can be more rationalised.

The member for Mundaring made the point that the peaks in the requirements at Midland are at the whim of the farmers. He rather blamed the farmers for the fact that occasionally we do get gluts at Midland; but I point out that this is a matter of nature because in the springtime we happen to get more fat stock than at any other time of the year, and that is when the producer is forced to send stock to the market. I can assure him that producers do not send stock to market without

due regard to the state of the market. They do not send stock during periods of oversupply if they can possibly hold off; but at this time of year it is quite impossible for some to hold their stock and, therefore, they send them to market.

The Towns and Austen report referred to by the member for Warren was also mentioned by the member for Mt. Marshall who, I think, cleared up the point that Midland was expanded in order to meet an emergency situation, and did so.

Mr H. D. Evans: In the wrong way.

Mr OLD: That is a matter of opinion.

The composition of the new commission is a matter which came in for a great deal of debate and criticism for the fact that it will comprise six persons: one who has relevant market experience, one who has expertise in financial management, one with extensive experience in the meat industry, two to represent producers, and one to represent the interests of the Government.

It seems to be generally accepted by the Opposition that the member with relevant marketing experience and the member with extensive experience in the meat industry will both be drawn from the meat industry. This is not necessarily so because there are many men who have had marketing experience but who have not necessarily been involved wholly in the meat industry. There are men who have retired from active participation in business who would provide a wealth of experience to the new commission. So I do not take the Bill as meaning those members will be drawn from the meat industry. However, I do say that the producers, who represent a large part of the industry, should be and are entitled to two representatives.

With regard to consumer representation, I think the commission will take cognisance of the fact that the consumer is a very important cog in the wheel and that without him there can be no industry. I am quite confident that the interests of the consumer will be watched by the commission, which will be composed of responsible men. Similarly, with regard to union representation, I wish it to be recorded that there is no thought of denigrating the unions by not including a union representative on the new commission.

This is a commission of management and not a marketing board; and, I do not think it is unusual for such a commission to comprise people who are producers and processors in the industry. The present management and board of the Midland Junction Abattoir are very much aware of the necessity for good relationships with the workers and keep in constant touch with the unions. I have no hesitation in saying this practice will be continued and that it will be the endeavour of the new commission to see that good

relationships with the workers are maintained through the unions.

Mr Moller: How do you intend to make the selection of members?

Mr OLD: The selection will be made from a panel of names submitted to the Minister by producer organisations. The member who will represent the interests of the Government will be appointed by Cabinet, but I give the assurance that the others will be appointed from a panel of names.

The member for Warren mentioned that saleyard prices could be controlled by having a consumer representative on the new commission, but that is not so because saleyard prices are controlled by supply and demand. Therefore I would not accept his argument as valid.

With regard to shortening the term of office from five to four years, I said earlier this will allow more flexibility, better representation, and for the possibility of a change in representation if that is considered necessary.

Mr Davies: On that argument you could reduce it to three years.

Mr OLD: We could do so, but we think four years is a good term.

The member for Warren referred to the trading powers of the commission. The Government has no intention of interfering with the trading powers. They will be handed over to the new commission and there will be an absolute minimum of interference. The new body will work as a commission and will not suffer undue interference from either the Government or the Minister. The idea of establishing this commission is to rationalise the Government abattoir operations and, being a responsible commission, it will be given virtually a free hand. At the same time, of course, the Minister for Agriculture will watch its operation. However, I repeat there is no intention at all to interfere unduly with the commission.

Our policy of the expansion of abattoirs is something which will be watched very closely. At this stage there appears to be no immediate need for expansions, but the matter is being watched closely and I can assure the member for Warren that this watching brief will continue.

The member for Warren also asked to what extent this measure will impinge upon the operations of the Lamb Marketing Board. I can assure him there will be no impingement upon the operations of that board by the new commission.

I think a misunderstanding occurred when the member for Warren in his opening remarks referred to the marketing of lamb and hogget when, in fact, he was actually referring to the Marking of Lamb and Hogget Act, which is being incorporated in this new Statute. That Act covers the branding of lamb and hogget, and I can assure the member there will be no interference in that respect.

The claim that the combining of the two abattoirs will bring about greater efficiency is supported by the fact that accounting can be centralised. Although there is no direction in this regard, the new commission will assess the situation and establish how to effect these economies. Already, computer facilities are available at the WA Meat Export Works and it would be a fairly obvious move to centralise accounting at that point.

The operations of the abattoir will be kept under the surveillance of the new commission, which will endeavour to rationalise the killing of various types of stock. As members well know, the WA Meat Export Works already has ceased the slaughtering of pigs; that operation has been taken over by the Midland Junction Abattoir. Further rationalisation of killing will be carried out by the commission as and how it sees fit.

The member for Mt. Marshall referred to the fact that the legislation mentions the grading, classification and branding of carcasses. The word "classification" has been included in the legislation because we believe carcass classification will be introduced in the near future, and when it is introduced the Act will already cater for it. Obviously, there are great advantages not only to the producer but also to the retailer and consumer in the classification and objective measurement of carcasses.

The member for Mundaring said that although in my second reading speech I mentioned that the management of the WA Meat Export Works was a contributing factor to the successful operation of that organisation I neglected to praise the Midland Junction Abattoir Board. To this I plead guilty, and apologise.

It is my firm belief that the Midland Junction Abattoir Board and management—in effect, the board and the management are one and the same—have kept losses to a minimum. The fact that losses have been incurred is in no way due to the board; in fact, quite the contrary is the case, because without the board's skilled trading and expeditious use of the market the losses could have been even greater. Once again I pay tribute to the Midland Junction Abattoir Board and the manager, Mr Wilson, whom we hold in very high regard.

A reference to clause 15 was not omitted for any sinister reason; the alteration proposed here is very slight. When we refer to the "meat industry", I point out that the meat industry goes from good animal husbandry through to the consumer, and encompasses all parts of the industry.

Mr Moiler: Why not have a consumer representative on the board as well?

Mr OLD: I believe the interests of the consumer will be well and truly protected by the commission; it realises the importance of the consumer as the end product,

because without a consumer one could not have a meat industry.

Mr Moiler: You are arguing that the consumer will be protected by the commission, but you say that farmers, wholesalers and retailers should be represented. You have also stated that the management is there only as manager. Why not put in a group of managers?

Mr OLD: It is a board of management. A consumer representative was not included on the last board, and that body had regard for the interests of the consumer. I can assure the honourable member that the commission will have the same regard for those interests.

The member for Mundaring made a passing reference to effluent disposal at Midland. The board knows full well that such a problem exists and in fact I understand great strides have been made in arriving at a satisfactory solution. I visited the abattoir not long ago and, following my visit, an expert from overseas made certain suggestions which I believe have greatly improved the situation there.

The problem of effluent disposal is not peculiar to the Midland Junction Abattoir; most abattoirs suffer from this problem. I think the member for Mundaring would be well aware of this, from his past vocation. I know that although the Katanning meatworks manages quite successfully to remove the effluent, there is still an odour. The problem is very difficult to overcome, but I believe all meatworks try hard to achieve a solution. I thank members for their comments and support of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Thompson) in the Chair; Mr Old (Minister for Agriculture) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 17 put and passed.

Clause 18: Section 12 amended—

Mr MOILER: I move an amendment—

Page 7, line 15—Delete the word "six" and substitute the word "seven".

The effect of my amendment will be to allow for the appointment to the commission of a representative of the Meat Industry Employees' Union. I never cease to be amazed at the attitude this Government adopts to the workers within an industry. Other countries are developing the attitude that the employee is not someone who can be just disregarded, and not only management personnel have the ability to contribute anything to a board. It is time the Government realised that the employee is the most important person within an industry and that despite all its so-called fine legislation, without the co-operation and support of the people

actually working in the abattoirs the Government is unlikely to achieve the full benefit of the actions of the meat commission.

No harm whatsoever could result from the inclusion on the commission of a representative of the Meat Industry Employees' Union. In his reply the Minister said there was no need for the employees to be represented on the commission because it is to be merely a board of management. If this is all it is to be we could leave it to be administered by the manager of the Midland Junction Abattoir or the manager of the Robb Jetty meatworks. However, the Minister is proceeding to enlarge the size of the management by appointing six members to a commission, so if we are to have the commission established, why not appoint an employees' representative as a member? The Minister has said that the union is well catered for and does not need a representative on the commission, but the union is not well catered for. If the union had representation on the commission there would be better liaison between the union and the commission which would make for better co-operation from the union.

If the union had a representative on the commission, the other members would be aware of the union's attitude at any time a problem was discussed and this could possibly avert an industrial dispute. That is the purpose of seeking to increase the number of members on the commission from six to seven.

If we accept what the Minister said—namely, that the consumer is being well looked after under this arrangement and that he is part of the industry—I would even suggest that the number of members be increased to eight so that the consumers may have a representative on the commission. However, I am being reasonable in seeking only to have the number of commission members increased to seven and in suggesting that the commission will not function to the best advantage unless a union representative is appointed to it. Therefore we intend to press strongly for the amendment in order to urge the Minister to permit a representative of the Meat Industry Employees' Union to be appointed as a member of the commission.

Mr OLD: I have already explained to the member for Mundaring that it is not necessary to have a union representative on the commission. This is no reflection on the union. The member for Mundaring has suggested that by having a union representative on the commission this would inhibit industrial trouble because he would be able to explain the union's attitude in any discussion among members of the commission. However, the commission would always be amenable in regard to discussing matters with the union and I imagine that no occasion would arise when the union would be denied an approach to the commission.

I still maintain that, as a board of management, the commission should be administered by the people concerned in the industry and I assure the member for Mundaring that the operations of the commission will be conducted satisfactorily without union representation and that at all times it will listen to the union.

Mr H. D. EVANS: I agree with the Minister that the present management of the Midland Junction Abattoir is amenable to having discussions with employees and union officials in particular. Indeed, to the credit of the management there, far less industrial strife has occurred in recent years than in the past.

However, we still return to the present new situation and the principles involved. In the first instance, some of the strikes that have occurred in the meat industry have been almost trivial, but the grievances were such that they were allowed to ferment and manifest themselves. The attitude that was adopted in regard to the abattoirs was not to the credit of the Government. Labour is far more important in a meatworks than it is in any other industry. It must also be borne in mind that those who work in meatworks have a stake in the industry, because they depend on it for their livelihood. Some of the attitudes that have become manifest among Government members from time to time in the past suggest that they would like to keep slaughtermen in deep freeze from one glut period to another instead of regarding them as employees working in one location.

I can recall one occasion, just prior to the last election, when two Country Party members expressed pleasure that the strike at the abattoir was continuing as this gained them some support in the electorate prior to the election. That actually was said in my hearing during an afternoon tea period in this building. It is easy not to be aware of the intense feeling that is aroused in working in this situation day after day. This can be appreciated only by those who are involved, or who have been involved, in the industry.

I return to the Minister's statement that the commission will be an administrative board. I consider that this is all the more reason that problems, at all levels, should be resolved at the board table. The Government should look at the situation which pertains in the United Kingdom and West Germany. Probably West Germany represents the best example of worker participation in industry. Since the end of the World War West Germany has been most successful in the field of industrial relations, and this has been achieved only by employee participation in industry.

