

cratic for a majority of the members of this House to poke something down the throats of the people of Western Australia whether they like it or not, without first giving them an opportunity to decide the issue by means of a referendum. That is the only fair way to handle this matter.

Perhaps it would have been all right had there been no alternative available. But there is an alternative in fluoride tablets. Why should we fluoridate the whole of the Government water supplies in Western Australia when we have fluoride tablets as an alternative? If the parents of the children are interested enough they can give their children these fluoride tablets in the correct quantity and obtain the desired result.

We are talking about a different age group altogether. Members on the Government benches say, "Drink water." I would point out, however, that there is very little water drunk by the school children of Western Australia; those for whom this legislation is particularly being brought down. I know in my own case that when my son comes home he does not drink water; he goes to the refrigerator and takes out a soft drink. We all know that near every school there is a little tuck-shop, and that the children have a soft drink with their meal.

So, on the one hand, we are providing for fluoridated water, and, on the other hand, the children are taking soft drinks. I do not intend to speak very long on this matter, as I know there are other speakers more competent than I who wish to address the House.

I would, however, like to refer to the psychological aspect of this matter, particularly as it will affect the elderly people; those who may be in their own homes, or in hospitals. These elderly people have very little else to do but think of days gone by, and those ahead of them. They have never heard of fluoride, and they are likely to be afraid of the effect it will have on them; they will point the bone at themselves and feel that if they drink fluoride they will become ill. I do not know what the psychological effect is likely to be in such cases, but perhaps the Minister may be able to enlighten us.

On the lighter side, there will be certain people who will be put out of work. Mr. Clive Griffiths said that the teeth of the people will always be good; and this of course will mean that the old fang-farrier—the dentist—will be thrown out of work. With those few remarks, I oppose the Bill.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. R. Thompson.

House adjourned at 11.12 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, the 1st November, 1966

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

QUESTIONS (13): ON NOTICE DISTRICT REGISTRAR FOR PERTH

*Registrations of Births, Marriages,
and Deaths*

1A. Mr. GUTHRIE asked the Chief Secretary:

How many—
(a) deaths;

(b) births;
(c) marriages,
were registered in each of the years
1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1962, 1963,
1964 and 1965 at the office of the
District Registrar, Perth?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

| | Births | Deaths | Marriages |
|------------|--------|--------|-----------|
| 1927 | 3,590 | 1,791 | 1,595 |
| 1928 | 3,648 | 1,900 | 1,805 |
| 1929 | 4,028 | 2,136 | 1,832 |
| 1930 | 4,196 | 2,030 | 1,682 |
| 1962 | 5,913 | 3,736 | 3,166 |
| 1963 | 9,177 | 3,816 | 3,322 |
| 1964 | 9,083 | 4,041 | 3,567 |
| 1965 | 9,003 | 3,980 | 3,760 |

STATISTICIAN AND REGISTRAR- GENERAL

Staff Employed

1B. Mr. GUTHRIE asked the Chief Secretary:

What was the total staff of the Government Statistician and Registrar-General (including the office of the District Registrar) in Perth during each of the financial years—

- (a) 1927-28;
- (b) 1928-29;
- (c) 1929-30?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

Total Staff
(Statistician
and Registrar
General)

| | |
|-------------------|----|
| (a) 1927-28 | 27 |
| (b) 1928-29 | 27 |
| (c) 1929-30 | 29 |

FEDERAL ELECTIONS

Forrest Place Meetings: Allocation of Days to Political Parties

2. Mr. JAMIESON asked the Minister for Police:

- (1) Is he aware that the Australian Labor Party has been granted only four days by the Police Department for Forrest Place meetings for the forthcoming Federal elections, compared with its opponents' ten days?
- (2) Will he undertake to have a more equitable distribution for future elections?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

- (1) Yes.
 - (2) The allocation of dates is considered equitable, and the days are as follows:—
- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Liberal Party | 4 |
| Australian Labor Party | 4 |
| Democratic Labour Party | 3 |
| Communist Party | 2 |
| Country Party | 1 |

RAILWAYS

Narrogin-Corrigin Service

3. Mr. GAYFER asked the Minister for Railways:

- (1) What is the rail distance from Narrogin to Corrigin?

- (2) How many days a week is there a morning train service from Narrogin to Corrigin?
- (3) Is it known by the Railways Department that this connection serves the town of Corrigin with its most important requirements, such as mail and urgent parts for machinery?
- (4) How many times, say in the last month, has this train arrived in Corrigin on time?
- (5) If delays are experienced in keeping to a schedule, what is the reason for these delays?

Mr. COURT replied:

- (1) Sixty-eight miles.
- (2) Six.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) During the four weeks ended the 22nd October, 1966—three times.
- (5) Delays were attributable to essential shunting for heavy grain loadings at Yealering and Bullaring.

NATIVES

Meat Ration Tickets

4. Mr. GAYFER asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

- (1) Are natives issued with coupons in the south-west area entitling them to a meat ration?
- (2) Under what circumstances are these ration tickets issued?
- (3) What is the value of each ticket?
- (4) Has there been an increase in this value over the last five years?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

- (1) Natives in necessitous circumstances in the south-west are issued with food orders which cover specified items, including meat.
- (2) To persons awaiting Commonwealth social services benefits, deserted wives pending maintenance or other appropriate action, dependants of persons in gaol and other cases of genuine hardship.
- (3) Each order is based on the number of persons involved, calculated on the relief scale used by the Child Welfare Department for non-natives in similar circumstances.
- (4) Yes. Until April, 1965, the Department of Native Welfare used a relief scale less than that of the Child Welfare Department. The latter scale was adopted following the granting of full civic status to natives in the South-West Land Division as from the 1st July, 1964.

CATTLE

Unregistered Stud Stock from Eastern States

5. Mr. GAYFER asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Is it possible to introduce to Western Australia unregistered cattle from the Eastern States other than from a stud property?

(2) If not, why not?

Mr. NALDER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Because cattle other than those originating from a stud cannot be identified with certainty and therefore may have come from a property or district where pleuropneumonia exists.

STANDARD GAUGE RAILWAY

Northam-Southern Cross: Load Reduction on Narrow Gauge Line

6. Mr. HAWKE asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) What is or will be the maximum load reduction on freight trains made necessary by the construction of overways to enable the narrow gauge line between Northam and Southern Cross to cross over the standard gauge lines?

(2) Is that reduction considered minor, as claimed in reply to my subquestion (5) of the series asked by me on this subject on the 22nd September last?

Mr. COURT replied:

(1) (a) From Northam to Merredin the maximum load has not been reduced. From Merredin to Southern Cross the load for an "A" class locomotive has been reduced temporarily at this stage from 1,370 to 715 tons. This is based on a speed restriction applied to new track work. As the maximum permissible speed is raised, so can the load be increased. Trains from Merredin towards Kalgoorlie are usually loaded for through working which is 850 tons.

(b) From Southern Cross to Merredin the load has not been reduced. From Merredin to Northam, the load for an "A" class locomotive has been reduced temporarily at this stage from 1,120 to 850 tons.

(2) It is expected that when the new track work over the grade separations has settled down and the loads adjusted accordingly, the effect on traffic will be minor, bearing in mind there will be no grain traffic on the 3 ft. 6 in. gauge.

RAILWAYS

Replacement of Locomotives, and Use of West Northam Station

7. Mr. HAWKE asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) When is it thought all steam locomotives will be replaced by diesels and use then be made of the new West Northam station for rail passenger services?

(2) As the new West Northam station was completed on the 9th June, 1966, why cannot the station be now used for rail passenger services without having to wait until all steam locomotives are replaced by diesels?

Mr. COURT replied:

(1) There are at present 18 steam locomotives concerned. A number of these will be replaced by narrow gauge diesel locomotives, with the introduction of standard gauge grain operations, at which time it may be practicable to use West Northam station for passenger purposes.

(2) As explained to the Leader of the Opposition in answer to his question on the 22nd September last, to stop passenger trains at West Northam in present circumstances could seriously hamper other schedules.

It is considered that the average patronage of one passenger daily boarding at Spring Hill is not sufficient justification to jeopardise smooth working over this section of the line.

Liquor Licences for Buffet Serveries

8. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Has the commission given consideration to introducing liquor licences to buffet serveries on W.A.G.R. passenger trains?

(2) If "Yes," what was their final determination?

(3) Does he not agree that liquor licences and the control of drinking would stimulate passenger train travel and be in keeping with modern demands?

Mr. COURT replied:

(1) and (2) This matter has been examined from time to time but final determination has not yet been made.

(3) Not necessarily. The sale of alcoholic refreshments under controlled conditions would be regarded as a facility for the convenience of passengers rather than a stimulant to patronage.

TRAFFIC

Congestion at Mint Street-Basinghall Street-Albany Highway Intersection

9. Mr. DAVIES asked the Minister for Works:

- (1) Is any action proposed to ease traffic congestion in the vicinity of the intersections of Mint Street and Basinghall Street and Albany Highway, East Victoria Park?
- (2) If so, what is proposed?
- (3) If not, can the position be investigated with a view to easing the position?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Traffic lights will be provided. The Perth City Council has been requested to construct the necessary channelisation. When this is completed, the traffic lights will be installed.
- (3) Answered by (2).

RAILWAYS

Freight on Ammonium Nitrate

10. Mr. MOIR asked the Minister for Railways:

- (1) Are different freight rates charged by the railways for ammonium nitrate when—
 - (a) it is to be used as a fertiliser, and
 - (b) it is to be used as an explosive component?
- (2) If there are different rates charged, what amount would be charged in each case from a common source of supply to Kalgoorlie?

Mr. COURT replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Fremantle to Kalgoorlie—

| | 1 ton | 4 ton | 8 ton | |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|---------------|
| | \$ | \$ | \$ | |
| Fertilizer | 13.60 | 11.00 | 7.38 | July-December |
| | | | 6.20 | January-June |
| Explosive component | 18.65 | 18.05 | 18.65 | |

RAILWAYS

Esperance Road and Rail Services: Receipts

11. Mr. MOIR asked the Minister for Railways:

Will he supply details of the revenue received from operations of—

- (a) the rail service to and from Esperance;
 - (b) the road service to and from Esperance;
- covering the previous two financial years?

Mr. COURT replied:

- (a) Revenue attributable to operating the rail services between Coolgardie and Esperance is as under—
1964-65—£528,266 (\$1,056,532).
1965-66—\$1,107,784.

- (b) Revenue attributable to operating the road services between Kalgoorlie and Esperance is as under—

1964-65—£20,828 (\$41,656).

1965-66—\$45,946.

TOTALISATOR AGENCY BOARD

Investment Tax on Involuntary Bets by Employees

12. Mr. TONKIN asked the Treasurer:

- (1) Is he aware that from time to time the Totalisator Agency Board collects investment tax in respect of certain investments involuntarily made by employees and that such collections are a contravention of the Betting Control Act, section 16A, subsection (4) and the Betting Investment Tax Act?
- (2) Is he aware that if and when such investments are made on a horse in a race on which the board conducts a totalisator pool and the horse is successful the effects are as follows:—
 - (a) The employee pays for the ticket and pays investment tax but has no chance of winning;
 - (b) the investment is included in turnover and the Treasury receives turnover tax and investment tax in respect of the investment;
 - (c) the dividend to all other holders of tickets on the winning horse is reduced proportionately;
 - (d) the T.A.B. collects a dividend without having made an investment and thus obtains unjust enrichment?

- (3) As the foregoing are the inevitable result of the Totalisator Agency Board's policy in the circumstances outlined and are in no way suppositious is he content to continue to collect turnover and investment taxes on such investments?

- (4) Would it not be equitable to regard as a bet each investment upon which investment tax is paid and the amount invested is accepted even though such bet is made involuntarily by an employee of the board and results from error?

Mr. BRAND replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) No.
- (3) It is not accepted that the facts are as stated.
- (4) I have not considered the matter.

RAILWAYS

"Albany Progress": Receipts from Fares

13. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Railways:

Can he advise—

- (a) The amount of money received by way of fares from passengers travelling from Perth to Albany via *Albany Progress* for the years 1964 and 1965 and to the 30th September, 1966?
- (b) The amount of money received by way of fares from passengers travelling from Albany to Perth via *Albany Progress* for the years 1964 and 1965 and to the 30th September, 1966?

Mr. COURT replied:

- (a) 1964—\$24,029
1965—\$19,959
*1966—\$14,248
- (b) 1964—\$20,699
1965—\$20,302
*1966—\$16,324

*1/1/66 to 30/9/66

QUESTIONS (5): WITHOUT NOTICE

WATER SUPPLIES

Desalination: Article in "News Review"

1. Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON (Minister for Water Supplies): On the 26th October, the member for Kalgoorlie asked me a question regarding an article which appeared in the September, 1966, issue of *News Review*. I advised him that as I had not seen the article in question, if he would make his copy available the question would be considered. The reply to the question is as follows:—

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Reverse osmosis appears to be a promising method of desalting brackish water. There is insufficient information available yet to estimate the probable cost of desalting by this method, but it appears that the water could not be considered cheap.

NATIVE RESERVE AT QUAIRADING

Siting of Houses

2. Mr. GAYFER asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

- (1) Is he aware that in the construction of the six native houses on the reserve at Quairading, because of the siting of the State Electricity Commission main, some of the houses will have to be built six feet apart?

- (2) Why is this when there are so many acres in the reserve?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question, the answer to which is as follows:—

- (1) and (2) Of the six new houses under construction, three of them are being erected six feet from the existing cottages which will be demolished when the new houses are completed. Three of the new houses will be 30 feet apart and three 20 feet apart.

SUPERPHOSPHATE

Payment for Orders

3. Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Agriculture:

I have here an invoice from one of the superphosphate agents—it is a pro forma invoice—for super to be delivered early in February and payment is requested by the 25th November. As that date is 2½ months before the goods will be delivered, and about six months before the super will be put into the ground, does he consider this to be a fair go?

Mr. NALDER replied:

I have no knowledge of the situation, but if the honourable member will let me have a copy of the invoice I will have the matter investigated.

IRON ORE: MT. NEWMAN CONSORTIUM

Use of Port Hedland Harbour

4. Mr. BICKERTON asked the Minister for the North-West:

- (1) Has he seen newspaper articles concerning the reluctance of two Japanese companies to agree to the Mt. Newman consortium utilizing Port Hedland?
- (2) Is the Government in on these negotiations?
- (3) If so, will he supply the House with the latest details in connection with the matter?

Mr. COURT replied:

- (1) to (3) There have been Press reports that one company, in particular, has been objecting, or allegedly objecting, to the proposed development of Port Hedland to absorb the Mt. Newman project or top of the Mt. Goldsworthy project. We as a Government have the advice of our advisers, and

this advice has been passed on to the Japanese steel mills, and presumably to their shipping companies, that Port Hedland, on the plans before us, was capable of being developed to take a tonnage of 25,000,000 to 30,000,000 tons per annum and operate as an efficient port. This is a very big tonnage by world standards and is considered to be ample for Mt. Goldsworthy, Mt. Newman, the Leslie Salt Company, and the normal build-up of general purpose or other tonnages. The State Government is being kept informed of the objections that have been made by the shipping interests that are to ship the Goldsworthy ore—that is, the Cia San Juan company—and we can only assume that the company is lodging the objections to protect its legal position under the shipping contract that it has in respect of the Goldsworthy ore. Personally I have no lack of confidence that the project will proceed as announced last week.

MOTOR VEHICLES

Names and Qualifications of Shire Inspectors

5. Mr. NALDER (Minister for Agriculture): On the 10th August last, the member for Darling Range requested some information with reference to the names and qualifications of traffic inspectors. The Minister concerned has made this information available and I ask that it be tabled in view of the fact that it is quite voluminous.

The papers were tabled.

BILLS (10): ASSENT

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

1. Supply Bill (No. 2).
2. Metropolitan Region Improvement Tax Act Amendment Bill.
3. Judges' Salaries and Pensions Act Amendment Bill.
4. Builders' Registration Act Amendment Bill.
5. Totalisator Agency Board Betting Act Amendment Bill.
6. Swan River Conservation Act Amendment Bill.
7. Stock Diseases Act Amendment Bill.
8. Eastern Goldfields Transport Board Act Amendment Bill.
9. State Electricity Commission Act Amendment Bill.
10. Poisons Act Amendment Bill.

BILLS (4): INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. State Transport Co-ordination Bill.
2. Eastern Goldfields Transport Board Act Amendment Bill (No. 2).
3. Metropolitan (Perth) Passenger Transport Trust Act Amendment Bill.
4. Road and Air Transport Commission Bill.

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

WEST AUSTRALIAN TRUSTEE EXECUTOR AND AGENCY COMPANY LIMITED ACT AMENDMENT BILL (PRIVATE)

Select Committee: Adoption of Report

Order of the Day read for the consideration of the report of the Select Committee.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. W. A. Manning) [4.51 p.m.]: I have to report that the Bill contains the several provisions required by the Standing Orders.

MR. DURACK (Perth) [4.52 p.m.]: I move—

That the report of the Select Committee be adopted.

Question put and passed.

PERPETUAL EXECUTORS TRUSTEES AND AGENCY COMPANY (W.A.) LIMITED ACT AMENDMENT BILL (PRIVATE)

Select Committee: Adoption of Report

Order of the Day read for the consideration of the report of the Select Committee.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. W. A. Manning) [4.53 p.m.]: I have to report that the Bill contains the several provisions required by the Standing Orders.

MR. DURACK (Perth) [4.54 p.m.]: I move—

That the report of the Select Committee be adopted.

Question put and passed.

MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL *Third Reading*

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr. Ross Hutchinson (Minister for Works), and passed.

INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Third Reading

MR. O'NEIL (East Melville—Minister for Labour) [4.55 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR. W. HEGNEY (Mt. Hawthorn) [4.56 p.m.]: I certainly do not feel disposed

to allow this iniquitous Bill to be read a third time without again voicing my protest on behalf of the trade unions of Western Australia. As a result of the irrefutable statements made by members of the Opposition during the second reading debate and the Committee stage of the Bill, the following facts stand out very clearly in my mind:—

1. There will be no more quarterly adjustments of the State basic wage. Indeed there will be no further declarations of the State basic wage, a practice followed by the State industrial authorities for the past 40 years.
2. As it is most likely that there will be increases in the prices of goods and services during the immediate future, in relation to which the consumer price index is calculated, the action of the Government will be tantamount to a reduction of wages for at least 80 per cent. of the State work force.
3. The State basic wage will be pegged at \$33.50—the present wage—until the present appropriate Commonwealth basic wage of \$32.80 is increased by more than 70c.
4. It will be seen, therefore, that the Government has removed entirely from the State Industrial Commission the authority to determine a basic wage and to declare quarterly adjustments in accordance with the Act passed less than three years ago by this very Government.
5. That when the Government reconstituted the arbitration authority in 1963, one of its main objectives was to reduce the basic wage to conform with the Federal basic wage, and to discontinue quarterly adjustments.

I know that members of the Liberal Party, especially one or two Ministers, protested that this was not so, but I, personally, as well as other members of the Opposition, doubted their word, and time has proved our forecast to be entirely correct. Other points that come to mind are—

6. That members of the Opposition predicted this would happen.

I do not propose to weary the House by requoteing from the relevant *Hansard*; suffice it to say that evidence is there to the effect that we believed, as we know to be a fact now, that the underlying motive of the Government was to bring the basic wage down to the Federal basic wage and to abolish quarterly adjustments.

7. That the Government removed Justice Nevile from the presidency of the court and appointed four commissioners behind his back, and two of the commissioners at least were to be expected to refuse to grant quarterly adjustments.

It does not matter what protestations the members of the Government advance to the contrary, I still contend that some of the commissioners were handpicked for the purpose of having quarterly adjustments discontinued. The next point is—

8. That when the new commission was to inquire into the matter of the basic wage—

That is, shortly after it took office—

—the then Minister for Labour, on behalf of the Liberal Government, indicated to the commission that his Government was only prepared to agree to the Federal basic wage of £15 8s. This was subsequently the figure fixed by the commission.

We have no quarrel with that at all. The commission made its decision in accordance with the power and authority it then had. To continue—

9. That when the Government found that all the commissioners at various times declared they were in favour of quarterly adjustments—

As indeed they did—

—and acted accordingly, the Liberal Government decided it would take away all authority from the members of the commission to have anything to do with the basic wage.

10. That on each occasion the Liberal Government has amended the industrial arbitration law, it acted to the detriment of the wage-earners in this State.

I can now revert to the year 1930 and briefly mention that one of the subjects in dispute in regard to this very Act was an amendment by the then Liberal Government. This amendment had the effect of reducing the basic wage by 8s. per week some months prior to any declaration which would have been made by the Arbitration Court. As a matter of fact the cost of living—to use the ordinary term—had fallen towards the end of the year.

Early in 1930 the Government introduced a Bill to provide that the Arbitration Court should consider the cost of living figures and may adjust the basic wage quarterly. As the Act was passed in 1930, the then Arbitration Court had the figures before it. It considered the figures and reduced the basic wage in March 1931 from £4 6s. to £3 18s. per week. That was done by the action of the then Liberal Government in providing that the court may adjust the basic wage quarterly.

Time passes and we find today, in 1966, that the Government proposes—it has the numbers and will do it—to take away altogether the right of the Industrial Commission to determine not only the quarterly adjustment, but the annual basic wage or periodical basic wage which the commission would otherwise have power to declare from time to time.

In 1952 the Liberal Government had another strike at the Industrial Arbitration Act. I recollect the debates of 1952 when the Attorney-General introduced on behalf of his Government an amending Bill. I mentioned the other day—I will not go into details now—that one clause of the Bill covered about 17 or 18 pages in connection with disputed elections, court-controlled ballots, and so forth; and that clause was not included for the purpose of advancing the union movement or the betterment of the working people, but to restrict the activities of the union.

At the same time, the then Government introduced a number of penalties which were rightly called savage and unreal; and, although some of the provisions, as we knew then, would never be operated, the Government has not, up to date, seen fit to remove these obnoxious provisions from the Industrial Arbitration Act, which deals with people. The Government should be doing everything it possibly can to foster and encourage good relationships between employers and employees throughout the State, but the Government is not doing that.

What did the Government do in 1963? This Government, in 1963, decided that a responsible industrial authority, presided over by Mr. Justice Neville, with the duty of considering figures quarterly and adjusting the basic wage in accordance with the cost-of-living figures, was to be abolished. This is the Government that pointed out to the court that the determination of the basic wage should be in line with the Federal basic wage. The Government did not introduce a straight-out amendment to discontinue quarterly basic wage adjustments.

The Government did not do that; what it did was this. It abolished the Arbitration Court altogether behind the back of the president. We had the Minister's own statement that he and a civil servant inquired into the provisions which should be incorporated in a modern Act, and for this purpose they went to Queensland. I understand the members of the Arbitration Court knew nothing about what was intended. The President of the Arbitration Court was not only insulted but removed entirely, and a completely new commission set up.

The then Conciliation Commissioner was appointed Chief Industrial Commissioner, and three others were appointed. You, Mr. Speaker, and most of us in public life have a fair insight into human nature; and I repeat, without being monotonous, that in 1963 this Government with the deliberate purpose of achieving its objective of discontinuing quarterly adjustments, among other things, decided to remove the Arbitration Court altogether—abolish it—and appoint four new commissioners in this State.

That was done; but what happened? Shortly afterwards the Industrial Com-

mission, in what is called court session, was inquiring into the basic wage in accordance with the provisions of the Act; because an approach could be made to the commission by the W.A. Employers Federation, or by the Western Australian trade unions for the purpose of an inquiry into the basic wage. On that occasion the Government had before the commission, a representative in the person of, I think, the Crown Solicitor. The case for a general declaration was heard, and a decision was made.

Now we come to the implementation of another provision in the Arbitration Act, introduced as I said before, by this Government in connection with quarterly adjustments. The commissioners, appointed by this Government less than three years ago, decided to carry on quarterly adjustments for the first time. There was an alternation of commissioners the next time the quarterly adjustment was considered, but the commissioners again decided to adjust the basic wage quarterly. Why? Because they found the cost of living—to use the ordinary term—in the meantime had increased by a certain percentage, and they decided to maintain the purchasing power of the workers' wages.

Time went on and the commission still continued to adjust the basic wage quarterly. But what happened? This Government did not make arrangements to approach the court and ask the Industrial Commission to reduce the State basic wage to conform with the Federal basic wage by submitting the requisite evidence to justify its action. What this Government did was to insult and pass a vote of no confidence, as it were, in its own instrument; that is, in the commissioners it appointed less than three years ago.

Three years ago the Government wrote in the Act the provisions in regard to the court having power to determine a basic wage; it continued to write into the Act power to allow the commission to adjust the basic wage quarterly in accordance with cost-of-living figures; and it continued to write into the Act the power that in the public interest the Government could approach the court at any time for the purpose of having its views submitted. This was a court appointed not by the Opposition, and not by a ballot of the people of the State but, rightly so, by this Government, not 10 years ago, 15 years ago, or 20 years ago, but by an Act that was proclaimed less than three years ago.

Now that the Government finds the personnel which it appointed has decided to do the decent thing; has decided, with a sense of responsibility, to adjust the basic wage quarterly, what does the Government do? It goes to the lowest depths to which any Government could go.

Mr. Graham: Hear, hear!

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The Government has decided to remove from this responsible

authority all power in connection with the determination of the basic wage or quarterly adjustments. The power reposed in it less than three years ago is now to be removed by this Government for political purposes, and the Chief Commissioner and his three fellow commissioners will have no authority whatsoever to raise a little finger in connection with the determination of the State basic wage that shall operate for 80 per cent. of the industrial union workers throughout the length and breadth of this country.

Mr. Graham: Little Sir Echoes.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: It has now been written into this Bill, which will become an Act, that in future, when the Commonwealth basic wage of the six capital cities exceeds \$33.50—it is 70c below it now—the State basic wage will automatically be increased accordingly. Who will increase it? Will the commission have anything to do with it? It will have no power at all. All that will be done is that the Industrial Registrar will obtain the figures from official sources and make arrangements for those figures to be inserted in the *Industrial Gazette*. That is all that will happen; and, although protestations have been made that this is not a move to reduce the basic wage, I say without any equivocation whatsoever that the action of this Government is tantamount to a reduction in the purchasing power of wages and, consequently, a reduction in the wages payable to the workers of this State.

Less than three years ago the court decided to increase the basic wage by 24c or 25c because of the increase in the cost-of-living figures. If the same position arises in the next quarter, and this Bill is passed, the commission will have no power to keep the wages in line with the purchasing power of the pound. Consequently, there will be a reduction of wages. So it will go on until 70c is reached. Then, as I said just now, the Commonwealth figures will be taken and the Industrial Registrar will cause the insertion in the *Industrial Gazette* of the adjusted figures for both male and female workers.