I am not suggesting that the two sets of circumstances are entirely comparable, but there is an important lesson to be learnt from West Germany. The industrial concerns that have worker representation at board level are quite varied and some

of them are huge; in fact, they are industrial giants. They are concerns that have competed successfully on the world's markets, because they are in world class. I can recall the member for Cockburn making a very erudite speech when dealing with a similar matter in his own electorate. He was speaking on employee participation not only in abattoirs, but also in other industries.

I feel it is unfortunate that this very shortsighted attitude should prevail within the Government. The type of nominee who could be appointed to the board will surely have the level of integrity that is required. The representative who is selected will be within the broad concept outlined by the Minister, and will probably be a nominee from a panel of names submitted as in the case of the producers' representative.

The question of direct consumer representation has been disregarded by the Minister. That is fair enough, and we will not pursue this point to the extreme. If the Government feels it cannot agree to have consumer representation on the commission we are compelled to accept its decision, but the issue we are dealing with is of direct consequence and importance to the meat industry.

Industrial disputes which arise in abattoirs are not created in their entirety by one side only; all parties become affected to a greater or lesser degree. So, any means that can be found to obviate industrial disputes should be availed of.

The method I have proposed is one that has been proved in other parts of the world. We are not suggesting a new innovation, but something that would be of direct benefit not only to the abattoirs but also to the meat industry generally. The benefits from such a new innovation would flow back to the producers, as much as to anybody else.

We regard the acceptance of the amendment as being most important to the industry. On previous occasions we have tried to have a member of the Meat Industry Employees' Union appointed to similar boards, but without success. In the case before us the situation is enlarged, and correspondingly the problems in the future will be enlarged. Therefore, the degree of urgency for the course I have proposed to be followed is increased proportionately. I support the amendment.

Mr BLAIKIE: I have no intention to support the amendment, and I will give my reasons. The proposal in the Bill seeks to establish a meat commission. If one looks at the industrial disputes which have arisen in the meat industry in recent years one becomes aware of where they have occurred. It is very important for us to realise it is an essential factor of management that harmonious industrial relationships be created and maintained. However, I raise opposition to the inclusion of a

union representative on a board of this nature. I believe that the proposed meat commission will be able to operate effectively without such a representative. If one considers what has happened in the private abattoirs throughout the State, the industrial relationship that has been created between the employers and employees, and the opportunities that have been made available to the workers, one finds that all are striving towards common goals.

As far as the position of the service abattoirs is concerned I am most concerned with the low tally numbers and the high labour cost factor, as compared with the position in the private works. All these matters must have an effect on the overall costs. I do not intend to go further into detail on this question, but I can see no purpose, apart from a philosophical desire, to have a union representative on the board.

There has been some mention of having consumer representation on the proposed meat commission. I cannot see that such representation would serve any purpose or have any merit. It is time members realised that the appointment of a union representative on the meat commission would serve no benefit to an industry such as this. We should allow the proposed meat commission to operate and to achieve the purpose for which it is being created; if that is done I am sure it will benefit not only the total industry, but also the producers and the workers in the industry and others.

Mr DAVIES: The attitude that has been adopted by the Government and also by the previous speaker is not surprising. In the last 10 to 15 years that has been the standard attitude for members opposite to adopt. What does surprise me is the lack of argument by the Government against the move that we on this side of the Chamber are making to bring about greater representation in industry of the work force.

The member for Vasse has said he does not agree with the amendment that is before us. He said we should look at the position of the private abattoirs and see how well they are operating. If they are working so well the Government is wasting its time setting up a meat commission, by doubling the membership of the existing board and increasing by 100 per cent the cost of management. Despite all this the Government apparently is not getting to the core of the complaint that has been raised by the member for Vasse. He says that the costs and the tally numbers are factors that worry him. The very source from which we are able to obtain the necessary expertise to bear on those aspects is the representative of the workers.

The thinking of the Government is at least two decades behind in regard to worker participation. Members who have

attended the Duke of Edinburgh's Commonwealth Study Conference, as I did in 1962 and the member for Cockburn did in 1968, will realise that there is a world-wide effort to set up tripartite organisations in which there are employee, employer, and Government representatives.

Mr Grayden: You are getting onto dangerous ground. I hope you realise what is happening at Chamberlains?

Mr DAVIES: Chamberlains has proven itself. The Minister is implying that this firm has proved to be incompetent and incapable of exercising control and management. If that is so then another inquiry, similar to that instituted many years ago, should be undertaken, and the firm should be told how to get back on the right track.

Mr Grayden: The firm is doing famously.

Mr DAVIES: Members who were here when that inquiry was instituted will be aware of what I am saying. I do not know the implication of the Minister's remarks, but I do know that world wide an endeavour is being made to establish tripartite organisations. As the member for Vasse pointed out, it is important in organisations such as those to have expert knowledge on costs readily available, and surely such knowledge is available from the work force itself.

The people who are saying that the figures that have been presented are false and should be examined should give us the reasons; however, instead of doing that they arrive at an assessment of the tally numbers and costs by appearing in cases before the Industrial Commission where both sides adopt an extreme point of view. The Industrial Commission is left with the task of trying to reach common agreement between the parties. Here is a chance presented for all parties to sit around the table and put forward their viewpoints. As the member for Warren has indicated, there are people of high repute within the trade union movement who can provide a measure of reputable and reliable information to the proposed meat commission; yet they are being overlooked completely.

Apart from the instances which have been put forward, there is another good reason we should have an additional member on the proposed meat commission. Paragraph (f) of the clause contains a provision which states that if the voting on any question is equal the chairman, who already has a deliberative vote, shall have a casting vote. I have argued previously that no member of a board should be entitled to two votes. In this instance I argue again that the chairman should not be entitled to two votes.

This is a very good reason to make it an odd number by increasing the board's membership from six to seven. I can see that the Chairman is about to ask me to get back to the point, but this is the whole

point. The actual amendment before us is designed to increase the number from six to seven and, of course, members will appreciate that seven is an odd number and will probably ensure that the chairman will not have a casting vote as well as a deliberative vote. I do not think it is right that a chairman should have the two votes. I have argued against it before and do so again now. The Government is 20 years behind on tripartite organisations.

I know there are reputable people within the union who could provide the expertise not now available from the other members of the board. We must not forget that we have representatives of employer organisations, producers, and the Government.

The fact remains that the board could be greatly improved by the passing of the amendment which I heartily support.

Mr MOILER: The Minister has not replied at any length to this amendment, but during the course of the whole debate, he has jumped from one foot to another. One minute he states that the consumers have been included as part of the industry and then when we query him on the consumers he says that they are well covered. When speaking a little while ago, he said the manager at the Midland abattoir is amicable and is available so that if unions have any problems they can approach him. If the Minister were to check his facts he would find that any farmer, not fully conversant with the operation of the abattoirs and wanting to know why he did not receive the market price he would have liked, is able to approach the manager and his staff because they are amicable towards the producer.

The Minister would also find that the manager is amicable to the wholesalers and to the employees. So if we follow the Minister's argument to its logical conclusion, which is that the manager is very capable and can converse with any section of the industry, we must query why the commission is necessary at all. Why not just have the manager?

In whatever way the Minister likes to describe the commission—he changes his mind from one moment to the next—it is highly desirable to have the union represented on it.

In my opinion the member for Vasse gave us a sound reason for a member of the union to be on the commission. Of course, he demonstrated his ignorance when describing how private abattoirs are so much better than those operated by the Government. He referred to the tally numbers the private abattoirs have, but the tally numbers are established under the Industrial Arbitration Act and are exactly the same for private abattoirs as for Government abattoirs. The member for Vasse considers that the commission should have no union influence to guide it and to put

it right on matters which directly affect the employees.

Mr McIVER: They are not bad at fixing the scales, either, in private shows.

Mr MOILER: Yes, that did occur. The point I am making is that on the commission will be two people from the producers whom the member for Vasse represents. The member for Vasse does speak on these matters quite regularly giving the impression that he has a knowledge of the industry, but he has demonstrated that he does not have such knowledge.

It is advisable to have union representation on any management committee so that difficulties can be resolved quickly and reasonably. In this way arbitration is not necessary.

As previous speakers have explained, all that should be reviewed is the attitude of this Government. The Government should update its thinking to the present time because it has been demonstrated time and time again that if employees have a voice on a board of management it augers better for the whole of the industry concerned.

Mr H. D. EVANS: I would like to refer to the comparison made by the member for Vasse because it is quite unfair to try to compare the returns and operations of private abattoirs with those of service abattoirs. They do not measure up logically because although the two types of abattoirs have certain functions in common, there is a vast difference in their operations.

For instance, a private abattoir operates at capacity. If there is no stock to kill the work force is dismissed. It is as simple as that. However, this is not the case with a service abattoir. As a glut period comes in, the private abattoir is able to recruit labour more readily than is the service abattoir because the private abattoir gives pay incentives in order to increase its throughput by overtime and other measures, and, as a consequence, the private abattoir can be a much more economic operation.

An important difference between the two types of abattoirs is that the private abattoir does not train slaughtermen. This is done by the service abattoir, and after the costly training process—a process during which the tally of the abattoir is necessarily down—many of the slaughtermen find their way into private abattoirs. It is for this reason the comparison made by the member for Vasse is distorted, to say the least.

Of course, the private abattoir can trim its charges because the service abattoir sets its fees to cover such disabilities as the training of staff and below-capacity operation. The service abattoir must try to maintain its institution at some level of capacity throughout the lean months of the year and so it must necessarily be forced to meet greater costs. Again, to

compare the costs of the two types of abattoirs is rather unreal.

The member for Victoria Park referred to the manner in which tallies are fixed, and this cleared the erroneous impression under which the member for Vasse was labouring. He also made reference to the shortcomings of arbitration.

Let me make reference to the late Mr Reg Davies who served the abattoirs of this State very well during his association with the Midland Junction Abattoir Board. He was able to take any matter which concerned producers directly to the board table, and time and time again misunderstandings were averted and he did a great personal service to very many producers.

Why does not this apply to members of the Meat Industry Employees' Union? That would be a reasonable analogy to make. A feeling of confidence in the administration would develop in an industry where many grievances come forward if the individual employees knew that their complaints would be directly investigated at the top level of administration. There are no reasonable grounds for rejecting this sort of approach.

The proposed commission will comprise six members, one representing marketing and one with meat industry experience. That leaves the situation fairly open but I can imagine just what sort of experience will be regarded as a qualification for appointment to the second position by this Government. The appointment will, of course, be made from the vested interests side of the meat industry.

The commission will include two representatives of the producers and I do not cavil at that. The producers generally will have direct access on the questions they wish to raise with the abattoir management whether it be with regard to fees, yarding arrangements, supply control, or any other matter. Access to the commission by the producers will be at the highest level.

Mr Blaikie: What is their stake in the industry?

Mr H. D. EVANS: Obviously, they have a stake in the industry and no-one is denying that. Neither is anyone denying the two-member representation. What is the stake of the meat industry employee? In many cases his entire future is closely associated with the industry. There is no level of capital investment by the employee, but a means of livelihood is associated with his job.

The proposed amendment certainly merits more consideration than it is receiving. The balance of the representation on the proposed commission is unsatisfactory. The member for Victoria Park has already mentioned the trend towards a tripartite type of administration within industry.