That brings me to this point. For some time, interested organisations have been endeavouring to induce the Government to do something in connection with the female basic wage. The commission has had certain powers up till now. The Minister, in reply to my questions—I accept his view as being sincere—said that the commission has the power to declare equal wages for males and females.

However, one has only to read the judgments of the Chief Commissioner and other members of the commission to realise the position from the commission's point of view. Indeed, the Chief Commissioner has indicated that amending legislation would be necessary. Consequently, had the Act remained intact, then it would have been competent for further approaches to

be made to the Industrial Commission, even though there had not been any amendments.

It was hoped—and I think those concerned will hope in vain—that there would be some appropriate amendment to allow a very definite and forward move to be made to adjust the male and female basic wages to bring them more into line.

I know it has been said that price control has nothing to do with the basic wage. All I wish to say in this connection is that the *Western Australian Industrial Gazette*, which has been quoted here, contains a judgment by Mr. Commissioner Schnaars. The gazette is No. 45 part 2, and is dated the 1st December, 1965. Mr. Schnaars says—

The Commission has received from the Government Statistician figures relating to the movement in the Consumer Price Index for the quarter ended September, 1965.

Those figures indicated the following change in index points:—

I will not give the individual index points, but the following are the items concerned:—

Food—

Meat
Potatoes
Other

Clothing and Drapery

Housing

Household Supplies and Equipment

Miscellaneous

The total change in index points is recorded as being + 0.7. The reason I have read that is to indicate to the House that the basic wage is made up on a certain basis. The cost of living and the cost of commodities and services are taken into account, and so are the periodical adjustments to the basic wage. The items concerned are the everyday requirements of the ordinary person in the family: food, clothing and drapery, housing—and people pay rent, whether they are in a State Housing Commission home or a private home—household requirements, and miscellaneous items.

If all these items have an upward trend in price, as I have a good idea they will have in the next few months, the same as they have had in the last quarter, no corresponding increase will be made in the basic wage here. Consequently, if there is to be no restriction whatever on the price of commodities and services which wages will purchase, the tendency will be for those concerned to increase the prices as far as possible until buyer resistance is so strong they will have to call a halt.

For some years now the Government in Western Australia has displayed a great interest in endeavouring to lower the wage in this State, but it has shown a great, unparalleled apathy concerning do-

ing anything concrete to protect the workers' wages in this State. We have certain controls. For instance, the price of butter is fixed in a certain way, but I do not propose to go into that now. This applies also to milk and potatoes. However, as far as general groceries are concerned, and rents and miscellaneous items, there is room for consideration, improvement, and alteration. The interest rate for hire purchase is fixed to a certain extent, but, here, again, there is room for improvement.

Concerning restrictive trade practices, someone said in the Chamber the other day during, I think, the Committee stage, that competition is a healthy thing. Of course open competition is healthy, whether it is in sport or business. However, combinations, collusion, and conspiracy to extract as much as possible from the people of the State are not healthy. There is every necessity for the Government to give consideration to restrictive trade practices legislation. The Government should do something to ensure that if the basic wage is pegged, then at least the working people will be protected.

My final word is that as far as I can see this Liberal Government abolished the Arbitration Court in 1963, and it has now double-crossed its own commissioners. The Government had full confidence in those commissioners less than three years ago; but this Bill is a vote of no confidence, because it will take away all the power and authority from the commissioners, and will leave them merely with the right to declare margins and other conditions, which will largely follow the Commonwealth court's decisions.

Members must not forget that 80 per cent. of the industrial unions of this State are registered here and will have no direct approach to the Commonwealth court. The deliberations of that court will be carried on in Melbourne and Sydney. Although we are an independent State and have sovereign rights; and although we should take the initiative and should have our own basic wage machinery, we are to be guided by the decisions of the Commonwealth court.

This State contains 1,000,000 square miles, and, ever since the inception of the industrial movement in this State, approaches have been made by the unions to the appropriate industrial authorities. However, the Bill we are now discussing will emasculate the Act—an Act which has been in operation for just on 41 years.

Although disputes have arisen now and again, the relationships have been comparatively harmonious and friendly in this State, and I speak from experience. However, if this Government carries on in the way it proposes, a certain amount of that harmony will disappear. The workers are not going to receive all the wage and social justice they deserve.

Members may have gathered from what I have said that I propose to oppose the third reading of this Bill.

Mr. Hawke: Hear, hear!

MR. TOMS (Bayswater) [5.23 p.m.]: As I did not avail myself of the opportunity to speak during the second reading debate on this measure, I desire now to follow the member for Mt. Hawthorn to express my displeasure concerning the Bill and to oppose the third reading.

I did, as no doubt you did, Mr. Speaker, listen with interest to the debate when this Bill was in the second reading stage. All the arguments which were submitted by members on this side of the House were based on very strong grounds and on practical experience. However, the few speakers from the Government side of the House relied solely on figures they plucked out of the air, I believe, to substantiate their case.

Practically the whole of this amending Bill is obnoxious to members on this side, but particularly obnoxious is the clause which will direct the commission in what it shall and shall not do. I think the member for Mt. Hawthorn very ably pointed out that in 1963 the present Government saw fit to go behind the back of the President of the Arbitration Court and disband that organisation, which had worked so effectively for many years, and which had been responsible for the harmonious relationship that existed between employer and employee. Not being satisfied with having abolished the Arbitration Court, the Government appointed its commissioners, who were, apparently, supposed to play ball. Even though they have certain discretionary powers, they have, apparently, not stood up to the full measure of the Government, and have not done all the Government desired. Consequently, under this Bill, the Government is taking away from those commissioners the power to adjust wages quarterly.

This is the same type of Government as that which in 1930-31 could not come quickly enough to the Parliament in order to provide for quarterly adjustments to the basic wage because of falling prices. At that time the wage was adjusted annually. I am beginning to wonder when the worker is going to have the opportunity of obtaining a little of his just deserts. This Government wants it both ways. When prices rise, it wants to peg the worker's wage, and when prices fall, it cannot come to Parliament quickly enough to enable the adjustment to be made at a much faster rate than otherwise.

Members no doubt read the editorial which appeared in the *Daily News*, on Thursday, the 27th October. We know that the Press of which I speak is the monopoly Press of Western Australia and influences public thinking quite a deal.

However, I could have been pardoned for believing that the member for Mt. Hawthorn had written this article.

The article sums up the position in which this Government is placing the workers today; and, because I believe the article is worthy of being recorded in *Hansard*, I will, with your concurrence, Mr. Speaker, read it in its entirety, as follows:—

No Help to W.A. Workers

The Government seems to be engaging in a rather cynical exercise in its move to kill the system of quarterly adjustments to the State basic wage.

The unions have put forward an argument which deserves an answer—that, while W.A. overall wages tend to be below the other States, it is wrong to tamper with our basic wage component.

It is absurd for Labour Minister O'Neil or anyone else to tell the average W.A. tradesman that this is not a relatively low-wage State.

What kind of advice does the Government rely on when it makes a decision of this nature?

Quarterly Increases

Clearly, the move is not in the interests of W.A. workers. It does not appear to be supported by the Industrial Commission—which has consistently granted quarterly increases though it has the power to refuse them.

Who, then, wants this change?

The only answer would seem to be that it is wanted by people who are interested in keeping wages down.

The Government says that its motive is to achieve uniformity by linking the W.A. basic wage with the Federal wage. But it is hard to believe that the real purpose is anything else but to check W.A. wage increases.

Whoever wins from this new Government legislation, it is unlikely to be the average W.A. wage-earner.

Mr. Kelly: Where did that article appear?

Mr. TOMS: In the *Daily News* on Thursday, the 27th October, which was after the debate on the second reading had been completed in this House.

Mr. Rushton: Are you going to read Mr. Schnaar's comments?

Mr. TOMS: I am not worried about his comments at the present time.

Mr. Tonkin: Pretty weak, weren't they?

Mr. TOMS: I am here to put the case for the average Western Australian worker.

Mr. Dunn: Mr. Schnaars was the champion in 1963.

Mr. TOMS: When the other members have finished, I will continue.

The SPEAKER: I am a bit with you, too.

Mr. TOMS: I said earlier that I did not enter into the debate at the second reading stage, but I listened to it very carefully. Once again I witnessed the spectacle in this House of the Opposition winning the argument, but the Government, by weight of numbers, carrying the particular measure. This is not in the best interests of harmony in the State, and I do not believe there are many members on the Government side who have had the industrial experience to know what the extra few shillings, with rising prices, mean to the average worker. I do not believe that members on the Government side of the House have had the industrial experience to realise this as vividly as most members on this side of the House.

Now we are being told that the court which was established by this Government is going to have taken away from it the power to adjust that wage. I wonder how much further the Government will enter into and interfere with the workings of this court. Is this going to be the last move; or is the Government at some future stage going to turn around to the court and say, "You shall do this; you shall do that"; because, as the Government has the weight of numbers in the Parliament of this State, the Government will direct what it will do?

I am beginning to wonder just how much longer the worker will take that kind of direction and dictation. I know it would not have happened when I was a young fellow. I believe the time will come when this bubble will burst, too, and the Government will only get what it is justly bringing upon itself. Why should the worker continue to follow the dictates, through the Government, of the Employers Federation? Behind the whole of this obnoxious legislation, one cannot help but see the hand of the Employers Federation. I only hope that the House of Review may, at least, consider the matter in that light and act in the interests of the workers of this State. Perhaps the House of Review will give this measure its due and, once again, open the window at the other end of this building.

MR. BRADY (Swan) [5.32 p.m.]: On this occasion I would like to say what I said last week when we were debating the second reading of the Bill; that is, I think this is the worst act by the Government, during my term in the House, as far as the working community is concerned. I have been closely associated with the industrial and trade union movement for over 30 years and I cannot remember a similar decision taken in this House except at the time the Financial Emergency Act was put through during the depression years, when the basic wage was reduced 22.5 per cent. in one fell swoop. The basic wage fell from £5 9s. to £4 7s. over-

night, allegedly to save Australia from financial collapse. This measure was introduced on the instigation of a man named Otto Niemeyer.

Now, in a time of prosperity, we are asking the workers of Western Australia to save the Government from financial collapse. If anyone takes the *Hansard* of last week, he will see that Mr. Watson, in another place, spoke on the finances of Western Australia. In that *Hansard*, members will see a masterly summing-up of the ineptitude of the Premier and the Government in this State, as far as finances are concerned.

In the eyes of the Government, it seems that the only people who can pull the Government out of the mire at the present time are the workers of the State. Apparently money can be spent willy-nilly in every direction and assistance can be given in many ways to bolster big business, but when it comes to finding revenue for the essential work of the State in regard to social services, taxation is put on everything that can be taxed. This is following on the raising of approximately \$7,000,000 by increased taxation in the last year. During the last year, bus fares were put up; State Shipping charges were put up; motor vehicle charges were put up; drivers' licenses were put up; new road taxes and heavy haulage duties were imposed; and, in the main, all these things are passed on to the working man and woman in the various parts of Western Australia.

It would not be quite so bad if these figures were going to be reflected ultimately in the basic wage of Western Australia. However, under the new system, the Government is going to adopt the Commonwealth method of simply fixing the basic wage on the figures for the capital cities. Therefore, right from the very start, the workers of Western Australia who are outside the capital cities are going to be penalised in regard to the basic wage.

I have said before, but I would like to repeat, that the worst feature of the Government's handling of this matter is that, whereas the basic wage was adjusted quarterly, and that was accepted by the Industrial Commission as the fair, honest, and just way of dealing with the matter, the Government is now laying down a law whereby the basic wage can only be adjusted every 12 months. Therefore, as I have said before, business firms, trading concerns, and manufacturing concerns can put prices up immediately, but the basic wage will not reflect those increases until the Commonwealth annual basic wage is recorded.

Already this Government, through the Budget announcement to the Chamber, has advised the community of a steep increase in charges. This has been very alarming, even to the business people of this State.

In the *Daily News* on Friday, the 7th October, there was an article headed, "New Duty Hits At Housewife," and I quote—

The W.A. housewife will probably carry most of the burden of the new stamp duty announced in the 1966 State Budget.

Most businessmen saw this as the eventual outcome of the extended stamp duty on receipts.

Most of the goods under \$10 which the housewife now buys free of stamp duty will carry the new tax. If shopkeepers pass on the increase, it is the house-keeping budget which will suffer.

I would like to interpolate here to say that this is going on almost immediately, and that some people have already put their charges up in anticipation. However, so far as wages and salaries are concerned, these basic wage increases will not be reflected until the annual basic wage is declared by the court. The article continues—

The SPEAKER: Order! I think the honourable member must not quote too extensively from newspaper articles. I was fairly indulgent with the member for Bayswater, but I cannot allow members to quote extensively from newspapers.

Mr. BRADY: Probably Mr. Speaker, you are right, and with your permission I will only quote about 25 per cent. of what I had intended to quote.

Mr. Rushton: Very neat.

Mr. BRADY: It is all very well for the honourable member to laugh, because members on the other side have the majority and they are very smug at the moment.

Mr. Hawke: Very smug.

Mr. BRADY: As businessmen, members on the other side of the House should be taking a more serious and realistic view. I know, Mr. Speaker, you do not wish me to quote extensively from this article, but, if you do not mind, I would like to quote three businessmen out of about a dozen. One of these was a supermarket manager and he said—

From the few facts the Government has supplied so far, I assume we'll be paying duty on many items we never did before. Many will be food lines—the biggest single factor in the family budget.