I suspect something of the old squatter-servant relationship in the measure

now before us. Members opposite seem to have some type of inherent snobbery which they should overcome in this day and age. This is the type of industry where union participation would be most important. Invariably industrial disputes arise at times when they can least be afforded and if those industrial disputes can be obviated it will be a contribution to the industry. There is no logical reason to deny union representation at the management level.

Mr FLETCHER: I support the amendment because I have seen worker participation work satisfactorily in the State Electricity Commission. It worked to the satisfaction of those employed in the power stations, those employed on construction work, and the clerical staff.

I was employed at the East Perth power house in the early post-war years when there was an employee representative on the State Electricity Commission and in the 1950s I worked at the South Fremantle power station. Provision was made in the Act for an employee representative on the State Electricity Commission and the section remained in the Act until the present conservative Government removed it with the introduction of the fuel and energy legislation.

This Government is persistent in its anti-working-man attitude. In the past the employee representative sat around the table with the commissioners and formulated policy. He was able to ventilate employee problems, to the mutual advantage of the State Electricity Commission and the employees as a whole. The amendment now before us is an attempt to arrive at the same amicable arrangement as that which existed with the State Electricity Commission. I know that the proposal will work, if it is not frustrated by members opposite.

It is generally accepted that members opposite are for the employers, as distinct from being for the employees. That is why they oppose the amendment. Surely some members opposite realise that my argument is reasonable, but they will still vote against the amendment because of their conservative attitude. Incidentally, among other things, the employee representative on the State Electricity Commission short-circuited the possibility of industrial strife. I guarantee that the industrial strife which did take place on occasions would have been more frequent had it not been for that employee representative.

On one occasion my name was one of three on the list submitted to the Minister, but I was not the successful candidate. If the issue we are now discussing was beneficial to either of the parties opposite, with regard to the Greenough by-election result, their attitude would be different. However, members opposite are consistent in their rejection of worker participation

in management. Strangely enough, the attitude of members opposite conflicts with the attitude held in America—the bastion of private enterprise. Worker participation in management works well in West Germany, as it does in Britain and other countries within the capitalistic world. The parochial attitude of members opposite is exemplified by their opposition to the proposal.

I do not really expect members of the ultra-conservative Government opposite to listen to our case. I do not even know why I bothered to rise in my place because nothing will overcome prejudice. Members opposite do not want to be bothered with the facts of the reasonable argument which has been put forward and they will kill the amendment, desirable though it is.

Mr MOILER: I rise to make one further brief point. While the member for Warren was speaking the member for Vasse interjected and mentioned the two producer representatives who will be appointed to the commission. The member for Vasse asked what stake they had in the industry and it was pointed out that they had quite a sizable stake.

Mr Blaikie: What is your beef? Do not mince matters!

Mr MOILER: On page 1 of the Bill the purpose of the Act is stated to be "to make provision for the constituting of the Western Australian Meat Commission . . . to amend and consolidate the law relating to abattoirs, stock saleyards, and trading in meat, meat products and livestock, and for incidental and other purposes". If the Meat Industry Employees' Union has not a large stake in all those matters, I would like to know which section of the community has. If it is good enough for the producers to have two representatives, which we concede, it is good enough—and the Government should be prepared to concede it is reasonable—to have one representative of the union.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes—18

Mr Barnett	Mr Fletcher
Mr Bateman	Mr Jamieson
Mr Bertram	Mr T. H. Jones
Mr B. T. Burke	Mr McIver
Mr T. J. Burke	Mr Taylor
Mr Carr	Mr A. R. Tonkin
Mr Davies	Mr J. T. Tonkin
Mr H. D. Evans	Mr Moiler

(Teller)

Noes—20

Mr Blaikie	Mr Nanovich
Mr Charles Court	Mr Old
Mrs Craig	Mr O'Neill
Mr Dadour	Mr Rushton
Mr Grayden	Mr Shalders
Mr Grewar	Mr Sibson
Mr P. V. Jones	Mr Sodeman
Mr Laurence	Mr Stephens
Mr McPharlin	Mr Watt
Mr Mensaros	Mr Clarko

(Teller)

Ayes	Noes
Mr T. D. Evans	Mr O'Connor
Mr Skidmore	Mr Crane
Mr May	Mr Young
Mr Hartrey	Mr Ridge
Mr Harman	Mr Cowan
Mr Bryce	Mr Coyne

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr DAVIES: There are a couple of matters I would like to mention. I refer to paragraph (d) on page 8 of the Bill, wherein the Government is altering the term of office from five to four years. The Minister said he thought it was a more manageable term, and I suggest to make it even more manageable we might reduce it to three years, because not one iota of argument has been advanced to show why the term should be changed at all.

I might suggest the term is being changed to accommodate Mr Cliff Bennett and put him in as chairman of the commission. I understand the policy is not to appoint to these positions persons who will turn 70 years of age before their term of appointment expires. I imagine Mr Cliff Bennett, having just retired from the WA Meat Export Works, would be about 66 years of age, and a four-year term would take him up to 70. If it is the Government's intention to appoint Mr Bennett as chairman of the commission, I would agree to it, because he has a great wealth of knowledge and experience to bring to bear and could probably gather together all the threads which will need to be gathered together by this commission. I might be completely astray but, in the lack of any evidence to the contrary, that is the only reason I can think of for altering the term from five years to four years.

I have suggested it might be a far better arrangement to alter the term to three years because at the end of a three-year period we can always reappoint people who have been doing a good job. Indeed, it might be desirable to make it three years to see how the commission is working out, because in effect it is something new and perhaps even after two years the Government might want to get rid of it, depending on the market and the way the appointments go. A three-year appointment sounds far better to me, unless it is intended to make a job for Mr Cliff Bennett.

Mr OLD: I can assure the honourable member no personality came into the thinking at all.

Mr Davies: It should have.

Mr OLD: If Mr Cliff Bennett happens to be nominated, he will receive the same consideration as anybody else does. The term could be three years, two years, or one year, I suppose, but five years is a fairly long term in the life of a board and it was thought desirable to reduce it a little, at the same time giving the board time to get going. We felt four years would

be a reasonable compromise. I can assure the honourable member that nowhere in this Bill is there any design to fit in any particular person, and there is nobody in mind. That is entirely up to the recommendations of the organisations which will be submitting a panel of names.

Mr DAVIES: I query the explanation given by the Minister. At the same time I would say he is rather remiss if he is not already looking around for members to appoint to the board. I would like to see it operative fairly soon.

I would now like to discuss paragraph (f) relating to voting rights. This paragraph seeks to delete the present subsection (10) of section 12 of the principal Act and substitute a new subsection (10) as follows—

(10) A resolution agreed to by a majority of the members of the Commission present at the meeting shall be the resolution of the Commission—

That is where I would like the paragraph to end, but it also says this—

—and in the event of the votes being otherwise equal the Chairman shall have a casting vote in addition to his deliberative vote; and

I have never been in favour of anyone having two votes, whether at parliamentary elections or in organisations such as the political party to which I belong, parents and citizens' associations, or football clubs. Let us consider the situation where a quorum of four members only is present—and apparently we will be asked to agree to this quorum in the next clause. In these circumstances voting could be equal, and therefore, I believe the decision should be in the negative. If the full commission is present—that is, six members—the voting could again be equal and in my opinion the decision in that instance should be in the negative too. If the matter under discussion is of importance, it can be reconsidered, and one side may be able to persuade a member voting the other way to change his mind. Once the commission has discussed a question, there is nothing to say it cannot discuss it again, even on the same day. No law is laid down as to the manner in which the commission is to conduct its meetings, and therefore, it faces no impediment in the manner in which it can deal with the situation of a tied vote. I do not accept the principle contained in this paragraph. I move an amendment—

Page 8, lines 17 to 20—Delete all words after the word "Commission" down to and including the word "vote".

If a majority of the commission does not vote on a matter, it cannot be a resolution of the committee. It is a simple matter: if the majority agrees to a motion

it is passed and if the majority does not, it is not passed.

Mr OLD: We feel that the best way to break an impasse where an even number of members are present—although not necessarily the whole commission as the member for Victoria Park pointed out—is to give the chairman a casting vote. I appreciate the point of view of the member for Victoria Park, but I believe this is the best way to handle the situation.

The CHAIRMAN: Before I put the question, I would like to make a request to the member for Victoria Park and other members of the Committee. It is a requirement of Standing Orders that amendments be submitted in writing, as this makes it very much easier for the Clerks and for me.

Mr DAVIES: I apologise for not handing in a copy of the amendment, Sir. I felt this was the best way to test the feeling of the Committee. I always endeavour to hand in a written amendment, but sometimes one sees something in legislation that is being discussed which motivates one to move an amendment. However, I will endeavour to meet the Chairman's request wherever possible.

The Minister has not advanced any reasons for giving the chairman two votes. It could happen that two members of the commission are producers of meat. If one of these members is the chairman, it is likely that he and the other meat producer could register three votes for or against any proposition. In the same way the chairman may represent another section of the industry, and his casting vote would weight the commission in favour of his particular interests.

However, I am not really complaining about such a situation, but rather about the principle that this Parliament—a supposedly democratic institution—is supporting the proposition of one man having an extra vote. If all members of the commission are equal, surely they are all entitled to one vote only. The Minister said that the situation of a tied vote can arise, and this is quite correct. However, we suggest that in such a situation the result should be declared in the negative. Such a practice would not impede the function of the commission.

As I said earlier, there is no rule to prevent any matter being discussed again. It may be that another member of the board may arrive at a later stage; the matter could be reconsidered, and the new member could be given a vote. This is what he is entitled to. The chairman is entitled to one vote only in my opinion, but here we are legislating to give him a second vote in the event of an impasse. I have opposed this principle in the past, I oppose it now, and I will continue to oppose it in the future.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 19 put and passed.

Clause 20: Section 14 amended—

Mr H. D. EVANS: One matter has not been explained in regard to the changes which will be effected to the existing bodies corporate. I am referring to the powers for raising loans, which each of these bodies has as a statutory right at this time. Of its own volition, the Meat Export Works or the Midland Junction Abattoir Board can raise certain loans and undertake various financial functions to a particular level. With the creation of this commission, will it mean that the individual organisations which are to be encompassed by the new Statute will have their powers of borrowing diluted? Will the commission have the power to raise loans to the same level as these bodies are able to do at the present time, or will this power be restricted? This question has not been discussed at all, and I am wondering whether the commission will be disadvantaged in this respect.

Mr OLD: In answer to the member for Warren, it is my understanding that the status quo will be maintained and that the borrowing powers of each of the instrumentalities will be retained by the commission. That is not spelt out in the Bill, but it is the intention. I think probably the words in proposed new section 14 (4)—

The provisions of this section shall have effect *mutatis mutandis* in relation to The West Australian Meat Export Works established as a State Trading Concern . . .

indicate it is a combination of the two as separate entities with borrowing powers.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 21: Section 15 amended—

Mr H. D. EVANS: This clause refers to the question raised during debate in respect of the trading powers of the proposed commission. The Minister indicated that its trading would be free of control by the Government. However, I refer to the history of the present Government in several similar matters, not the least of which is the happening in connection with the Dairy Industry Authority—an authority which was set up in a similar manner to bring forward recommendations and to control an industry, but which found its recommendations were denied and that Government impositions were placed upon it.

Similarly, the trading powers of the Lamb Marketing Board have not been expanded. Indeed, had the Premier's inquisition when he first assumed office been successful, that board would have been abolished. These things do not lead the Opposition to feel sanguine with regard to assurances that the trading powers of this commission will

be free and unfettered. The concern of the Opposition in this respect has been amply demonstrated.

The Midland Junction Abattoir Board was given trading powers as part of a developmental process which the present Opposition has adopted as its policy in meat marketing. The endowing of that board with trading powers was a first step in this regard, and it also served several beneficial functions for the operations of the abattoir. The establishment of the Lamb Marketing Board was a natural extension of this because it is a unit of marketing that can be identified and controlled much more readily than a full marketing agency in respect of the whole industry. Therefore, the Opposition has demonstrated a very real interest in this matter. Its reservations in respect of the Government are well founded.

Section 15 (3) of the Abattoirs Act states—

On and after the coming into operation of the Abattoirs Act Amendment Act, 1971, to the intent that the assets of the Board and the services of the Board employees may be utilised to the maximum practicable extent consistent with the making of profits or the producing of revenue,—

In other words, to trade profitably. It continues—

—the Board, subject to the Minister, is authorised to carry on any trade that in the opinion of the Board can conveniently be carried on in conjunction with the preparation and processing of meat.

This Bill seeks to delete the words “preparation and processing of meat”, and to substitute a passage so that the subsection will read—

... the Board, subject to the Minister, is authorised to carry on any trade that in the opinion of the Board can conveniently be carried on in conjunction with the activities of the Commission under this Act, whether or not that trade is directly related to the meat industry, but only in so far as that trade may be necessary in the interests of the meat industry.

That is a concept far different from the concept of the parent Act. The present provision in the Act is consistent with the making of profits or the production of revenue, but here we have a suffix passage which states that the commission may carry on trade but only in so far as that trade may be necessary in the interests of the meat industry.

I only wish the member for Boulder-Dundas was not sick this evening, because several legal interpretations could be placed on “the interests of the meat industry”. Whose interest is involved in this, and just what is meant by the words “the meat industry”? It seems this passage lends itself to interpretations which

could vary with each instruction or direction given to the commission. The commission will be under the control of the Minister, and it will be confined to trading within the limitations of the Act, whatever they may be; and they are not defined. It is bad legislation when we have provisions which lend themselves to ambiguity of this nature.

The extent of the trading power of the commission will be confined to the phrase, “the interests of the meat industry”. I cannot for the life of me accept that that provision will make the operation of the meat commission any easier or more effective; it just should not be in the Bill. The Minister has control already without introducing a limitation of this nature. I propose to move an amendment to clause 21 (c) to delete all words after the word “Act” in line 31. The activities of the commission will still be subject to the direction and control of the Minister if my amendment is passed. We do not need the provision to go on further to confuse and confound the situation. If the matter is to be left to the interests of the meat industry, we know whose interests will be involved.

This Government has viewed the Lamb Marketing Board through the eyes of the vested interests in the industry, and a covenant was made prior to the last election on this very matter. We are confronted with the situation in which those who support the Government will receive support in return, and in my opinion that is the interpretation that could well be placed upon this unfortunate passage I seek to delete.

I move an amendment—

Page 11, lines 31 to 35—Delete all words after the word “Act” down to and including the word “industry”.

Sir Charles Court: Are you seeking to restrict its activities?

Mr H. D. Evans: Not at all.

Sir Charles Court: That is what you are doing.

Mr MOILER: Like the member for Warren, I am concerned that the Minister has seen fit to delete what is contained in the parent Act and substitute the following passage—

activities of the Commission under this Act, whether or not that trade is directly related to the meat industry, but only in so far as that trade may be necessary in the interests of the meat industry.

I can see no necessity for the substitution of this passage, and the Minister certainly has provided no reason.

After the composition of the commission has been finalised, it is likely to be that body which will recommend that something is or is not in the best interests of the industry. It is possible that some small, biased section of the industry might decide that some action is or is not in the best

interests of the meat industry, and may recommend action accordingly. There is no need for these words to be included in the legislation. The Act has worked to the benefit of the industry and the public generally, and should continue to do so.

The commission should be permitted a full discretion, as it has now under the parent Act, where it is answerable to the Minister. This provides the control the Government seems desirous of maintaining. I support the amendment.

Sir Charles Court: Have you read the amendment?

Mr OLD: Earlier I gave an assurance to the member for Warren that no restriction would be placed on the commission's trading powers. There is no doubt in my mind that the honourable member's amendment will place such a restriction upon the commission. The words he wishes to delete actually serve the purpose of widening the powers of the commission and will enable it to undertake any trading it feels may be necessary in the interests of the meat industry. The member for Warren is contradicting his previous request that the commission be unfettered in its trading powers and therefore I oppose the amendment.

Mr H. D. EVANS: It is my view that the words, "activities of the Commission under this Act" are sufficient, because those activities are already specified in the legislation. The commission cannot trade beyond the powers delegated to it under this Act. Therefore I do not see the purpose of concluding with the following passage—

... whether or not that trade is directly related to the meat industry, but only in so far as that trade may be necessary in the interests of the meat industry".

At the least, it is superfluous; possibly it is even sinister in that it imposes restrictions upon the operations of the commission. I believe the passage, "interests of the meat industry" is open to misinterpretation, and could leave the commission in the position of not being able to trade in the manner most beneficial to it and in the interests of the largest section of the industry. I am prepared to agree to progress being reported to permit the Minister to consult the Crown Law Department to clarify the issue so that there can be no doubt as to the interpretation of the passage. As it stands, the legislation may be abused by certain sections of the industry.

As I have pointed out, it is sufficient to say, "under this Act"; it is unnecessary to go on and make the passage descriptive and prescriptive in terms of, "the interests of the meat industry". I dispute the Minister's claim that my amendment will have the effect of placing restrictions upon the commission; on the contrary, the passage, "in the interests of the meat industry" will have this effect.

The Minister has assured us that it is not the Government's intention to fetter the commission in any way, and that it will

be able to use its commercial judgment in its trading operation. However, the restriction which could be placed upon the commission causes members on this side a great deal of concern.

Mr MOILER: I think it is fair to point out that action taken by the previous Government permitted the Midland Junction Abattoir Board to trade, and this has been to the benefit of the abattoir and the industry generally. However, these amendments were opposed by some small, powerful sections of the meat industry, which would have been far happier had the board been denied the right to trade.

It is quite possible that the wording of this clause will leave the legislation open to abuse by this small, powerful section of the industry which still does not want to see the board trading. I believe it is highly likely that section would challenge the interpretation of this clause, and the meaning of the words, "in the interests of the meat industry". Such a legal challenge quite possibly could be sustained and the commission may be prevented from trading.

Not only would we have people represented on the commission who are quite happy to leave things as they are so that they can wring more profit from the industry than they are doing at present, but if the commission were still able to convince the Minister that in the interests of the industry generally it would be advisable to trade in a particular way, a powerful section within the industry could challenge such a move and nullify it.

I agree with the member for Warren that the Minister should report progress and obtain a legal opinion.

Sir Charles Court: Have you studied the amendment proposed by your colleague, because it is a restriction?

Mr H. D. EVANS: The Premier has made several interjections that this amendment is restrictive, but he has not explained why he considers that is so.

Sir Charles Court: All you have to do is read the words you wish to delete. They explain themselves. You want to be careful we do not accept your amendment, because then you will look silly.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Let us look at the amendment. It seeks to delete, after the word "Act" in line 31, the words "whether or not that trade is directly related to the meat industry, but only in so far as that trade may be necessary in the interests of the meat industry". Subparagraph (ii) of paragraph (c) on page 11 also contains the words, "substituting the passage 'activities of the Commission under this Act,'". So in any case the commission can act only in accordance with its powers that are prescribed under the Act, irrespective of the descriptive passage at the end of subparagraph (ii) of paragraph (c).

As the member for Mundaring has pointed out, from various sections the commission could be open to challenge which could be used as a delaying tactic to suit the interests of private enterprise.

Mr Moiler: Such as taking out a writ or something similar.

Mr H. D. EVANS: Yes. I would be most interested to hear any other interpretation placed upon that passage. The matter should be clarified by obtaining an opinion from the Crown Law Department. I would therefore be happy to see progress reported at this stage so that an opinion could be obtained.

Mr OLD: The deletion of the words in question would only place further restriction on the commission and I gave an assurance that no restriction would be placed on it. These words amply demonstrate that it will not be restricted. A wrong interpretation is being placed on the meat industry. The interpretation that is being used relates to the wholesale meat industry, but the industry actually starts at the farm, progresses through the saleyards, through the abattoirs and eventually to the retailer. It covers a complete ambit.

Mr Moiler: Did the representatives of the industry consult the consumers on this question?

Mr OLD: I do not know whether eating would be covered in the industry. Eating is a habit rather than an industry. I still maintain that the deletion of the words would restrict the powers of the commission.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 22 to 40 put and passed.

Title—

Mr H. D. EVANS: Looking at the descriptive passage relating to the title it virtually summarises the sum total of the Bill. Whilst I am not seeking to have the Bill reprinted or condensed, at this stage I ask the Minister to seek legal clarification on whether or not the suggested amendment would have a restrictive influence on the trade.

Mr Old: Yes, I will do that.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

APPROPRIATION BILL (CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND)

Second Reading: Budget Debate

Debate resumed from the 9th October.

MR CLARKO (Karrinyup) [9.49 p.m.]: I invite members to consider carefully for a while the littoral lovers of the metropolitan area of Perth. I use the word "littoral" in the sense of referring to those

who deliberately prefer to live by the seaside, and those who reside in my electorate, of course, are entirely in that position.

Mr Taylor: And so are mine! What else has yours in comparison?

Mr CLARKO: The problems of coastal areas such as those in my electorate are important, not only to the people who reside within but also to the people who reside near those areas seaside. I am sure the coastal regions represent a prime Perth metropolitan facility. As a "Lion" I support their aim "to build a better town in which to live", and I am also greatly aware of the considerable amount of work performed by the Australian Institute of Urban Studies and by others who take an interest in the problems of Australian cities.

My electorate contains areas both old and new. There are sections such as in parts of North Beach which are extremely old, and there are other sections where the trees have been cleared only recently and houses have been constructed extensively. At present the houses are the dominant feature of the landscape, and in particular the frontal aspect is most evident. I presume this is caused principally by the lack of adequate ground cover, such as trees and shrubs. When we see the young trees and shrubs grow, as we find in the older suburbs of Floreat and Cottesloe, we will lose the dominant aspect of the houses.

It seems to me in terms of creating a pleasant environment in which to live tree planting is a very effective way by which the new suburbs can be beautified. The development on the north shore—as some people might prefer to call it—and the development in the Canning electorate make up the two fastest growing parts of the metropolitan area.

One of the real problems that has arisen is that in this area of my electorate we find very light coastal scrub land; and when it is denuded of trees by bulldozers we are left with a cleared area which can only gradually be upgraded by the occupiers of houses who energetically plant all types of grasses and shrubs.

If we are to develop in such a way in the hot climate we experience in Western Australia, I believe that long avenues of trees should be grown in the median strips of the new arterial roads. I want to stress the need, particularly in new suburbs such as those in any electorate to develop good roads.