We know the basic wage reflects food, rent, clothing, and miscellaneous. Here a supermarket manager is stating that food lines will be the lines which, probably, will be stepped up the most. Later on the article states—

Said Perth Chamber of Commerce president R. H. Henderson: "We oppose the imposition of stamp duty in principle on anything. However, we must appreciate the Premier's prob-

lem in that WA is still a claimant State.

This stamp duty tax is virtually a flat tax on turnover.

This can be very unfair because it has no relation to net profit."

Those are just two brief quotations. The final reference I wish to make from this article, is as follows:—

"All firms will be told that they have to pay stamp duty."

Those words were attributed to the Under-Treasurer. To continue—

Private transactions, as distinct from those carried out by registered businesses, would retain their present exemption from paying duty where the sum involved was under \$10.

The reason I wished to quote this article to the House is because the cost of living is going up. Apart altogether from costs in connection with direct production, the cost of living will go up as a result of the new stamp duty and as a consequence of the new taxes which the Premier has envisaged in the Budget. My argument is that the housewife will not be able to get any recompense in regard to the position until the basic wage is changed, and that could be in 12 months' time.

Another article appeared in *The West Australian* on Friday, the 14th October, dealing with hospital fees. I am not going to quote this article as it is written, but instead I am going to try to summarise it. In effect it says that the costs will be going up considerably and people who are paying contributions in anticipation of getting a private ward will now be lucky to get into a multi-bed ward. As a consequence of the new hospital charges, it could be that some people will be in multi-bed wards and will still be paying private ward charges.

I would remind the House that the Government is anticipating an increase of 50 per cent. in hospital charges; in fact, I understand they are applicable now.

Mr. J. Hegney: That is generally known.

Mr. BRADY: Recently I heard a young man who had come out of hospital speaking at the Trades Hall in support of his candidature for Parliamentary selection for one of the seats in the metropolitan area.

His remarks could be summed up to the effect that there was a very gloomy feeling among the people in the hospital when they found the charges were being increased, because they felt they could not afford to remain in hospital as they and their families were not in the position of being able to pay the charges.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member must relate his remarks to the Bill.

Mr. BRADY: Here again, the hospital charges will not be reflected in the basic wage, but the people will have to pay the

hospital charges which are imposed on them and their families, and they will not be able to recoup their outgoings.

It is only a few months since the Government increased the rentals on State Housing Commission homes. Every tenant of a State rental home has had his rental increased, the increases ranging from \$2 to \$4, and these increases were imposed practically overnight.

Mr. O'Neil: That is an extravagant statement as well as being incorrect.

Mr. BRADY: The Minister will not deny that State housing rentals were stepped up considerably, the increases ranging from \$2 to \$4.

Mr. O'Neil: That is the maximum. You said all rentals had been increased, but not all were increased, in fact.

Mr. BRADY: The Minister, on his own statement, has said that the maximum increase would be \$2.50. Just imagine a working man having to pay another 25s. a week extra in rental without having that increase reflected in the basic wage. If it were only a 5s. increase it would be drastic in the extreme, and yet the Minister sits there smugly and says the increase would be \$2.50.

Mr. O'Neil: Over a period of several months.

Mr. BRADY: This means the workers will be affected by the increased rentals; and that should be obvious to all and sundry, even those who never take the trouble to reason these things out and worry over who will pay the increases. It is all very well to say that the basic wage will not go up; but somebody will be hurt and hurt badly, and that somebody is the man who works in industry and commerce—the man who cannot pass the increase on.

We know the Government has been increasing various charges for some time and, in the main, the working man in industry has been paying these increases; and, now that they are likely to be reflected in the basic wage, the basic wage will be frozen and the worker will have to carry the increases for 12 months before he obtains any satisfaction by way of an increase in his wage. As I see the position, many of the increased charges will not be reflected in the basic wage because of the nature of its composition.

In the *Third Annual Report of the Chief Industrial Commissioner of the Western Australian Industrial Commission* for the period from the 1st July, 1965, to the 30th June, 1966, the Chief Industrial Commissioner reports on the fixing of the basic wage during the last 12 months, and he points out that there were four fixations. He also shows the State basic wage for Western Australia at \$32.65, and the basic wage for the six capital cities at \$30.80. Since that report was published it would seem that another 24c has been added to the State basic wage, and now

the workers of Western Australia will see the basic wage in this State receding by about \$1.05 before they receive any adjustment.

On page 9 of this report, the Chief Commissioner comments on the national wage case. Before quoting his remarks, Mr. Speaker, I had better mention, in case you ask me to connect them to the Bill, that I understand it is the desire of the employers to endeavour to have a national wage fixed without its having any relevancy to a basic wage or margins. This is what the Chief Commissioner said—

Since compiling this report I have had the opportunity of reading the judgments in respect of the recent national wage case. Whilst the orders which will issue as a result of those proceedings may not be finalised for some time, it is pertinent for me to mention that it appears likely that when those orders are finalised they may embrace certain new principles in relation to wage fixation, particularly in respect of minimum wages and expression in awards of the total wage concept. It is important therefore that the Government, trade unions, and employer organisations should closely examine the implications which may be involved and the extent to which any new principles should be reflected in awards of this Commission.

There are two reasons for my quoting that extract from the Chief Commissioner's report. Firstly, the employers in the Eastern States apparently want to have a separate national wage fixed without making a distinction between the basic wage and the margins, but the Commonwealth Industrial Commission has continued to fix a basic wage.

Here again I would say that if the Western Australian Industrial Commission considered that the making of quarterly adjustments to the basic wage of this State was wrong in principle, this would have been mentioned in the annual report, but it has not been. In my opinion it has not been mentioned because for some time the commission has felt that the principle it has adopted is the correct one; that is, in order to give a just and fair return to the working community, there should be quarterly adjustments applying to the basic wage, as well as margins applying to each award. So far as I am concerned the Government has not been encouraged by the Industrial Commission to introduce this Bill and, in effect, it is now getting away from the principle that was established in 1929-30 by the Arbitration Court when quarterly adjustments to the wage earned by a worker were granted.

One member in the House the other evening, when speaking to the Bill, dealt with the question of production. Unfortunately I have not had sufficient time to make all the research I would like to make

on this subject, but most of the figures on production I have studied for some time have indicated that production has, on the basis of the workers employed in industry, been increasing considerably per capita. In fact, I think it will be found in the report on the Commonwealth basic wage hearing, that Mr. Hawke, the trade unions' advocate, quoted extensively to prove that the production output of each man in industry was increasing considerably.

Mr. O'Neil: It rather weakens the case for the retention of the basic wage as we know it.

Mr. BRADY: We will have the Minister tell us, I hope, when he replies to the debate on the third reading, about the production figures in Western Australia. For the Minister's benefit I will quote the production figures appearing on page 32 of the Commonwealth *Quarterly Statistical Abstract* for September, 1966. Members will note that the abstract is not one month old. During 1964-65 the net value of production was—

| | \$ |
|---|-------------|
| Agriculture | 92,800,000 |
| Pastoral and trapping | 101,747,000 |
| Dairying, poultry farming and bee keeping | 14,700,000 |
| Forestry and fisheries | 25,296,000 |
| Mining and quarrying | 32,163,000 |
| Total primary | 266,715,000 |
| Manufacturing | 260,637,000 |

I would also like to take the opportunity of mentioning that the figure for total primary production is the highest since 1955-56. The production under this heading has increased every year. Therefore considerable increases have been made in all production spheres. Last year, 1965, when figures were made available, it was found that all production fields had reached a maximum, with the exception of agriculture. As I have already quoted, the total production for agriculture was \$92,800,000, or approximately \$16,000,000 below the peak figure of 1963. I wanted to quote that figure because the Minister could easily say that I was trying to mislead the House. Nevertheless, production in other spheres—in both primary and manufacturing industries—has increased considerably.

So I could not see the third reading of this Bill pass without explaining to the House that the Government is acting unfairly and unwisely by getting away from quarterly adjustments in the basic wage. Figures that have been quoted in the debate on the second reading indicate that even if Western Australia continued with the present method of fixing the basic wage by quarterly adjustments, the basic wage in this State would not reach a figure higher than that in the other capital cities.

I believe the Government is making a rod for its own back. It is creating great difficulties for industrial and commercial concerns. I regret the Government's move on this occasion has been instigated by someone other than the Industrial Commission, and that it has decided to take this retrograde step by departing from what has been the accepted basis for fixing the basic wage ever since, one might say, the Arbitration Court was established in Western Australia.

I oppose the third reading of the Bill. I hope it will ultimately be lost and that we will see some semblance of common sense prevailing in the community and that adjustments to the basic wage will be retained.

MR. EVANS (Kalgoorlie) [5.58 p.m.]: I desire to take this opportunity of reiterating my opposition to this pernicious piece of legislation. In doing so it will, inevitably, be a case of repeating the remarks I made during the debate on the second reading, but I offer no apologies. In an endeavour to bolster up my arguments, I would point out, firstly, that this measure will have a depressing effect on the bulk of the labour force in this State, because the workers will be denied the right of entry to express their views before the wage-fixing authority whose determination will apply in future in this State if this legislation is passed.

Those unions which come within the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth wage-fixing authority do have the right of entry, by way of representation, so they can at least express their views before that tribunal. The bulk of the workers of Western Australia who come under awards which are granted by the Western Australian Industrial Commission, and who are subject to the determinations made by that commission, will be deprived of that right.

Mr. O'Neill: Do you believe without qualification your statement that the unions will not now be able to approach the Industrial Commission under any circumstances?

Mr. EVANS: I was speaking in terms of the Bill which seeks to deprive the Industrial Commission of the right, in the first instance, of making a declaration, and then of being able to review the basic wage subject to certain conditions which prevail in respect of the wage determinations of the Commonwealth tribunal.

The vicious budgetary impositions that have been foreshadowed—many of them were brought very much closer to home by the notices given by the Premier this afternoon—will act as an open invitation to others to jump on the band wagon and to increase prices generally.

It would seem that the knowledge that the basic wage would be increased under the provisions of the existing Act, if the figures for the previous quarter showed a

variation in the cost of living, acted as some sort of a brake on those agencies which, up till now, have been controlling the sale of commodities and the extension of services, rents, and rates—a brake in regard to increasing prices and charges. This might have been a very efficient brake.

Even with the existing provisions in the Act, prices have been uncontrolled and have been allowed to rise without much justification. If the brake is released then commodities, services, rents, and rates are sure to rise, to the detriment of the labour force of Western Australia which, in the past, had the privilege of knowing that the Industrial Commission was established to act as a watchdog and to review the basic wage if it deemed it necessary.

Members on the opposite side of the House who sought to justify the Government's intervention, but who did not justify at all the provisions in the measure before us, indicated that New South Wales and South Australia have both adopted the scheme outlined in the Bill; but the spokesmen for the Government's side of the House did not—whether their omission was deliberate or inadvertent is not for me to say—indicate that in both of those States there has for some years been practised a very effective price control scheme. Therefore it is not a fair comparison to make, and it is not fair to draw conclusions that Western Australia should follow the other States unless we go all the way.

This brings me back to the first point I made; namely, this is a very dangerous precedent to establish in Western Australia. The fact is that we are refusing to exercise the legislative power which was given to us when we secured release from the apron strings of Great Britain. It has been said that we are handing over a power to the Commonwealth. I do not say we are handing anything over to the Commonwealth, but we are refusing to exercise a sovereign power which reposes in Western Australia by saying that we will follow the Commonwealth. Surely we should not take a leaf out of Mr. Holt's book when he said that Australia would follow L.B.J. all the way. We should be proud of being Australians, and we should live up to our Australian traditions and stand on our own feet. I feel that we in Western Australia should also stand on our own feet and should exercise the powers which have been given to us.

If the Government sees virtue in the measure before us and in following the lead of other States, may I suggest there is virtue in following the workers' compensation legislation of New South Wales? I cannot hear any clamour or agreement from the Minister. If we are to follow the other States which have been mentioned in respect of the Bill before us, then we should adopt the legislation which has prevailed in South Australia for six years

whereby immunity of suit between husband and wife, arising out of motor vehicle accident claims, is provided, without tying it to the provisions which are foreshadowed in a Bill to be introduced in this House for the setting up of a tribunal to reduce once again the monetary awards which might be made. This Government seems to be a great one for reducing payments.

Mr. Toms: Not for reducing taxes!

Mr. EVANS: This Government is a great one for reducing the status of other people and inflating its own by avaricious money-grabbing tactics. I want to reiterate and emphasise that if the Government sees virtue in completely freezing certain of our legislative powers, while adopting willy-nilly and without question the legislative provisions of other States, then I suggest the workers' compensation legislation of New South Wales, which is far superior to that of Western Australia, and the immunity of suit provision of South Australia should be adopted. The Government of South Australia has not seen the need to adopt provisions which will reduce the amount of awards granted to the unfortunate victims of motor vehicle accidents, and which are likely to be introduced in Western Australia in the near future.

I do not intend to speak further on this measure, but I do wish to indicate that I intend to vote against the third reading.

MR. DAVIES (Victoria Park) [6.8 p.m.]: As I have already said on a number of occasions, this Bill contains several provisions—one has been requested by the trade union movement; some have been inserted by the Government; and others have been amended after discussions between the trade union movement and the Minister for Labour. This indicates a need to consult the people concerned before legislation affecting them is introduced.