Someone has said that minor roads should be made narrower, more crooked in alignment, and less direct. It is contended that by building roads in this manner the disturbance by the drivers of motor vehicles to residents will be minimised.

In my electorate there is a very great need to provide an overall major road system. It is fashionable among some

people in Australia to criticise the construction of freeways. I say without doubt that if freeways are not provided to serve the northern suburbs of the metropolitan area eventually the whole of the existing road system will be choked with motor vehicles. A person who lives in a northern suburb and has to travel in a south or south-easterly direction to the city knows that he is unable to drive freely during peak periods of traffic.

We have the instance of West Coast Highway in respect of which the whole function of a coast road has been destroyed. If we can promptly find the money to develop Mitchell Freeway we will enable the people living in the northern suburbs of the metropolitan area to travel freely. The provision of freeways will not only reduce the time that is required for people in those areas to commute to their places of employment, but also reduce the air pollution associated with motor vehicles which have to travel bumper to bumper and stop at the traffic lights.

In the main my electorate is a residential area, although it contains a small light industrial area at Balcatta which has been described as a garden industrial area. However, I think the garden has yet to be developed. In my electorate there are the remnants of the market gardens associated with the swamp land. With the passage of time these pockets of land are decreasing, and we have reached the stage where we have to decide for what purpose such land is to be used.

People living on the coast value especially the prime feature—the nearness to the ocean. Those people still regard their suburbs as being relatively close to Perth, but that closeness is being destroyed by the congestion on the major roads.

The northern suburbs do not have the advantage of a rail system; and the people living there have no other form of transport than road transport. Unfortunately the original proposal to build a coastal railway to serve those suburbs has been abandoned. I believe this is most unfortunate. What is unfair to the people of those suburbs is that as taxpayers they are required to make up the losses sustained by the public transport systems, but they derive no advantage from them.

I cannot subscribe to the view of the modern planners who talk about the desirability of doing away with the large parking areas in Perth. That is all very well for people living in suburbs which are provided with alternative transport systems. As yet, the people of the northern suburbs do not have the advantage of such alternative systems. A major bus system operates in the more populated suburbs, but in the sparsely settled parts of my electorate only a limited bus service is provided. So, in my electorate

the motorcar is more vital than it is in the inner suburbs of the metropolitan area.

It is important for us to dwell a while on the major roads, particularly Mitchell Freeway. I understand it is planned to extend Mitchell Freeway from the section adjacent to Perth to Beach Road in Hamersley by 1981. In my opinion that timetable provides for too slow a form of development. Not only must the programme be accelerated, but the section of Mitchell Freeway which will extend into the Shire of Wanneroo in the north must also be accelerated, so that it will be able to serve the rapidly growing coastal suburbs near Whitfords.

The extension of Marmion Avenue is under way, and it will serve the needs of residents in the northern suburbs who wish to travel in a southerly direction towards the city. Here again the work on this road system needs to be speeded up. It is an alternative to West Coast Highway. Above all, the major road linking the northern suburbs with the city should not be Marmion Avenue or West Coast Highway; it should be Mitchell Freeway.

Already a survey or study is being undertaken by the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority into the construction of a coastal road, and a great deal of emphasis has been placed on the extension of West Coast Highway through the southern suburbs. I do hope that the people conducting this survey, who have seen fit to set up an office in the Swanbourne district to obtain the views of the people affected, will make sure that they invite views from those who are associated with the northern part of the proposed route. I understand it is to consider the area from Karrinyup Road southwards. I say this, because there already exists an air of conflict. I hope the engineers will ensure that Marmion Avenue is not extended southwards beyond Karrinyup Road, through the regional open space at Trigg.

There are many queries yet to be answered, if the proposal to divide this area of sand dunes by the road I have mentioned is adopted. If the proposal to do this is implemented it is essential that the public be made fully aware of what is to take place.

What I am about to say might sound to be too parochial to many members, but I think it is essential in old and developed areas where the roads have been constructed on the grid system to convert more of the road intersections into cul-de-sacs. In the City of Stirling, past attempts to do this have met with local opposition. Therefore it is important that such conversion be undertaken by informing the local residents of what is happening, and by erecting temporary barriers to enable the public to experience the altered situation.

It is regrettable that when such barriers were erected in the electorate of Scarborough certain people saw fit to push them over, to drive over the verges, and to ignore the signs. So far the success in the City of Stirling has been very minimal.

If we are to provide the same sort of advantage, enjoyed by people living in new areas where there is not a tremendous amount of through traffic and the traffic is not heavy, for the people living in the old areas we should first show them that improvements in the road system will be of considerable benefit to the adjacent residents from the point of view of safety as well as convenience.

I would like to press also for a greater allocation of moneys for traffic lights which must be installed when the conflict and congestion first occurs. In my electorate there are two intersections requiring traffic lights, one being at the intersection of North Beach Road and Odln Road the latter of which feeds the northern suburbs of Hamersley and Greenwood. A month ago I was able to arrange for the Minister to visit the site with one of his senior officers and I am advised that the area is to have traffic lights, the money for which is to be provided in next year's road programme. I hope that these lights will be so provided.

At the same time the intersection of Karrinyup, Huntress, and Killarney Roads requires traffic lights. It is of no use planning a city to extend to the north if it is not provided with good open road arteries.

When talking about troubles in an electorate such as mine it is necessary to touch briefly on the problem of noise from motor vehicles, particularly from motor bikes. I am told there is no necessity for the noisy exhaust systems in use today. They might make the drivers think they are top-class racers, but all they do is affect and annoy the residents of the streets through which they pass.

I want to turn now to the beaches. In 1973 the City of Stirling appointed two academics (Professor Martyn Webb and Dr. Sylvester) to carry out a survey of the coastal beaches of the City of Stirling. The report was called the Scarborough Beach report, although it covers areas further afield than most of us call Scarborough.

These beaches provide us with unlimited recreational facilities, and the opportunity to surf, swim, rest, use our boats, obtain a suntan, or just look at the ocean. These things constitute considerable wealth to us as ordinary humble people just going about our daily lives. It is essential that any development of our beachfront should be as natural as possible. I do not think we want, as was suggested in the report, great big groynes shaped like shark fins. I think nine were proposed for the area between Scarborough Beach proper and

Trigg Island. I visualise the continued future of beautiful sandy beaches at Trigg.

To the south of Trigg we have most beautiful open sandy beaches, the envy of visitors from other parts of Australia and the world.

Mr Taylor: And the envy of Cockburn. I am making a mental comparison as you talk. I would like to speak after you and give the real comparisons. You are a very fortunate member.

Mr CLARKO: Does the member for Cockburn disagree with my view?

Mr Taylor: No. You say you are worrying about an electorate you need not worry about. You should talk about community problems as a whole instead of only as they affect your electorate.

Mr CLARKO: I was born in Cottesloe and lived all my young years there. I spent much of my time at the beach. I live now at Trigg and spend less time nowadays at the beach because of my present occupation; but my family makes great use of the beach. Many of the people in my area were children with me at Cottesloe; they bought land out at Trigg and beyond because it was cheaper in the northern corridor and they could afford it. It gave them the kind of environment they had as children. If we compare our cities with those in other parts of the world, we find that on a population percentage we are the most coastal urbanised people in the whole world. This is what we want and it is essential that our beaches are protected as much as possible.

Mr Taylor: Could you relate your point to other electorates? That is all I am asking. My own complaint is that my electors have to swim in the electorate of the Speaker, and yet we have miles of beach the same as you have. Is there a way to protect all beaches rather than only those in your own electorate?

Mr CLARKO: I am not competent to speak on the area represented by the member for Cockburn. I do not know it anywhere near as well as I do my own electorate, and the area from there to North Fremantle. I know that very well, because I spent all my life in that area, not in the area south of Fremantle. I am talking of the beaches north of Fremantle. It is crucial to our future that they remain as natural as possible and that any money spent on them is spent wisely. We need to spend money in this area, but many local authorities cannot afford it.

I have mixed doubts about a combined metropolitan beaches authority. I once supported such a proposition, but I now fear it. I prefer the decisions on the development of beaches to be left to the local authorities which are closest to them.

We have the problem of car parking at the beaches. We should recess our car parks so they do not constitute a visual obstruction when people are looking from

the road towards the ocean. It is vital also to have pathways from the parking areas to the beaches, particularly among the sand dunes. We should very carefully provide these pathways from the parking areas to the waterfront.

I have said before that I am totally opposed to the popstick landscape—bits of wood sticking up all over the place. We should put underground every public service facility we can, particularly electricity and telephone wires. This is the only way we will get back to something like the natural beauty we had previously.

Some of the public facilities on our beachfronts are disgraceful looking buildings. Not only are they unpleasant to the eye individually, but they have been grouped badly as well. In the Scarborough Beach report two points are made, one being that these necessary buildings should be recessed into beachfronts. The second point made is that they should be made of natural material such as limestone. I would like to commend the architects at Yanchep for their use of this material in that area. Perhaps it has been used on too grand a scale, but certainly it is most appropriate for Western Australia.

It seems to me that the people associated with the development of beachfronts have failed to provide sufficient shade, whether by the use of trees or shelters. In the 1920s and 1930s, extensive areas of shade were provided at Cottesloe, but these seem to have gone and although various authorities have undergone a great deal of research on this aspect, as yet not much has been achieved.

As I have said before, we must protect the dunes, and I include those in Toodyay outside my electorate. I understand that recently a number of discussions have taken place between the Minister and the councillors of the Shire of Wanneroo, and I hope that some solution is found promptly to resolve the difficulty.

I want to mention another matter which other members might consider is minor, but which is serious in my area; that is, the provision of crosswalks, particularly across West Coast Highway—which is far too busy—to the beach. Once Trigg Island is passed, the amount of space between the road and the water is so small that few parking areas are possible and so people park in the nearby streets.

I cannot support the erection of overways because they are ugly and costly. For five years I tried to persuade the authorities to establish crosswalks, but I was told continually that the magical "conflict number" had not been reached. A couple of years ago I visited Esperance and there were something like a dozen crosswalks for people to cross the road to reach the water's edge. I am amazed that in this respect we cannot reach the same level in the busy parts of the metropolitan area. I believe the rule of thumb method

should be discarded and that people wishing to reach main beaches and rocky pools should be provided with pedestrian-controlled lights to be operated only when required. I am sure the cost of these would be more than warranted if they save lives, especially of young and old people in the area, apart from others who visit our beaches in ever-increasing numbers.

The member for Cockburn has referred to the use of beaches. I know very well that people from Balga are prime users of the beachfront. The people from the new suburbs developed behind the coastal areas are, in increasing numbers, using our beaches, and particularly our rocky pools. Migrants, not noted for their swimming ability, feel safe in our rocky pools, but in order to reach them they must cross a roadway which is far too crowded and where, despite five years' effort, not one single crosswalk has been provided.

It is also important to note that particular attention has been given recently to the unfortunate boating tragedies which have occurred off the coast from Fremantle. It is important that groups such as the Whitfords sea rescue group and others be given support—financially and by means of other assistance—in order that they are able to provide a more adequate sea rescue service.

There is also a need for boat launching facilities in the northern area. Although there has been talk about many schemes very little has come to fruition. Whilst I am not a boat owner myself, a tremendous number of people from the metropolitan area are unable to launch their boats along any of our northern beaches. I believe the State Government will need to provide some financial assistance to local authorities so that they can construct boat launching areas. It is essential that such areas be planned carefully and that associated parking does not despoil the landscape.

I want to mention briefly the two surf clubs in my area. The club at Sorrento, as a result of most generous assistance from the Lotteries Commission and the Shire of Wanneroo, will be able to transform its present primitive shed into a first-class amenity to better serve not only the people who swim at Sorrento beach, but also those who swim for many miles north of it.

The Trigg Island Surf Life Saving Club is much older and much larger, and extensions are now being carried out to the club building with money provided by the City of Stirling. The members of the surf life saving clubs voluntarily risk their lives without any reward and they should be greatly commended for their efforts. They should receive every assistance possible from local authorities and other organisations.

I will touch briefly on some problems associated with schools in my area. We have failed to obtain the services of a crossing attendant for the North Beach convent. The convent is situated in Kitcheners Street adjacent to a very steep hill and

close to a blind crest. A request for the services of an attendant was rejected a couple of weeks ago. Requests from the Takari Primary School and the Gwelup Primary School have also been rejected. I believe every school is entitled to the services of a crossing attendant. The lives of our children are precious. Whilst I say that cross-walk attendants should be provided, I also point out that motorists should take special care when driving in the vicinity of schools.

The development of our modern suburbs has gradually improved with the provision of community recreation centres. A very elaborate centre has been completed in Warwick Road, in my electorate, during the last 12 months to serve the Duncraig-Sorrento area. It is a tremendous facility and comprises a wide range of committee rooms as well as basic indoor sporting facilities. A community recreation centre has been built at Hamersley also.

I would like to express my thanks to the committees of the many voluntary groups which, over the years, have been poorly housed but have still done a good job. The new facilities will allow those organisations to do a better job in catering for the recreational needs of the people in the area. I also wish to refer particularly to those groups which called themselves progress associations but are now called community associations. Those associations are achieving what we have been aiming at for a long time; that is, greater public participation in community projects.

I am also keenly interested in the future development which will take place north of North Beach Road in West Carine. The area shortly to be subdivided is owned by the Government and is heavily timbered. I trust sufficient land will be made available for public open space and other public use, such as for the construction of halls, a local library, an autumn centre if it is required, and buildings of that sort. I refer to open space in excess of the obligatory 10 per cent. Public buildings must be flexible and functional, and they must also be made available for use by as many people as possible; that is, be multi-purpose.

A play group which recently disposed of its building is using a hall. I understand the Shire of Wanneroo is considering the proposal that people who move to new areas be provided with some form of multi-purpose building in which they can get together and develop the various interests within their community.

I was pleased to note that a number of pre-primary centres are to be built in my area. Possibly there will be four new centres within the next three or four years. I have long been interested in kindergartens, and a supporter of children being provided with pre-primary or kindergarten education in their fifth year. It is important for the type of education to be semi-formal

and I am delighted to note that pre-primary centres will be made available for the children in my area who currently wait in queues ranging from 100 to 150 trying to get into a kindergarten which will accommodate only 72 children. Those children will now have a better and, soon, a universal opportunity to go to a pre-primary centre. Ideally, some of them, within a few years, will be able to go into the existing kindergartens in their fourth year.

I was most impressed with the news that we will now be able to continue to develop our high schools in the northern region, particularly the new Craigie and Greenwood high schools. The completion of those schools will take a great deal of the pressure off the existing Balcatta High School and Carine High School. Crowding will be reduced at those schools, and the children will not have to travel such long distances.

Again, in terms of development in my area, I believe it is important not only for the electorate of Karrinyup but generally for the surrounding region that the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority, under the chairmanship of Mr Neil Hawkins, has seen fit to call a public meeting to allow the people immediately adjacent to Lake Carine to participate in the future planning of that very large area.

Two lakes are involved—Big Carine and Little Carine. A meeting was held at the Hamersley Recreation Centre a couple of months ago and it was interesting to hear the views of local residents put forward. It seemed to me that, in essence, the local residents desired that the water aspect remain as the prime feature of the development. It was agreed that principally the area should be for passive recreation, although many did say that there would have to be some active recreation areas, but that it should be on the perimeter adjacent to the roads.

It is hoped that some of the lake area can be retained for wildlife; in other words, left alone so that the natural use by wildlife will continue.

The Karrinyup cultural centre is at long last under way. It has been planned for some six or seven years and it now gives me great pleasure to observe that at last the foundations are being put down. The centre will cost something in the order of \$300 000. It will be of prime importance to the people in the area because we are just that little bit too far from the city to share in the cultural facilities which are already available there. It is hoped that cultural and other facilities will be provided and that some ballet and local theatrical groups will be able to perform at the new centre. I am sure that would be a tremendous advantage, not only for the people living within the electorate which I represent, but for those who live in the surrounding areas.

I want to pay particular attention to the question of purchasing a home. One of the main burdens placed on young people in Western Australia over the last few years has been the cost of buying a home and the cost of funding it. Costs have reached an astronomical level and now place too heavy a burden on the average person who is seeking to build a home in a pleasant area chosen by him and which he can develop for his family. I commend the actions of the Rural and Industries Bank in developing schemes which have successfully kept down the price of land. Extremely valuable land has been kept down in price by attaching to the sale building and single-ownership conditions. I note that the Government is planning to increase the number of lots to be auctioned, and I hope it proceeds with this at a rapid pace because there is certainly a very keen demand for them.

Much of the area has been developed by civil servants, whether they be involved in local authorities or otherwise. I, for one, strongly object to the latest instance of public servant bashing by a North American academic who got out his copy of Roget's *Thesaurus* and put together a great string of adjectives which I do not think are appropriate. The public servants I know are fine people, and if anyone cares to study Australian history he will find Australia would not have developed in its remote position and lacking the basic amenities of other lands had it not been for the tremendous industry of public servants.

I want to conclude by quoting part of the oath which was sworn by all Athenian citizens. It is quite different from the oath sworn by some of my electors when they are driving home from work and get stuck in a traffic jam. The Athenian citizens swore—

We will transmit this city greater, better, and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us.

That is what I hope will happen, not only in the area of Karrinyup itself but, as the member for Cockburn said, in all those areas which are privileged to be beside the beautiful Indian Ocean.

MR FLETCHER (Fremantle) [10.21 p.m.]: The Budget usually affords an opportunity for members to speak about matters affecting their electorates. I point out that Fremantle is very well cared for by a very progressive council and councillors and a benevolent Australian Government which is assisting financially in many areas—in the care of the aged, for children, youth, sport, culture, and many of the things mentioned by the member who has just resumed his seat.

I have previously mentioned in the House that as a result of homework done by the staff of the Fremantle City Council and the good case presented, that council received from the Australian Government

in excess of \$2 million last year, and more has been promised. I also pointed out that many other local authorities could enjoy equal benefits if they cared to submit a well presented case as did the Fremantle City Council.

We on this side of the House and the public are bored by the Premier's complaints about the Australian Government's alleged ruinous policy, economic and otherwise. While I do not wish to bore the House, it is necessary for me to produce evidence and statistics to counter the tedious propaganda campaign which has been undertaken by the present Premier of this State and by other anti-Labor Premiers throughout Australia. The campaign has been aided and abetted by the Press, which makes scant if any reference to Press releases which I make available.

I submit it is better to produce such evidence and statistics, even though they may be boring, than to make statements or propound arguments, because statements and arguments can be argued against and attempts can be made to refute them. The evidence I will produce comprises statements made by Ministers. If members question Press statements made by Australian Government Ministers, they have an equal right to doubt Press statements made by Ministers of this Government. I feel there is an obligation on me and on members on this side of the House to attempt to refute the propaganda put out by our Premier and other anti-Labor Premiers throughout Australia.

First of all, I will quote from a Press release of the 30th July, 1975, by the Federal Minister for Health—

Dr Everingham said community health education was the answer.

The Press release also said—

Dr Everingham said the Australian Government provided 75 per cent out of capital costs and 90 per cent of running costs of community health centres.

Members on the other side of the House cannot argue about that, but they still complain. The Press release continued—

Over \$60 million had been spent on the programme in its first two years.

It is easy for the Premier to bring down a benign Budget because of the assistance I have mentioned and the taxes and charges he had previously levied on the community. I will quote a Press cutting in that respect later on. I want to assist my argument in relation to health.

In money terms, charges have doubled, and more than doubled in many instances. Electricity charges have gone up by 18 per cent, then 25 per cent, and then a further 12½ per cent within a period of 11 months. Water and sewerage rates have gone up by an average of 37 per cent, then a further 40 per cent within 12 months. I am arguing that these charges are not

necessary in view of the benevolence of the Australian Government.

State Government Insurance Office premiums have gone up by 25 per cent and a further 20 per cent within 12 months, and I think it is a reasonable assumption that the SGIO was used to increase charges first, to give an excuse to private insurance companies equally to increase their levies on the community.

Government hospital charges have gone up by 50 per cent. Stamp duty on cheques has gone up by 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rd per cent. Vehicle registration fees are up by 65 per cent, drivers' licenses by 60 per cent, bus and train fares by an average of 11 per cent, and country rail freights by 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent and then a further 17 per cent. These charges have increased despite an increase to 49.8 per cent from the Australian Government. That is what this Government has received from the Australian Government, while the best we could get when the Labor Party was last in office was 41 per cent.

I wonder how our present Premier can say such nasty things about the Australian Government when he receives handouts like this.

Sir Charles Court: What are these handouts? This is our money.

Mr FLETCHER: I will give further evidence, if only the Premier will be quiet. He can hand it out but I ask him to take it. Let us look briefly at education, and then I will speak about health, a subject in which I am particularly interested.

I receive Press releases because of my association with the Health Education Council and I submit material periodically to the Federal Minister. However, I will refer firstly to education because it is very topical. I have here the *Western Teacher* of the 2nd October, 1975, and it says—

The presentation of the Budget in Canberra on 19th August, created an atmosphere of gloom and pessimism throughout the Education Department and the Ministers office.

That is until they came to analyse it. The report continued—

The W.A. Minister for Education, the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon, in common with his counterparts in the other non-Labor States, has subsequently made a number of statements about cuts in finance for education. Just how many of these were based on fact or designed for "Whitlam Bashing" tactics is difficult to determine. Some of them prompted replies from the Australian Minister for Education, the Hon. K. Beazley.

Rather than bore the House with too many statistics, I will abbreviate this comment. However, I call the attention of the House

to this pertinent paragraph under the heading, "Some light appears"—

In order to get a clearer picture of the exact position in which the State Government finds itself, it is necessary to look to the General Purpose Payments. General Revenue Assistance has been increased by nearly \$90 million from \$279.8 million to \$375.6 million. The increase of approximately 33% can be compared with an increase of 25% from 1973/74 to 1974/75, and less than 15% from 1971/72 to 1972/73. General Purpose Capital Funds have been increased from \$100.2 million, to \$120.3 million, an increase of 20% on last year's figures. While it must be conceded that the increase in General Purpose Capital Funding is probably insufficient to allow for increased building costs, there can be no doubt that the increases in General Revenue Assistance have been more than generous when compared with the pattern which emerges from a close examination of the Budget figures for the last 10 to 12 years.