I protest once again, because little attention is paid to the trade union movement. There are other sections of the community to which the Government gives great attention; and it is a matter for regret that this Bill was introduced, and then a conference had to be held between the trade union movement and the Government to work out certain amendments. Why did the Government waste so much of everybody's time? If the Government had conferred with the recognised trade union movement in the past, we in Parliament would not have had half of the debates that we have had in respect of this and similar matters.

The main provision in the Bill, and the one to which we raise the strongest objection—although there are others to which we object—is the proposal to abolish the quarterly adjustments of the State basic wage. This question can be exam-

ined from two points: Firstly, the Government's attitude to arbitration generally; and, secondly, its attitude to the working people of this State. By the term "working people" I do not mean those of the upper crust, such as members of Parliament, administrators of departments, and managers of businesses and banks, because they are able to look after themselves. I refer to metal tradesmen, road workers, transport workers, public servants generally, and a very wide cross-section of the community in respect of whom the Government does not seem to be very concerned.

I see the member for Stirling shaking his head. Perhaps I omitted to include the farmers. I would point out that farmers are not regarded as being in the working class; they are in a class of their own. Certainly the farmers of this State have received much consideration from this Government, and they are to be given yet more consideration as a result of what happened recently in this House and in another place. I do not include farmers in the working-class category, but in the category which is getting special exemptions from the Government.

The Government's attitude towards the Arbitration Court has been adequately expressed by the member for Mt. Hawthorn. Obviously the Government was not very pleased with the industrial set-up of Western Australia before the amending Bill of 1963 was passed, although a very fine man was in charge of the court. I refer to Mr. Justice Neville; and there had been other very good men in charge of the Arbitration Court prior to 1963.

Although for almost three years, during the term of a Labor Government in Western Australia, quarterly adjustments of the basic wage were suspended, the Australian Labor Party as a Government did not try to interfere with the functions of the court. It recognised that quarterly adjustments were a function of the court, and it did not introduce legislation to interfere with the functions of the court just because it did not like what the court did. We as a Government did not say that if the court did not act in the way we wanted it to act, we would lay down by Statute what we wanted it to do. We abided by the decisions of the court.

This Government decided in 1963 that the Arbitration Court, as it was then constituted, was not acceptable to it, and so it booted Mr. Justice Neville upstairs. It got rid of Mr. Christian, the employers' representative, and Mr. Tom Davies, the workers' representative, at a cost of something in excess of \$24,000; but I am sure the actual figure is closer to \$30,000. I am being conservative in giving the figure of \$24,000. But this was a cheap price for the Government to pay in order to establish a tribunal which would do what the Government wanted it to do. Here the Government made a mistake.

A member on the Government side mentioned that in 1963 Mr. Schnaars was eminently acceptable to this House. Let me say that Mr. Schnaars has not been eminently acceptable to me at any time, and I have given my reasons when speaking in other debates. I spoke of the actions of Mr. Schnaars at one particular time when we tried to maintain industrial peace, and I have pointed out what he said.

Mr. Court: You are criticising the Government for its so-called interference with the court, but here you are now black-guarding the chairman of the Industrial Commission.

Mr. DAVIES: Obviously the Minister has not been listening.

Mr. Court: I have been listening carefully.

Mr. DAVIES: At no stage this afternoon have I said that I was satisfied with the Industrial Commission.

Mr. Court: You are now being specific in speaking against the Chief Industrial Commissioner.

Mr. Hawke: And against the Government.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. DAVIES: Before the tea suspension I had drawn members' attention to the action of the Government in regard to the Industrial Commission. I had also pointed out the difference in the attitude of the Labor Party when it was in Government from 1953 to 1955, and the policy of the Arbitration Court was not palatable to the Government and the people it represented. That Government did not take any action to restrict the powers of the court or to direct it in any way in relation to the basic wage.

In fact, the Arbitration Court carried on undisturbed until it was abolished in 1963 at a cost of more than \$24,000 to the Government. The Government thought that was a very cheap way of getting rid of the then existing court which was unpalatable, and which the Government felt would be replaced by a court which would be more amenable to the wishes of the Government.

Immediately before the tea suspension the Minister for Industrial Development and myself were having some slight difference of opinion regarding Mr. Schnaars. I must admit I have not had very much admiration for the man, and at the time of his appointment to the Industrial Commission I was not too pleased. I do not think he has done much in the meantime to warrant approbation from me. No doubt, he was once in favour with the Government but at this stage he would not be very popular.

These matters have been pretty well thrashed out in previous argument, and I think we should confine ourselves, at the moment, to the Government's action. That

action, of course, is the abolishing of the quarterly adjustment, and the fixing of the State basic wage for both males and females to the basic wage operating in the Commonwealth. This amendment to the Arbitration Act will direct that the Industrial Commission take this action.

The arguments which have been advanced have been mainly on two grounds: One that the other States in Australia—and particularly New South Wales—have followed the Commonwealth; and, secondly, this State is being penalised adversely by the Grants Commission because of the State's policy in regard to the basic wage.

Let us look at the first suggestion, which is that because the Labor Government in New South Wales in 1964 provided that the Commonwealth standard should also be the State standard we are expected to follow the course which was taken in that State in 1964.

Of course, the point that has never been brought to notice by the Minister, and which has never been answered, is that at the time in 1964 the State basic wage in New South Wales was lower than that applying in the Commonwealth. In fact, there was a difference of something like 7s. I have been in touch with Sydney this afternoon, by telephone, and I am assured that the percentage of workers in that State, as related to the other States of the Commonwealth, is approximately 50-50. So there would possibly have been half of the population on the lower State wage. Naturally, any suggestion by the Government to increase the State basic wage by 7s., to balance it with the Commonwealth basic wage, was going to be accepted; and that is precisely what happened on that occasion. That is why there was no objection by the trade union movement at the time.

The Government of New South Wales, on that occasion, did not fix the basic wage which was to apply as that applying to the six capital cities. The Government fixed the wage to the Commonwealth wage which applied in New South Wales, which was 70c above—and still is—the average of the six Australian capitals.

Mr. O'Neil: That was the figure for Sydney, not New South Wales.

Mr. Jamieson: That is what the wage for New South Wales is fixed on; the Sydney figure.

Mr. DAVIES: As the Minister no doubt realises, the wage which applies to Sydney applies throughout the State. When the Commonwealth basic wage was fixed it appeared that the Commonwealth court would consider the Commonwealth basic wage more frequently than it had been doing in the past. This was indicated in decisions which had been given; and Mr. Renshaw, the Labor Premier of New South Wales, gave an undertaking that if the Commonwealth court did

not act in a reasonable manner and at reasonable intervals, then he would legislate to reintroduce quarterly adjustments. That was his policy and that was one of the reasons why the trade union movement in New South Wales, at that time, accepted the submissions which had been made.

Unfortunately for the workers of New South Wales, at the last election the Labor Government was defeated after being in office for a record period of something like 28 or 32 years. Mr. Renshaw was then no longer able to legislate for the reintroduction of quarterly adjustments, but I have it on authority from Mr. Jim Kenny of the N.S.W. Trades and Labour Council that only recently Mr. Renshaw made it known that it was the policy of the Labor Government to reintroduce quarterly adjustments in New South Wales.

This seems to amuse the member for Dale, but no doubt he will soon tell us why he will vote for this measure which will penalise 80 per cent. of the workers in this State. The position in New South Wales is entirely different from that advanced by the Minister for Labor when introducing this measure. The 7s. difference between the State awards on that occasion still applies even taking into consideration the recent \$2 increase granted by the Commonwealth court at its last sitting. One of the judges, on that occasion, said he felt the court should consider the basic wage more frequently than it did.

I have already explained that it is almost impossible for any case to be taken to the Commonwealth court and for a decision to be reached under a period of 12 months. One has only to look at the case which has been going on for months—and no doubt will be going on for many more months—conducted by Commissioner Terry Winter, who is inquiring into margins in relation to the metal trades award. He is looking at the position from work-value aspects.

Work value, of course, has been taken into consideration for the general fixing of the basic wage by the Commonwealth court, and it was, I understand, taken into consideration to a degree when the basic wage was investigated in 1964 by the State court in Western Australia. It was at that time that the State Government made its position perfectly clear. The Government could see that quarterly adjustments—the policy of the Industrial Commission in Western Australia—were to continue, and the Government took the opportunity to enter into the general application which was before the court to increase the basic wage.

The Government entered the case as a matter of public interest, and such entry was unexpected as far as the commission was concerned, and was without the permission of the commission. However, that is by the way. The point is that at that time the State Government made its policy

widely known in regard to the application of the Commonwealth basic wage to this State.

No doubt, since then the Government has been consistently hoping that the court would change its policy and adopt the Commonwealth basic wage. At one stage late last year it looked as though the court was heading that way, but for some reason or other it decided to continue the quarterly adjustments as had been the policy over a long period of time.

I want to know what right the Government has, after having made it known that it wanted the Commonwealth basic wage to apply, to legislate, by using its weight of numbers in this House, to tell the Industrial Commission what its policy shall be. Has not the commission a mind of its own? Is it not set down in part XIII of the Industrial Arbitration Act what the court shall do in regard to the basic wage?

Mr. O'Neil: You are referring to part VII.

Mr. DAVIES: Thank you Mr. Minister: part XIII refers to penal clauses. Part VII of the Industrial Arbitration Act sets down what the Industrial Commission can and shall do in regard to the basic wage. It is open for any interested section of the community to apply for a general review of the basic wage at any time quarterly adjustments are announced.

The court is open, in fact, to any agent or any affected section of the community to appear before it and tell the court what is desired in regard to the basic wage. But this has never been done, because the Government is frightened that if it took a case to the court it would still not be able to get the decision it wanted. Therefore, it is using its numbers in the House to tell the court what it shall do.

This, I think, is an abrogation of the democratic principles we have come to accept. It is interference with the court which should never have happened. It is not the first time the Government has done this. I am beginning to wonder if it gets away with it this time whether it will use its numbers to tell all the courts what it wants them to do. This is probably only the first of many forays we will see directed at the authority of the court.

The second and major point which has been made was in regard to the fact that Western Australia is to be penalised—or is being penalised, or has been penalised—by the Grants Commission because the basic wage in this State is adjusted quarterly in accordance with the "C" series index cost-of-living figure. There is argument, all of its own, on the components of the "C" series index, but I do not propose to go into that tonight. It makes very interesting reading indeed and I am sure many members have studied the matter.

The fact remains that the Government has been quite happy to claim that ours is a low-wage State and to use this factor as

an incentive to get industry to come to Western Australia.

Mr. O'Neil: The Government has never made that claim. It was only the Trades and Labour Council.

Mr. DAVIES: Unfortunately, I am not in a position to know of the representations that have been made to the various companies to get them to come here to set up business in this State. However, I am certain that is what has happened, and those who have been making representations to companies which are thinking of coming to Western Australia to set up factories, or other establishments, have told the representatives of those companies that this is a low-wage State.

I am certain that that has been said, although I have not the slightest proof of it. I am certain that that claim was made as an incentive. It has certainly never been denied. Now the Government makes the claim that this is not a low-wage State. I have never heard anything so ridiculous. All the figures that are available to us, including those the Minister has not refuted, point quite definitely to the fact that Western Australia is a low-wage State.

When the Minister was replying to the second reading debate he made the claim that the figures quoted in regard to the Australian averages should not be taken as a measuring stick, and he referred particularly to the figures quoted in the advertisement published in *The West Australian* on Monday, the 17th October, by the Trades and Labour Council.

Mr. O'Neil: I was quoting the Commonwealth Statistician's figures.

Mr. DAVIES: That advertisement pointed out that there was a substantial difference between the average earnings figures for this State and those of the Australian average. The Minister said that there was no such person as Mr. Average. I think we all know that; we are not that dense. He seemed to think that as he is an ex-school teacher he has some special powers to observe something which others are not able to see, because he said there was no such person as Mr. Average. But we have to use some kind of basis. We have to arrive at some figure when making comparisons, but the Minister went to some length to explain why this figure was a bad one to use.

He mentioned other factors, such as overtime and the ratio of seniors to juniors, the ratio of women employees to male employees, over-award payments, incentive payments, and so on; but not a word about this appeared in the paper. This must have distressed him because he said he was reading from copious notes and that because we had sat fairly late the night before he had to rely on information which had been made available to him by his advisors. We all accept that.

Mr. O'Neil: I did not say that at all. You check my speech.

Mr. DAVIES: I think the Minister said he was quoting from copious notes.

Mr. O'Neil: That is so, but I did not say anything about having to rely on information from my advisors. I said to avoid being inaccurate I would use copious notes.

Mr. DAVIES: I will accept that the Minister did not say it, and I withdraw the statement.

Mr. Bickerton: Don't you rely on your advisors?

Mr. O'Neil: Yes.

Mr. DAVIES: However, the fact remains we all know the Minister must have advisors and no doubt he uses them. If I were a Minister I would certainly use my advisors, and I do not blame him for it. He cannot be expected to do all his own research, and if I were a Minister I would require someone to do some research for me. However, no word of his rebuttal of the claim that this was a low-wage State appeared in the paper.

Mr. O'Neil: Because it was after the deadline, I suppose.

Mr. DAVIES: However, on Friday, the 28th October, which was just two days later, there appeared in the *Daily News*, on page 4, a headline, "Schnaars' Figures Don't Tell Whole Story." And, lo and behold, Mr. Schnaars goes through exactly the same reasons as were advanced by the Minister, stating that the average figures should not be accepted.

Mr. O'Neil: We both quoted the same statistician.