So the *Western Teacher* is saying that our figures compare very favourably with the assistance which education received from the previous anti-Labor Australian Government. In fact, the assistance we are receiving is about four times greater than we received previously.

The next item refers to health, and this is Press release 113/75 of the 5th September, 1975. It reads—

Grants for new Community Health Projects

Grants totalling \$7 225 395 for new community health projects throughout Australia have been approved by the Australian Minister for Health, Dr Doug Everingham.

And it goes on to point out—

The grants are part of the \$65 million budgeted by the Australian Government for the Community Health Program of which WA gets a share of \$758 287.

Associated with this is a listing of 18 items. I will not bore the House with all of these but I shall refer to five items. The grant for community health has increased by \$30.9 million; that is, from \$36 million to \$66.9 million. The money available for school dental services has been increased by \$7.4 million; that is, from \$18.6 million to \$26 million. Health service for Aborigines has gone up from \$15.1 million to \$22 million—an increase of \$6.9 million. The grant for the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories has been increased from \$7.9 million to \$14.1 million, in other words an increase of \$6.2 million. Every person in this State receives the benefit of this assistance, and still the Australian Government is insulted by our present Premier and Treasurer.

I admit that it is hard to listen to all these figures, but I submit they are very telling and they refute the case submitted by the anti-Labor Governments of Australia.

A paragraph here refers to the Medibank agreement and it says—

The Prime Minister said the Australian Government's financial commitment to the States' hospital systems this financial year would be \$200 million for Victoria and \$78 million for Western Australia.

I would like to interpolate here that if Medibank will save us \$78 million for the whole year, and the Premier of this State had to be dragged screaming and struggling into Medibank one month late, how much did his attitude cost the State? I ask members to do a little mental arithmetic; if we divide \$78 million by 12, we get the figure \$6.5 million. That is how much it cost this State to enter Medibank one month late. We could do a lot with that amount of money.

Mr Shalders: It will cost the taxpayer a lot more.

Mr FLETCHER: This is particularly so when the Premier is crying, poor mouth. I will deal with this matter subsequently. The report continues—

The Medibank agreements would ensure that everyone in those States was entitled to free access to standard ward public hospital treatment free of means test.

This restored the situation which was introduced by the Chifley Labor Government in 1947 and allowed to lapse under the Menzies Government five years later.

I remember that well, Mr Speaker, and so will you. We were levied 1s. 6d. in the pound and this money went into a special contingencies fund for just this sort of thing. However, immediately the Menzies Government came to office in 1949, that finance went into revenue. This was taxpayers' money and yet it went into Consolidated Revenue to be used for other less worthwhile causes. To continue—

Private hospital insurance contributions would also be reduced considerably because the Australian Government benefits of \$2 a day, under the old National Health Act, would be increased by \$16 a day.

On my arithmetic that is an 800 per cent increase in assistance, and yet we still hear these grizzles from the Government side of the House.

I point out to the House that I am a member of the Fremantle Hospital Board and I know of the bad debts that accrued there in the past because people were not able to pay their bills. I know this ran into thousands of dollars every month; I have heard at each meeting about these debts with tedious repetition. The tab for

those debts is now being picked up by Canberra, and still the State continues to grizzle. Let Government members try to knock over that argument if they can, and endeavour to show that the Australian Government is not kind to this State and to Australia as a whole.

Another Press statement of the 23rd July, 1975 reads as follows—

The Western Australian Government is expected to sign an agreement next week to enter the Medibank Hospital Plan, the Treasurer, Mr Bill Hayden said today.

I have this in the wrong sequence, but I think members will follow it. To continue—

He said the Australian Government would meet half the net cost of operating the W.A. public hospital system and would provide significantly higher benefits for patients . . .

I have made these facts known to the House already. As I said, additions are now being made to the Fremantle Hospital thanks to such benevolence. A new 60-bed ward was commenced during the term of the Tonkin Government, and no doubt the present Minister will open it for us and the Government will not mind taking the credit for it. To continue with this report—

Mr Hayden said the only result of the State Government's protracted opposition to Medibank was the State's loss of millions of dollars caused by its failure to enter Medibank on July 1 this year.

I have referred to that.

Mr Laurance: You are admitting that as a member of the hospital board people who could not pay their accounts did not pay them anyway so why have Medibank?

Mr FLETCHER: In the past many people, including Aborigines, were not able to pay their bills and now Medibank is picking up the tab. Perhaps the honourable member could not understand the reasons that some people cannot pay their bills. An invalid in a family, for instance, will be a drag on the household economy of that family for many years. Perhaps the member for Gascoyne does not know of cases like this, and it is quite possible in any case that he would turn his back on them. I am not sure of that, however, but I do know that members on this side would not.

Here is another Press release, No. 132, of the 31st September, 1975. I regret that the member for Subiaco is out of his seat temporarily. This is headed, "Course for general practitioners", and it reads as follows—

GP Shortage—At least 500 people with a medical background will be helped to improve their skills as general practitioners this financial year in northern and country areas.

The Australian Minister for Health, Dr Doug Everingham, has announced a grant of \$5.5 million to the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners to finance its Family Medicine Program.

The Program is designed to improve the quality of family medical practice and to help relieve the shortage of general practitioners.

Members from the north and from country areas will know the dire need for medical practitioners that exists in those areas. So please do not back-hand the Federal Minister and the Australian Government for their generosity in trying to assist in these outback areas. Do not indulge in all the dirty rubbishing that is going on now in an endeavour to pull down a Government that does that sort of thing. However, where does this action receive the sort of publicity I am giving it tonight? This is what could almost break the heart of a sincere parliamentarian as distinct from a politician. There is a distinction between the two, and I know members opposite are aware of it.

Another Press release, No. 112/75 of the 4th September, 1975, states—

"The allocation for the Hospitals Development Program increased substantially in the Budget from \$30.3 million in 1974/75 to \$108 million", he said.

It continues—

In order to maintain progress on projects supported in 1974/75 grants totalling \$13.6 million have been made to the States to cover expenditure in the first quarter of this financial year.

When we are receiving assistance like that it is no wonder the Premier can bring down a balanced Budget; and more particularly when, as I said in my opening remarks, he has imposed all the levies that he imposed earlier in the year in the hope that the public would forget. However, they have not forgotten.

I have also done a little arithmetic in respect of this increase from \$30.3 million in 1974-75 to \$108 million in 1975-76, and I discovered it represents an increase of about 350 per cent; yet the Premier still grizzles and goes east to connive with his Federal anti-Labor counterparts to pull down the Australian Government.

Even at the most recent meeting of the Fremantle Hospital Board I heard people rubbishing the Australian Government because our hospital was being cut down to half the anticipated size. They were blaming the Australian Government for this. As my office was quite handy, I nipped back to it smartly and returned to the board meeting while the discussion was still in progress with this evidence in my hand. Fortunately I had an opportunity to point out to the hospital board,

as I am to this House, the generosity of the Australian Government; and I said to them, "Now whose fault is it? Is it the fault of the Australian Government when there has been an increase of 350 per cent in the allocation?"

I have here another Press release dated the 6th September, 1975, and it is No. 108/75. I hope members opposite find these interesting, because I do. This one deals with funds for the Australian Red Cross Society. I will not go into all the details, but I point out the Premier made no comment about the generosity of the Australian Government to the Red Cross Society. The Press release states —

State Premiers were informed of the Australian Government's proposals on the eve of the Budget in a letter from the Prime Minister . . .

In the Budget the amount provided for blood transfusion services operated by the Red Cross was increased by \$805 500 to \$3 408 500 . . .

Since 1 July 1973 the operating costs of the Blood Transfusion service conducted by the Red Cross have been met by the State Governments (60%), Australian Government (35%) and the Society (5%).

The Red Cross is receiving those funds, but in the main its members probably would be reading the propaganda in the Press and, despite this benevolence they would probably vote against the Australian Government as a result of the strength of the current campaign to pull it down.

There is plenty of opposition and furore in the Press regarding the Australian Government, but the sort of thing I am relating to the House is not publicised; or if it is publicised it is truncated or hidden on some back page, so it behoves me to publicise it in this place.

Another Press release, No. 124/75, deals with funds for medical research. Mr Speaker, you will recall that the brutal Australian Government was supposed to have reduced funds for medical research. I know that argument has died since funds have been made available. This is what the Press release states—

Following discussions between the Treasurer and the Minister for Health, the Australian Government will increase the funds available for medical research in the 1975/76 financial year from \$4 million to \$4.85 million . . .

"This increase in funds for medical research in 1976 will ensure that, with prudent management, no research workers or technicians are retrenched where this may have been necessary with a lower level of funding", Dr Everingham said.

Despite all the hysteria in the Press, those people involved in this research will not become redundant for the reasons I have outlined. The Press release states that

funds for medical research in the financial year 1975-76 have increased by \$850 000 to \$4.85 million, and the total for the 1976 calendar year has increased to \$7.15 million whereas it was previously \$6.3 million.

The Minister for Science and Consumer Affairs had this to say in Canberra on the 25th September, 1975—

The Minister for Science and Consumer Affairs, the Hon. Clyde R. Cameron announced today that he had been able to reach an agreement that would ensure there was no cut back in Research Grants made through the Australian Research Grants Committee for the calendar year 1976.

Mr Cameron said that with the agreement of the Prime Minister, the Hon. E. G. Whitlam, and the Treasurer, the Hon. Bill Hayden, he would be putting further submissions to Cabinet about the long term future of Australian Government support for scientific research in Universities for the 1976-78 triennium.

Did members opposite read that in the Press? They did not, but they read the criticism of the Australian Government which was never refuted. I have one more quote on the matter of health before I refer to other portfolios.

I regret the Premier is not present—although I am aware he must have pressing business outside—because this is the sort of thing I would like him to hear as he is one of those involved in the anti-Labor connivance and the blatant attempts by anti-Labor Premiers to pull down the Australian Government. I would like him to know that at least one member on this side of the House knows what is going on, and so do as many of my constituents as I can possibly reach; however, unfortunately, a member can reach only a limited number. The following quote relates to New South Wales—

Dr Everingham told Mr Bob Whan (Labor) that Community Health Projects in his electorate Eden-Monaro appeared to be the victims of a general freeze on Australian-N.S.W. projects.

Further on it continues—

"Given the good working relationship which exists at officer level, the hold ups must be politically motivated", he said.

I have just made reference to that aspect. It continues—

"The States received an additional 34% in unspecified grants this year but NSW is suffering financial difficulties from its poor handling of Medibank and its failure to transfer country railways.

Now, Mr Speaker, New South Wales is in the same position as this State and it is indulging in the same intransigence in which the Premier is indulging in respect

of handing over our frightful liability in regard to our existing railway deficit.

Mr Shalders: What will they do with it?

Mr FLETCHER: The member knows there is a State deficit in respect of the railways, and that deficit need not be a charge against the State. It does not matter how he argues, the case is irrefutable. Millions of dollars could be saved to prevent the retrenchment of sewerage workers who are about to be thrown out of work, and about whom all the disputation exists.

Savings of this nature—and I will give other examples—would make those retrenchments quite unnecessary. I will say that I do not think the Minister, who is giving me the courtesy of a hearing, is comfortable in this situation. I do not think other Ministers or other members of this House are happy about what is happening to these sewerage workers or about the manipulation of funds that is occurring; nor are they happy about the continual crying of poor mouth. I believe the Minister for Works is a victim of his own Cabinet in this respect.

On the other hand, the Premier is made of tougher stuff; he finds it easier to indulge in these sorts of tactics. I do not blame the Minister at all, because I believe he has had this situation inflicted upon him from higher up.

Another area where savings could be effected if the Government were not playing politics and playing it very tough and dirty is in joint electoral rolls. I have a Press cutting here dated the 9th October headed, "WA cold on joint poll rolls" which states—

Canberra: WA's Liberal-Country Party Government had "gone cold" on the idea of joint Commonwealth-State electoral rolls for WA, the Minister for Administrative Services, Mr Daly said yesterday.

This Government would not have a bar of such legislation yet joint electoral rolls would save the State thousands of dollars and at the same time provide better rolls. But because of the Premier's bitter bigotry towards Canberra, thousands of dollars are being wasted on separate electorate rolls.

I refer now to the Regional Employment Development Scheme. When the Australian Government provided financial assistance for this purpose, it was applauded, but when finance was reduced, it was booed. It just cannot win.

Mr Laurance: You are dead right.

Mr FLETCHER: It is argued that such financial assistance created inflation and that to take it away created unemployment. On the one hand the Australian Government was booed for creating inflation by providing finance for this scheme and on the other it was booed for creating unemployment by tightening the purse strings in an attempt to reduce inflation.

We lost electoral support at both ends, which gives members an indication of the ridiculous, one-sided and unfair system under which we operate.

I have pointed to the savings which could be achieved in the field of railways, joint electoral rolls, and roads; I have also pointed to the loss incurred by the Government's late entry into the Medibank scheme. Yet the Premier now has asked the Water Supply Union to go east and try to prevail upon the Australian Government to make more money available to this State, when I have enumerated the various sources of finance available to assist the State of which the Premier is not taking advantage and which would obviate the need to dismiss water supply workers.

If this is to be the Premier's tactic in respect of the water supply workers, where next will it occur? Will it occur in the gold-mining industry? The price of gold has flopped recently. Will it apply to the Waterside Workers' Federation? Will its members be asked to go east and ask the Australian Government for more finance? What other unions will be used in the manner the Premier is trying to use the Water Supply Union?

I have a Press cutting headed, "World gold supply exceeds demand" which states—

The world gold price has fallen for the simplest economic reason—because supply exceeds demand.

On September 1 the International Monetary Fund announced plans to sell part of its gold holding to help poor nations.

The accompanying graph shows the market reaction. Gold fell more than \$US30 in three weeks.

However, the IMF plan to sell gold and reform the international monetary system, with gold playing a minor role, was only the latest in a series of blows to gold prices.

Alongside the cutting is my note, "Whitlam's fault, of course". I know that although members opposite are quiet now, they will find a way of blaming the Whitlam Government—just as the Press will—for the decline in gold prices, despite the fact that it is an international situation.

I refer to the benevolence of the Federal Minister for Transport and the Australian Government in respect of finance for roads. All members have received the publication titled, "Finance for Roads"; I wonder how many members threw it into their waste-paper baskets because it represented too good a case for the Australian Government. On page 1 it states—

The Australian Government is providing \$1 156 million during the 1974/75-1976/77 period as grants to the States for roads and transport research.

This is an increase of nearly 33 per cent over the \$870 million provided during the previous three years.

The \$1 156 million is being provided under three Acts—the Roads Grants Act, 1974, the National Roads Act, 1974, and the Transport (Planning and Research) Act, 1974.

Included in this figure is the additional \$30 million grant to the States for roads announced at the Premiers' Conference in February.

Yet the Premier still cries poor mouth and claims he is not getting a sufficient proportion of that money. Under the heading "National Roads Act, 1974" appears the following statement—

This Act provides \$409.21 million for national highways, export roads and major commercial roads during the three years ending 30 June, 1977.

Can anybody on the other side of the House claim that the same amount of finance would be provided by the alternative Australian Government?

Sir Charles Court: Of course we can!

Mr FLETCHER: The previous Liberal-Country Party Government in Canberra handed out assistance in a parsimonious fashion when compared with the generosity of the present Australian Government.

Sir Charles Court: You are not up with the game.

Mr FLETCHER: The publication continues under the heading "Roads Grants Act, 1974", where it states—

This is providing \$720.8 million over the three years for:

- Rural arterial and developmental roads.
- Beef roads.
- Rural local roads.
- Minor traffic engineering and road safety improvements (MITERS).
- Urban arterial roads.
- Urban local roads.

NSW is to receive \$214.0 million, Vic \$161.1 million, Qld \$151.8 million, SA \$46.3 million, W.A. \$116.5 million, Tas \$31.0 million.

I do not have to tell the Premier that, because he already knows it. However, these sorts of statistics get hidden in this type of publication. They should be shouted from the rooftops to let the electorate know the Australian Government is not as vicious or tight-fisted as is alleged. Yet the Premier still grizzles about the lack of finance forthcoming from Canberra.

Press release 75/706 of the 11th September, 1975, has this to say—

A report on proposals by the States to improve their urban public transport services was released today by the Australian Minister for Transport, Mr Jones.

The report, "A Review of Public Transport Investment Proposals for Australian Capital Cities, 1974-75", by the Bureau of Transport Economics, is the third in a series which began in June 1972.

Mr Jones said that the report contained the results of evaluations which were used in framing urban transport improvement projects approved in the 1974-75 budget. It contained details of additional projects submitted by the States since the Australian Government approved a scheme in 1973 to provide two-thirds of the capital cost of improving urban public transport.

I repeat that two-thirds of the capital cost is to be provided.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member has five minutes remaining.

Mr FLETCHER: Thank you, Mr Speaker; I wish I had five hours, despite what the House might think.

Mr B. T. Burke: I do, too, Harry.

Mr FLETCHER: I get satisfaction in telling the truth, rather than seeing it hidden. The Press release continues—

"The report covers evaluations of 25 urban public transport projects representing a total investment of \$93.2 million," Mr Jones said.

"Of this, \$45.8 million was for projects to improve urban railway systems," he said.

A nonmetropolitan member opposite asked, "How could they manage it?" I say: Let the Australian Government pick up the tab for the lot. I would prefer that situation rather than seeing this State standing the loss, so that we could use the finance for other purposes.

I continue to quote from news release 75/706 issued by the Australian Department of Transport and dated the 11th September, 1975, as follows—

Typical projects for which the Australian Government has agreed to provide financial assistance are:

The purchase of four hydrofoil ferries to operate between Manly and Sydney (\$1.4 million).

There are other projects listed, but this is the one in which I am interested—

The acquisition of 65 new buses for Perth (\$2.7 million).

However, the Premier still continues to complain about the shortage of finance in this State. He could further benefit the State by handing over the railways, because he would then be able to bring down a surplus Budget instead of the one he has just brought down. He could help to keep in employment the men employed by the Metropolitan Water Board and also others who are on the list of unemployed.

I now intend to quote from a news release issued by the same department, No. 75/667, dated the 30th July, 1975, and headed, "Rural Local Roads Program Approved in Western Australia". Under this heading the following appears—

The Australian Minister for Transport, Mr Jones, has approved Western Australia's Rural Local Roads Program involving an expenditure of \$15.24 million in 1975-76.

Also, in news release No. 75/713, dated the 17th September, 1975, the following appears—

The Minister for Transport, Mr Jones, today described claims by the New South Wales Government—

I mention this only to point out how reasonable my argument is that there is connivance going on in the Eastern States. I continue—

—that the Australian Government had cut its allocation of road funds to the State as "a mischievous distortion of the truth".

I merely add that Western Australia indulges in the same sort of distortion. The Minister for Transport went on to say—

... that for the three years 1974-75 to 1976-77, the Australian Government would provide \$379.33 million to N.S.W. for roads under the roads legislation passed in September 1974—

He then went on to say—

I hardly see how an increase of this size could be called a "cut" in spending.

This is part of the anti-Labor Premiers' co-ordinated attack on the Australian Government. I hope I can get this one point over in the limited time available to me, because this explains how the propaganda backfired. In the news release issued by the Australian Department of Transport—No. 75/689, dated the 8th August, 1975—the following appeared—

Sir Charles Court was reported this week as claiming that the Australian National Railways were deliberately attempting to freeze the shipping line, Associated Steamships Pty Ltd, out of the container trade between the east coast and Fremantle.

He was quoted as stating that this was "a very blatant case of a Government instrumentality trying to freeze out private enterprise".

Mr Jones said that if the Premier was so concerned at the competition offered by rail to the shipping company, he should instruct his Transport Minister to have W.A. rail container freights raised.

The WWF, incidentally, was recruited to approach Associated Steamships Pty. Ltd. to continue operating its ships on the

Western Australian coast: I continue to quote from the same news release—

"Of course Sir Charles won't do this because the advice given to me by the Transport Minister, Mr O'Connor, was that the W.A. railways were already making a profit on the carriage of containers on their section of the Trans-Australian Railway," he said.

As far as I can see, a subsidy is being requested from the Australian taxpayers so that it may be granted to Associated Steamships Pty. Ltd. Incidentally, speaking on behalf of the waterside workers, I would like to see the interstate freight carried by ships, but if it can be carted more economically by rail to the advantage of the community generally, that is how it should be carted. Continuing to quote—

Each of the Ministers, including Mr O'Connor, had said that his State's portion of the railways was operating profitably so far as this type of traffic was concerned.

However, there was no Press comment. I thank the House for its indulgence, and I thank you, Mr Speaker, for allowing me to speak for a little over my time.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Cowan.

JURIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Returned

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 11.06 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 15th October, 1975

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. A. F. Griffith) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

BILLS (4): ASSENT

Message from the Lieutenant-Governor and Administrator received and read notifying assent to the following Bills—

1. State Housing Death Benefit Scheme Act Amendment Bill.
2. Mineral Sands (Western Titanium) Agreement Bill.
3. Mineral Sands (Allied Eneabba) Agreement Bill.
4. Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act Amendment Bill (No. 2).

QUESTION ON NOTICE

TOWN PLANNING

Scarborough: Pizza Hut

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON, to the Minister for Justice representing the Minister for Town Planning:

- (1) Has the Minister upheld an appeal to erect a Pizza Hut on lots 9 and 10, corner of Scarborough Beach Road and Liege Street?
- (2) (a) Was the existing building on the site used as a Liberal Party committee room for the 1974 State Elections;
(b) did the building also carry a 24 foot by 8 foot election sign for the Liberal Party candidate for Scarborough; and
(c) if so, were these circumstances influential in the upholding of the appeal by the Minister?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) and (b) It is understood from a nearby resident that the site was used as suggested by the Hon. Member and that Labor Party signs were also erected on this site.
(c) No. I understand the Liberal candidate (now member) was opposed to the project. A strong influence in the Minister's decision was the traffic study which was carried out and professional officers' recommendations to uphold the appeal.

BILLS (2): RECEIPT AND FIRST READING

1. Government Railways Act Amendment Bill (No. 2).

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. N. E. Baxter (Minister for Health), read a first time.

2. Acts Amendment (Western Australian Meat Commission) Bill.

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. N. McNeill (Minister for Justice), read a first time.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Third Reading

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West—Minister for Justice) [4.40 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.