Mr. DAVIES: I do not know whether the Minister had been in touch with Mr. Schnaars, or whether Mr. Schnaars had been in touch with the Minister, but I was frankly shocked to think that a person who was supposed to be a member of the Industrial Commission—the industrial judiciary—should make a public statement in support of an action which was being taken by the Government. How can the trade union movement possibly go before this man and expect to get an unbiased decision when he blatantly supports action that is being taken by the Government in this way?

Mr. Court: He was not defending the Government.

Mr. Graham: Not much!

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member must not reflect on the judiciary, and although Mr. Schnaars might not be a member of the judiciary, I think the principle should be observed.

Mr. Graham: He has become the tool of this Government.

Mr. DAVIES: No person who holds a responsible position, and who is expected to sit in judgment on others, should take part in politics.

Mr. O'Neil: Mr. Schnaars gave the reasons for that statement.

Mr. DAVIES: That is what I feel has happened here. I believe he stated that because there was a likelihood of industrial unrest—and I would like to know where he got the idea that there was to be any industrial unrest, because there has never been any suggestion that there would be a general strike, or a partial strike, or that there might even be a stop-work meeting—he felt he should make the statement. Evidently he used an excuse like that to enter into a debate to support the Government, and to support what the Minister said in this House on Wednesday night or early Thursday morning, which, up to that time, had not been rebutted.

Mr. Court: You must be forgetting some of the things said on your side last week about the possible outcome of this legislation. Also, you cannot deny a man in Mr. Schnaars position an opportunity to say what he believes is right when you are saying things that are wrong.

Mr. Graham: You are weaker than usual in that statement.

Mr. DAVIES: The interjection by the Minister for Industrial Development shocks me. He now rushes in in defence of Mr. Schnaars, although at no stage up to now has he entered into the debate.

Mr. Court: It was in the interests of fairness.

Mr. DAVIES: In the interests of fairness to the trade union movement, whose members appear before him, and who expect an unbiased judgment, such a statement should never have been made. That is exactly what I am saying.

Mr. Graham: You are quite right.

Mr. DAVIES: The statement raises serious doubts in my mind.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have warned the honourable member already. If he wants to say anything about any member of the judiciary, or any member of the Industrial Commission, he is quite at liberty to do so provided he moves a motion to that effect. I do not wish the discussion to go on along these lines but I think, from memory, last week a member did quote Mr. Schnaars as having expressed a certain point of view on television, but the member concerned further qualified the statement by saying that he was only told about it. He had not seen the telecast himself. I did see it and I thought the reference was a little unfair.

Mr. DAVIES: I did not see the telecast, and at this stage I do not propose to move a motion along the lines you have suggested. Mr. Speaker, in regard to the Chief Industrial Commissioner. I would have abided by your earlier warning, or at least have taken heed of it, had not the Minister for Industrial Development thought it necessary to enter into the debate by way of a long interjection.

Mr. Court: In the interests of fairness for a man who is not here to defend himself.

Mr. Graham: You would not know the meaning of the word "fairness."

Mr. Court: You are not against attacking people here.

Mr. Graham: Who isn't?

Mr. Court: You aren't. You attacked some of the judges.

Mr. Graham: I remember their attacks on some jurymen, too.

Mr. Court: You were attacking judges when they could not defend themselves.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DAVIES: The comment which was made in the paper, and to which I previously referred, was an echo of the statement made by the Minister. Therefore, if I refer to the Minister's statement, I am referring almost to the same statement made by Mr. Schnaars. The statement was to the effect that overtime earnings were one of the reasons quoted why there should be no comparison between the average wages and the actual wages paid. Of course, it is difficult to find precise figures in regard to many of the factors which were mentioned. However, I was able to have a look at the releases which come out from the Department of Labour and National Services relating to the employment situation in Australia in each month.

I went back over the figures for 12 months and I found that on each and every occasion during those 12 months, in the appendix relating to factory overtime and factory short-time—but particularly in regard to factory overtime, because it appears no short-time is being worked—I found the approximate overtime being worked in this State was greater than that being worked in each of the other States. I refer particularly to the States of New South Wales and Victoria.

Mr. O'Neil: How many factories were taken into account in making the assessment? It is important.

Mr. DAVIES: The Minister has seen these figures and he knows how many factories were taken into account, and he knows the figures vary from month to month. Therefore, how can I give him an answer to the question he asks? He should not need to ask a question like that if he reads the figures himself.

Mr. O'Neil: I do.

Mr. DAVIES: A proportion of the factories are looked at to get the average rates, and a percentage is taken into account from each State. The numbers of employees are also given in the survey, and the fact remains that the average number of overtime hours worked per person, or per employee—and that is most important—in each of the 12 months was greater in Western Australia than in New South

Wales or Victoria. That factor alone would increase the Western Australian average wage instead of pulling it down. The same applies with other figures relating to bonus systems, shift work, week-end penalty rates, and so on.

Are we going to say that we should not look at the Australian average and compare it with the Western Australian figures because certain work is being done up north and the employees are working seven days a week and therefore the wages are much greater than normally would be the case? Is the Minister going to prove that the proportion of people sweeping the roads to the total population in Western Australia is lower than the proportion doing the same job in the Eastern States? Is he going to say the proportion of those receiving large incomes is lower in Western Australia than in the Eastern States? The ratios for each State must be about the same; the figures prove it.

We only have to look at the *Pocket Compendium of Australian Statistics* published by the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics. The latest booklet published is for the year 1966 and at page 151 there is a summary showing indexes of minimum weekly and hourly wage rates and standard hours of work for adult males. There we will find that Western Australia runs second last. We only have to look at the average weekly earnings per employed male unit for the year 1964-65, to see that Western Australia runs a bad last.

I do not ask members to believe the statistician's figures; I ask them to look at the material which is advanced to the Grants Commission and upon which this Government based the case which it presented to the Grants Commission. It was stated that Western Australia was being penalised by the Grants Commission because we had quarterly adjustments to the basic wage and therefore the Grants Commission adversely penalised the State because of its basic wage policy.

Mr. Moir: That was the Minister's statement.

Mr. O'Neil: Let me make a correction. I never used the word "penalised." I said there was an adverse adjustment because of it. You check right through what I did in fact say.

Mr. Graham: What's the difference?

Mr. O'Neil: The member for Boulder-Eyre said they were my exact words.

Mr. DAVIES: Now the Minister is splitting straws; he is claiming that we are going to be adversely adjusted because of the State's wage policy. If that is so, surely we are going to be penalised. I am not prepared to argue with the Minister on this aspect.

Mr. Tonkin: If the Minister had an adverse adjustment of his salary, he would be penalised.

Mr. DAVIES: It has been said time and again when deputations have been taken to the Government that this or that cannot be applied because the State will be penalised, but the Ministers on those occasions have not bothered to use the fine difference of being adversely adjusted. I think the Minister for Labour, with a grin on his face, is trying to waste my time by drawing me into this argument.

Let us have a look at the 33rd report of the Commonwealth Grants Commission from which I previously quoted. I would now like to quote from page 34, table 10. Here we find the average weekly earnings per employed male unit for the year 1964-65. The information given shows that Western Australia has the lowest of all the figures. This State's average weekly earnings per employed male unit is \$49.30; the next State to that is Queensland with an average of \$50.40.

This is the information which has been given to the Grants Commission, and this is the information upon which this State is adversely adjusted. Let us now have a look at table 11 which is headed, "Personal Income Per Capita". The latest figure available for Western Australia is \$1,139, which is the lowest of all the six States. Once again these are the figures upon which this State is adversely adjusted by the Grants Commission.

Mr. O'Neil: That is for 1964-65.

Mr. DAVIES: I will read further—

It may be observed from Table 10 that the increase in average weekly earnings in Western Australia over the period 1960-61 to 1964-65 was 18.5 per cent., which was also the average increase for New South Wales and Victoria. The Tasmanian increase was about 17.3 per cent. In respect of personal income per capita (Table 11) the Western Australian increase was only 20.2 per cent., compared with an average increase in the standard States of 22.7 per cent.

So the increase in the standard States is 2.5 per cent. greater than in Western Australia. To continue—

The Tasmanian increase was about 22.6 per cent. It should be noted that in 1964-65, as compared with 1963-64, the "standard" increase in average weekly earnings was 7.4 per cent., whereas in Western Australia and Tasmania it was only 4.4 per cent.

That means a difference, in the increase, of 3 per cent. between the Australian average and that of Western Australia. This is how we are being adversely adjusted. I quote—

It is to be noted that in any one year in any one State the average weekly earnings may be affected by alterations in wage levels by wage fixing authorities, either earlier or later than the general changes throughout the Commonwealth. The "standard" percentage increase in

1964-65, as compared with 1963-64 in personal income per capita was 7.1 per cent. In Western Australia it was only 3.7 per cent., and in Tasmania 6.8 per cent.

Once again Western Australia, the adversely adjusted State, comes a bad last. This is the Government's argument for its present action. Do I have to remind the Government of the other quotations where the Grants Commission said that because wages generally were lower in this State than in other States we were not adversely affected? Must I refer the Minister to paragraph 235 in regard to the railways?

Mr. O'Neill: I would like you to read all of paragraph 235.

Mr. DAVIES: I will read the last sentence of that paragraph which states—

Accordingly during 1964-65 the level of wage payments in that State was lower than the level in the standard States.

Mr. O'Neill: Read the part that starts, "As a result of quarterly adjustments—"

Mr. DAVIES: I hope the Minister will explain these quotations when he replies; and I hope he will also reply to the other quotations that I made from this report the other night. I should have thought the Minister would do so before this. Apparently the Grants Commission report is correct, but the Minister has made no attempt to reply to those statements.

The wages paid in Western Australia, and throughout Australia, do not relate entirely to the basic wage. That is a subterfuge to which the Government is only too happy to resort to justify its actions. You know, Mr. Speaker, as well as I do that in Victoria and the other States, for years there have been service payments to Government departments.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member has another five minutes.

Mr. DAVIES: Thank you, Sir. This will not stop at the incentives and the service payments made at the present time. I would like to refer to the latest cutting from the *Australian*, dated the 27th October, 1966, which says—

The Victorian Government has agreed to grant higher holiday pay to all shift workers employed by the State. The decision will add several million dollars to the Government's annual wages bill.

The effect of this proposal is that if an employee has been on high wages as a result of shift work, when he goes on his holidays he will remain on those high wages. In effect, he will be paid shift work while he is on holidays. This is a principle agreed to by Victoria, which has a Liberal Government headed by Sir Henry Bolte.

We are told that because Victoria has put up its charges it is in a financial mess; and we are told that we must put up our

charges to match those of Victoria in regard to hospitals, and so on. Yet we find the Government which is supposedly in such a financial mess being able to make this concession to its employees, which will add several million dollars to its wages bill each year.

If the Victorian Government's action is to be accepted as a standard, will the Government of this State do the same for its employees in Western Australia? Of course not. It is lagging behind now in its service payments; and we would certainly not expect the Government to make an adjustment like this in order that we might keep up with the standard States.

What has the Government done about the equal pay problem? I have not got time to go over the disgusting attitude that the Government adopted to the question of equal pay, when it said to the unions, "Go to the court; the court is the only body that can grant equal pay." The court on the other hand says, "We have not the power; the Government needs to alter the Act." The Government in turn says to the unions, "Take the case to appeal."

The SPEAKER: This is not in the Bill.

Mr. DAVIES: Yes it is, Sir, because it refers to the fixing of the female basic wage in part VII, which the Government is seeking to tie to the Commonwealth in the future. The attitude of the Government was to lead the trade union movement on and force it into an appeal. The trade union movement did everything possible to indicate to the Government that the Industrial Commission had no power to take the necessary action; and even though the trade union movement did all that was expected of it, the Government did nothing to amend the Arbitration Act, as the officials in the trade union movement were led to believe it would.

There are standards in other States which do not apply here, and which the Government has no intention of introducing. To suggest that the State has been adversely adjusted because of its wages policy is poppycock. The figures in the Grants Commission report proves this to be so. We are a low-wage State, and the Government cannot bring forward any substantial figures to deny that we are a low-wage State. The Government has taken steps to direct the court—which I do not like—in an action so that it will penalise the workers of this State; and that is something which I cannot support.

MR. TONKIN (Melville—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [8.10 p.m.]: The real purpose behind this legislation is to benefit the Government, and to enable it to extricate itself from a difficult financial position. The Minister has admitted there is a difference of opinion in the community amongst the people closest to this problem on the efficacy of the measures proposed to be taken.

But the Minister made the surprising statement that this question was not at issue. I should have thought that if there was a difference of opinion, especially amongst the members of the business community, as to the advisability of this course, that would have been one of the matters taken into consideration before the Government decided to go ahead.

Apparently, however, regardless of an opinion quite widely held in the business community that it is better to have a small quarterly adjustment added to the basic wage rather than large additions made at longer intervals, the Government, to suit its own ends, wishes to abolish quarterly adjustments; and, of course, the Minister said as much when he mentioned that the differential between the Commonwealth wage and the State wage could build up to substantial figures.

I think the Minister's words were, "This is a basic problem." It is a problem to the Government, because the Minister went on to say that it involved the imposition of the decision in order to meet the extra costs of Government, and that these increased charges and taxes would have to be paid—so the Minister said—by everybody. But, of course, they will not.

Some employers have already said they cannot themselves meet these increased taxes and charges, and they propose to pass them on. So the Minister's reasoning is quite faulty in arguing that because all the people have to meet these increased taxes and charges, and only a section of the people get the benefit of quarterly adjustments, some alteration ought to be made; because such a position is most unfair.

If that were the position it would be unfair; but it is not the position at all. The situation is that a section of the community—and that section is the working section of the community—will have to carry most of the costs of what the Minister calls an adverse adjustment. That is the real reason for our opposition to this proposal: that it is unfair; that it is inequitable, because it singles out the working people in the community to carry the burden to assist the Government out of its financial difficulty.

The real reason for this is that every time there is a quarterly adjustment, the Government is faced with an increased wages and salary bill, and that presents it with a problem which it does not like. So, in order to stave off the position for a time—it cannot eliminate it, although the Government would if it could—and to give it more breathing space, the Government proposes to make it impossible for any quarterly adjustments to be declared.

When one contrasts the Government's present attitude—which is to admit it is in financial difficulty and it has to penalise

a section of the community in order to help it—with the very rosy picture painted at the election time, one wonders how much honesty there is on the Government's side.

Just listen to this Mr. Speaker, which was put out for the public benefit; and I quote from *The West Australian* of the 19th February, 1965—

Western Australia today stands on the threshold of a tremendous future. It is a future that few of you dared hope for six years ago.

And you might well ask yourselves why. Why was it not like this six years ago? Why after six years of Labor Government was Western Australia marking time in 1959 while Australia was surging forward?

And why after six years of private enterprise Government is Western Australia now advancing further than Australia as a whole—

And please note this Mr. Minister for Labour—

—with more wealth to share, more facilities of higher standard, more to invest in such vital activities as education, home building and so on, and more funds for such worth-while things as giving help to the sick and the handicapped and all others who are similarly in need?

It is a wonder the words did not choke them.

Mr. Graham: It is a pity they didn't.

Mr. TONKIN: In the face of that—this rosy future—we have had unprecedented taxation increases and charges. There has never before in the State's history been anything like them. There have also been increased hospital charges. That is how we are helping the sick. Take away the quarterly adjustments—that is how we are sharing this increased wealth. Who is sharing it? The people who are to lose these quarterly adjustments? The Government cannot benefit financially unless it is at somebody's expense. Whose expense? The community generally or a section of the community? That is a simple question to which can be given a simple answer.

Mr. J. Hegney: Those on the lowest income.

Mr. TONKIN: Those on the lowest income who depend upon the fixation of the wages by the court are the ones to carry the total cost of this financial benefit which the Government expects to derive and will derive. So, what a hollow ring there is about those words quoted by the Premier back in February, 1965—this extra wealth in which all the people were going to share; that is, those people who, without any increase in wages, have to pay the increased hospital charges and the increased charges for transport. That is a fine way to share the increased wealth!

But somebody will share it, because there is no attempt on the part of the Government to control prices to ensure that the value—such value as there is—will remain in the dollar. No; that is no concern of the Government at all, despite the fact there have been people who have said quite openly and frankly they cannot bear these increased taxes and charges themselves, so they will be obliged to pass them on, which inevitably means increased charges and prices which the wage earners will have to meet. Although the Government knows that, it will take no action to control price increases at all. It is prepared to load the whole burden of this financial benefit to the Treasury upon a section of the community.

Members opposite will sit there and be prepared to support that policy despite this stuff which was put forward at the election and upon which the Government succeeded in its appeal to the people. Could there be anything more dishonest than that type of thing? Why, Mr. Speaker, within two or three months of saying that, the Premier went before the Premiers' Conference and said, "Western Australia has reached the State tax limit. W.A. has just about reached the limit in the rates of State taxation which can be imposed."

So, in April, 1965 we had just about reached the limit. Since then we have had imposed, and promises of, increased taxation unprecedented in the State's history; but the workers have had to carry those increased charges and those increased taxes, and their wages are to be pegged; because at no time will the court be able to adjust the basic wage in order to compensate the workers for the increased cost of living which has taken place.

So, in plain language, this is a deliberate attempt on the part of the Government to reduce the standard of living of a large section of the people of Western Australia. The Government knows what the result will be and it deliberately sets out to achieve that result. What possible justification can there be for such a course of action?

On the one hand we have the Government or the spokesman for the Government talking about the great prosperity everywhere, the surging forward, and the increase in wealth, while on the other hand a large section of the wage-earning community is told, "You are going to have less of it, because the Government is in financial difficulty. It cannot meet these increases in governmental expenditure which result from the quarterly adjustment of wages. So you workers—you people, some of whom supported us and put us back into office because we promised you the opportunity to share in this rosy future, a share in this wealth—now that we have got you where we want you, we are going to peg your wages and do nothing

about the cost of living at all. You can look after that the best way you can. You can meet these increased charges. You can pay more land tax, more metropolitan regional improvement tax, more hospital charges, and more charges on the buses. You can meet all of these, but you can have no more wages. We will just keep them where they are until the Commonwealth court declares a wage which happens to be the same as the State wage, and you can accept that despite the fact that the Commonwealth will not take into consideration the high level of taxation which has been reached in Western Australia."

At no time in its deliberations in connection with the determination of the basic wage for the whole of the Commonwealth or the six capital cities will the Commonwealth court take into consideration the fact that although Western Australia had reached the tax limit in April, 1965, it has since imposed very considerable additional taxation, to such an extent it is well out of balance with what is being imposed elsewhere. The Commonwealth court will not be interested in that aspect; it will make a determination upon the general case for wage increases submitted by the advocate.

Mr. Speaker, you are fully aware that the granting of quarterly adjustments by the Industrial Commission does no more than take into consideration the price index supplied by the State Statistician, and the wage which is awarded is a wage calculated to leave the worker in the same position with regard to the cost of living as he was at the end of the previous quarter. He gets no additional benefit—no extra share in productivity—but it is a recognition that his wage has been lagging for three months, during which time prices have been rising. So he has sustained a reduction in his standard of living and the court makes an adjustment in order to give him a fresh start.

Knowing full well that in the last 20-odd years there have been increases in costs and increases in prices, I will not admit these have been due to increases in the basic wage. Prices and charges increase without any increases in the basic wage. I would not deny they make some contribution to them, because there have been known to be firms in Western Australia that make provision in their costing in advance for two successive basic wage rises; and they load that into the charges and costs which they expect to obtain from the members of the community who do business with them.

When this first came to my notice I was very surprised. I did not really believe it, but I was a member of a committee of which a member on the other side of the House was also a member, but he was not present at this particular meeting. We were endeavouring to fix the charges—and they were very low charges—which ought to be asked from people who wanted to

have a fortnight in a home for convalescence. One of the members of the committee—he happened to be in a very high position in a large business establishment in Western Australia—was urging us to make provision in our accounts for two possible successive basic wage rises.

When I opposed the suggestion, he gave the committee the information that this was the practice of the business concern with which he was associated. So that concern was very well protected. When it was doing its costing for the articles which it had to sell, it loaded into the cost of those articles two possible basic wage increases which had to be calculated or costed on the right side so far as the employer was concerned.

Is it any wonder that prices and charges are increased when that is the policy which is followed? The Government takes an action which results in a penalty, and I can see no distinction between that word and the two words "adverse adjustment" used by the Minister. I can see no distinction at all. The Government takes an action which inevitably—and it is completely unavoidable—imposes a penalty upon a section of the community only, and not on everyone in the community at all, because one section of the community will be able to escape it by passing it on.

Therefore not only is the due proportion of this extra cost to be borne by the section of wage earners to whom I have referred, but loaded on to this will be the cost that should be borne by someone else, but which is passed on by those people because they say they cannot bear it. It is as well we should fully understand what we are doing, and that the people generally should understand it.

This argument about uniformity leaves me cold. There is no magic in the word "uniformity." As a matter of fact, if we apply it to some things we would have a ridiculous situation. What particular virtue is there in having the State basic wage precisely the same as the Commonwealth basic wage? If the wages are adjusted periodically to meet the cost of living—and that is all that happens—why should not the wage be declared in such a way as to enable the worker to maintain his existing standard of living? That is all the quarterly adjustment does. To take it away inevitably means a reduction in his standard of living.

We on this side protest against this legislation. We would protest ordinarily against an attack on the wage standards of the bulk of the community, but when we have in mind the rosy picture which the Government painted when it talked about sharing the wealth, then surely we have a right to stand up here and tell the people of the hypocrisy which the Government has shown in this matter. I think a lot of this will be remembered by

the people who will be the ones to carry the burden.

It is refreshing that at least one paper in this State has seen fit to take the Government to task in connection with this proposal. Ordinarily we have to suffer having the whole of the Press against the members of this party, particularly at election time.

Mr. J. Hegney: People ought to read the leading article at election time to see how things will be summed up then.

Mr. TONKIN: That is the point. Particularly at election time we expect that the papers in Western Australia will see no good in the Labor Party. They never have. However, in view of this surely one must take special notice of a leading article which deals with a Government proposal and puts forward the relevant arguments which show the weakness in what the Government proposes to do.

We know full well the reason actuating the Government. If one listens carefully to a Minister, introducing a Bill, one is usually able to detect in an odd place, when the Minister is off-guard, the real reason for what is being done; and I say without any hesitation at all that there is only one reason for this. The Government has not considered the consequences at all; it is not interested in them. The reason is to try to ease the financial difficulty of the Government in meeting the costs which result to it from quarterly adjustment declarations. The Minister said this—

Differentials of the magnitude reached have far-reaching effects not only on the Government's financial position but also through the economy at large.

They are not all adverse effects through the economy at large when there is an increase in the wage, because a lot of people other than wage earners benefit. There is increased turnover in shops, and there is a buoyancy in business which improves taxation for the Commonwealth. So it is not all adverse effect.

It is true that the State Government has budgetary difficulties straight away, and that is the real reason for this action. As I have said before, in some directions the Government throws money around without much regard for economic expenditure at all. I would like to know, for example, how much money the Government has spent in employing private architects to design Government buildings.

I may ask a question or two later about a job done at Moora where, I am told, a private architect designed a building to have a floor on ground level in an area flooded every year. The result is that a good deal of the work was spoilt. That is the sort of thing in regard to which the Government wastes money and gets into financial difficulty. The Public Works De-

partment would not have made a mistake like the one to which I have just referred; but that work is given to a private architect who apparently does not know his job, and a mess results. If the Government would give more attention to saving money instead of wasting it, it would not be in this acute difficulty with its budgetary problems, and therefore there would not then be the need to take this step.

I do not imagine the Minister for Labour jumped in the air with enthusiasm when he was asked to do this. It is not the sort of course which would give pleasure to any Minister, I imagine. However, if the Government gets itself into such a financial pickle that it sees this as the only way out, then some Minister has to carry the responsibility; but I did not detect any great gladness in the demeanour of the Minister for Labour, or any great pleasure, at doing this task. He endeavoured to make the best of a very bad case of it and, under the circumstances, did reasonably well.

However it is a rotten case. Any case which proposes to single out a section of the people to carry a financial burden to relieve the Government of its difficulty must, of course, be a bad case; and that is just what this is. We on this side oppose this Bill with all the vigour at our command.

MR. HALL (Albany) [8.41 p.m.]: The Bill before the House is, as we all know, one for an Act to amend the Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912-1963. To me this debate represents about a last-ditch stand by the Labor Party to show its resistance to this iniquitous and, to repeat my remarks during the second reading debate, dangerous legislation. I feel we are removing a monument which can be compared with a pyramid which has stood for many years. It was established by the labor people by sweat, hard work, and, perhaps, sacrifice. This method of wage adjustment through arbitration and conciliation was established, and then, in 1963, the arbitration legislation was amended to take away certain rights from the workers of Western Australia.

This Bill is in its last stage in this House, after which it will go to another place; and it is not hard to visualise what will happen to it in that atmosphere.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has already emphasised very definitely the economic effect on the whole of the State of the freezing of the wage. That, in itself, is bad enough, but to tie our wage to Commonwealth standards is doing away with the rightful heritage of the workers of this State. It will have a dire and diabolical effect on the commercial economy of the State.

We will freeze wages, but we will have no control over prices; and the effect of this has been emphasised and reiterated

by many speakers on this side of the House. No-one in his right senses will deny that price control and wages go hand in hand. If the ceiling is to be maintained by wage-freezing and fixation, we must have some form of price control.

A comparison has been made with New South Wales, but I think that a little research and investigation will prove that New South Wales has some form of price control. I do not think that can be disputed. Also it has a stability or standardisation of wage which is on a higher plane than that existing in Western Australia.

We all know what the effect of this legislation will be on those who are on the basic wage—which is the minimum wage—and who are unable to add to their income. Therefore a family consisting of a mother, father, and four children, will find it very difficult to meet rising costs if they are unable to generate a double income for the family.

The overall picture would be the fixation of a wage for a man with responsibilities in comparison with a man and his wife with no responsibilities who are, nevertheless, generating this high income. The basic wage—or the minimum wage—would have its effect on the responsibility of the man who, from a national point of view and certainly from a State point of view, would be easing our migration costs considerably by the introduction of a family and children into this State and into the Commonwealth of Australia. That, in itself, should warrant subsidisation from any Government, Commonwealth or State, in order to assist these people to enjoy an equitable and normal way of life. They should not be deprived because of their endeavours to inhabit the country and stimulate employment.

The proposal in this measure is a contradiction and will have the effect of lessening the actual migration of stabilised citizens who wish to reside in our State for life. It cannot be denied that the drift through migration of the people who come to Australia is a tremendous loss to the Commonwealth of Australia.

By this Bill which is before the House, the Government is trying to bring into effect an iniquitous piece of legislation which will have its effect upon families which are prevented from generating a further income to buy the necessities of life and to live in accordance with the principles of decent living.

I would like to take the time of the House to read from the *Statistical Register of Western Australia for 1957-58*. This is part XII which deals with retail prices, wages, employment, and miscellaneous. This gives the history and the commencing period of the basic wage in this State, and I quote—

Under the provisions of an amendment of 1925 to the Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912, the State Court of Arbitration was required to declare a

basic wage annually, to operate from the 1st July in each year.

I would like to repeat that in 1925 an amendment was made to the Industrial Arbitration Act of 1912 and, from the 1st of July, we were to have an adjustment—a wage annually adjusted from the 1st of July in each year.

I made reference to the destruction of what had become the monument of quarterly adjustments and to the introduction of annual adjustments by this iniquitous piece of legislation that has come before the House in the year 1966. Let us continue to the next stage—

In 1930, the Court was empowered by another amendment to the Act to adjust the annual declaration each quarter in consonance with "the variation (if any) in the cost of living."

That emphasises the point; it was to be adjusted in accordance with the cost of living in order to give a fair and equitable income for a normal living standard. One proceeds a little further through this report to find—

A further amendment in 1950 removed this obligation and gives the Court discretion to make basic wage determinations at any time, provided that such reviews are at intervals of not less than twelve months. The provision for quarterly adjustments was retained. Basic wage determinations of the Court are automatically applicable, and thus become the minimum wage permissible by law, in respect to all male and female workers who are covered by industrial awards made by the State Court or by agreements registered with the Court and those who come within the provisions of the Factories and Shops Act.

In 1930 one finds that the quarterly adjustments are not to be interfered with by this annual declaration. The report continues—

The first decision of the Court took effect on the 1st July, 1926, and prescribed a rate of £4 5s. for males and £2 5s. 11d. for females throughout the whole of the State. In fixing the male rate the Court divided the wage into four elements and allowed such amounts for each as to meet the requirements of a family unit of four, comprising a man, his wife, and two children. For Food and Groceries the amount was the equivalent of the Piddington Commission's standard but reduced to provide for a family unit of four; for Rent, the average rental of four and five-roomed houses.

Therefore, in 1926 and in 1930 one sees movements towards these quarterly adjustments. I say that we are giving away our birthright to align ourselves with the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, which is always dominated by the political atmosphere of the Commonwealth. I do not think that could be regarded very

lightly. If one traces back the actions of the Menzies Government, one finds on one particular occasion that it entered into a dispute with the Commonwealth Arbitration Court to prevent the adjustment of wages.

I might say that the Government is working directly against the interests of the normal people; that is, the wage earners. The Government will be using taxation which has been extracted from the pay packets of the workers. But, this legislation will prevent the people of Western Australia from increasing their basic wage. At the same time the Government will be living on the taxes which have been supplied from the pay packets of the workers.

The power of domination by the Commonwealth Arbitration Court is an anachronism. Today it has greater power than its creator, the National Parliament. Where it chooses to intervene, its awards and determinations override State industrial laws and awards. It prescribes labour conditions for State instrumentalities which no Parliament—and certainly not this Parliament, or for that matter any other State Parliament—can veto or amend at any time. The National Parliament has this overriding power and this dominating power and yet we are aligning ourselves with this concept to give away our birthright of basic wage control.

Not many years ago I understand we carried out a referendum for secession and it was successful, but today we find we are aligning ourselves with the very things from which we wanted to secede. By that I mean we will be giving away the right of State control of basic wage adjustments, or any amendments that we may desire.

It seems very hard to visualise that all parts of the States are equal and that all of the States are equal and that, by this means, we will be placed on an equal footing. I think we could take the Ord River as a spectacle of how we are treated in this State; and in my estimation, the Commonwealth Government treats us worse, industrially, than it treats the Minister when he approaches it in connection with the Ord River scheme.

The same difficulty will apply through the difference in the harvest and other conditions which might prevail in the various States. Fortunately, at the present time, this Government is handling last year's harvest, which was an excellent one; and, through the powers above, we can probably look forward to a bumper harvest this year which will assist the State in its economic dilemma.

It seems to me that the introduction of this legislation will affect control over one section of the public, which, in my opinion, is the section that should be getting assistance to the very maximum; we should provide that section with an equitable standard of living for the man, his wife, and their children.

What is the actual concept of the wage? I refer here to the Commonwealth with reference to the basic wage. In 1949 there was an amendment to the Commonwealth Act to give the Commonwealth Arbitration Court control over the fixing of the wage. If the House will bear with me for a little time, I would like to quote the actual action which took place. This is contained on page 18 of the same report of the *Statistical Register of Western Australia for 1957-58*, part XII, which refers to retail prices, wages, employment, and miscellaneous. This is what is said about the concept of the basic wage on a Commonwealth basis—

The concept of a "basic" or "living" wage occurs commonly in the determinations of wage fixing authorities in Australia, although it may vary in definition. Originally the term was understood to mean the minimum—

Which is about the lowest which could possibly be arrived at. The report continues—

—or "basic" wage necessary to provide a reasonable standard of comfort for the average worker and his family. In later years, however, economic factors have been taken into account and, in determining specified minimum rates of wage, consideration has been given to the capacity of industry to pay those rates.

I would like to dwell at that point for a moment. We have heard so much about productivity; about expanding industry, and the economic value of it. Why cannot the worker share in this margin of profit created by his own productivity?

Mr. J. Hegney: Because there would be less for others!

Mr. HALL: That is very doubtful; but the position is that the human element in this expression "productivity" means that the worker is generating an income for his manager or industrial concern, or employer. He is weakening his body physically by the exertion of time and motion studies, and by other things which have been introduced in connection with productivity. If there is no remuneration for his efforts, it is not going to be very long before the same worker either cracks up physically or seeks other employment where the work is not so strenuous.

I would think there is some merit in the thought that the worker should share in the profit basis. This will affect several firms in Australia today. One firm with which I had close association was a silk and textile company which gave the most junior employee—a young man of one year's standing—a share in the profits. He took home £100 over his wages and holiday pay at Christmas time. There are many firms which could give an incentive rate out of the profits created by the individuals' productivity. Are we to understand from this that the negotiation points will be negated, or can they be enlarged on the

actual basic principle? I think the workers' plight through the Commonwealth arbitration set-up of Australia has, in the past, been very very bad.

At this point, I would like to cast my mind back to the employees of the Postmaster-General's Department who for years were fighting for their rights and privileges. Finally they reached the point of no return, but they received very little consideration until they went on strike. What happened to the whole of Australia when that particular industry collapsed through strike action? We well know the result. The Government hastened to rectify the error, which it had committed, of fobbing off the employees of the department; it had to face up to the position and make some adjustment.

As a result of this fobbing off and this resistance to wage adjustments, I wonder how much was lost to the workers in their pay packets, and how the economy of Australia as a whole was affected? How many other employees working under a Commonwealth award have been faced with the same difficulty of having to appear before the Commonwealth Industrial Commission but have met with nothing but refusal? If we vote for this Bill we will be voting for a system under which the workers of Western Australia will be faced with the same difficulty that faces employees under Commonwealth awards.

Mr. Hawke, the trade union advocate appearing before the Commonwealth Industrial Commission on the Commonwealth basic wage hearing, in his summing up presented a case for the commission to uphold a return to quarterly adjustments for the Commonwealth basic wage. Also, if this Bill is passed, virtually we will be destroying the foundations of arbitration we have built up over the years. We heard a great hullabaloo over the proposed demolition of the Barracks Archway, but in value this Bill is three times as important to the people of Western Australia as the Barracks Archway. If Parliament agrees to the measure, quarterly basic wage adjustments will be destroyed. Therefore, I cannot support the legislation in any circumstances.

In support of the remarks I have made I will quote some facts from the *Wage Rate Bulletin* published by the Victorian Chamber of Manufactures. This copy is dated February, 1955. An extract from it reads as follows:—

Quarterly Cost of Living Change
Based on the Commonwealth
Statistician's "C" Series, Quarterly
Retail Price Index Numbers, December
Quarter, 1954.

| | | Adult Male Basic Wage | £ s. d. |
|-----------|-----|-----------------------------|---------|
| Melbourne | ... | ... | 11 15 0 |
| Sydney | ... | ... | 12 6 0 |

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|------|------|----|----|---|
| Adelaide | .... | .... | 11 | 16 | 0 |
| Brisbane | .... | .... | 11 | 4 | 0 |
| Perth | .... | .... | 12 | 18 | 0 |
| Hobart | .... | .... | 12 | 6 | 0 |
| Launceston | .... | .... | 12 | 2 | 0 |
| Six Capital Cities | .... | .... | 12 | 0 | 0 |

Federal Awards

| | | | Male Basic Wage | | |
|--------------------|------|------|-----------------|----|----|
| | | | £ | s. | d. |
| Melbourne | .... | .... | 11 | 15 | 0 |
| Sydney | .... | .... | 12 | 3 | 0 |
| Adelaide | .... | .... | 11 | 11 | 0 |
| Brisbane | .... | .... | 10 | 18 | 0 |
| Perth | .... | .... | 11 | 16 | 0 |
| Hobart | .... | .... | 12 | 2 | 0 |
| Launceston | .... | .... | 11 | 18 | 0 |
| Six Capital Cities | .... | .... | 11 | 16 | 0 |

The female basic wage in each State, of course, is shown as being about 75 per cent. of the male basic wage.

Without delving into the rates for the trades themselves, which vary considerably, I point out there is quite a variation between the Commonwealth basic wages fixed in the various States. When the wages in the respective States vary to this degree, which must affect the economy of each State, how are we going to arrive at an equal wage for workers all over Australia, in view of all the different awards under which various unions work in all parts of Australia and the varying conditions in these trades for which these awards have been granted? We must face the fact that the economy of one town in one State could not hope to be in accord with the economy of another town in another State.

If we cast our minds back to the period before quarterly adjustments to the basic wage were made, we will recall that the Arbitration Court had to fix, in fact, three different basic wages: one for the metropolitan area; one for the South-West Land Division; and one for the Goldfields Division. These were based on the cost of living in the main towns of each of those divisions. If we endeavour to seek uniformity in wage-fixing—and the word “uniformity” has a very wide meaning and offers a lot of scope—how are we to achieve this in view of all the varying conditions and different awards?

If the Eastern States are enjoying buoyant economic conditions and have a flourishing economy, I feel sure the voice of Western Australia would not be heard in protest; not even faintly. I believe the legislation before the House is dangerous, and, I repeat, it is iniquitous and damaging to the principle of fixing a just wage for the wage earner; and a man's wife may be unable to work to earn extra income, because she has to remain at home to look after his children.

When we direct our thoughts to a consideration of basic principles, we must ask ourselves: What can we do to assist in

keeping to basic principles when the basic wage is being fixed?

Mr. Crommelin: Are the lower wages paid to workers employed in the textile industries in the Eastern States seriously affecting the Albany Woollen Mills?

Mr. HALL: The wages and margins paid to workers employed in the textile industries in the Eastern States would be far ahead of the wages paid to the employees of the Albany Woollen Mills. They are paid incentive payments, and the firms work on a lower profit margin and so decrease the prices, and the local firm cannot compete with them. These larger firms in the Eastern States have a high rate of production and they are able to work on a smaller margin of profit.

Mr. Crommelin: How can the local woollen mills decrease their prices against the high rate of productivity of the larger firms?

Mr. HALL: The Albany Woollen Mills is working as economically as possible, but it cannot pay the margins to its workers which the Eastern States' firms pay to their employees. This brings us back to a consideration of basic State rights and privileges so that we can own something of our own, and produce something within the boundaries of our own State, with the workers being subject to our local conditions. When that occurs I can tell the member for Claremont I will be happy to see the local woollen mills reach the same standard as the textile mills in the Eastern States, where the employees enjoy incentive payments and other benefits as a reward for their services. I hope I have answered the member for Claremont sufficiently on that point.

I repeat that the Bill is damaging to the basic wage principle that is followed in this State and to the minimum wage earners; that is, the men who cannot obtain any additional income to assist them to survive life's struggles. These are the men who, by rearing their own children, save the Immigration Department many thousands of pounds annually. At the moment there is a continual stream of migrants returning to their own countries, which means that all Australia has achieved is to give them the benefit of enjoying a cruise at the expense of the Commonwealth Government.

When these people return to their own countries the economy of Australia suffers considerably. It is about time we assisted those men who rear their children in this country and who have to support them on the basic wage. We should consider those workers who are assisting to increase the population of this country, and who, for the overall defence of Australia, are our greatest salvation. We can help to increase the population of Australia by granting to the basic wage earner the right to receive a reasonable wage and to enjoy a good standard of living.

MR. JAMIESON (Beeloo) [9.10 p.m.]: If arbitration in industry is to continue to exist, the three parties to the arbitration system, namely, the Government, the employers, and the employees, must all respect legislation that has been enacted for the guidance and control of their activities; but the Government has gone beyond this. It has assumed an air of omnipotence and it will not be satisfied by the action of the court. Not only has this Government displayed this attitude, but a Government of a similar character displayed a similar attitude in 1963. When things were not to its liking at that time, it rushed into this Chamber with a Bill to amend the Industrial Arbitration Act with a view to interfering with the workings of the arbitration system. This Government is taking similar action on this occasion.

This is a very important feature of the amendment now before us and serious consideration must be given to it. The Government cannot expect the other parties to have respect for the arbitration system when, to obtain advantage as an employer, it is prepared to use its special position to amend the Act which governs this system. If the trade union movement tried to do this by forceful means the Government would be the first to complain, and if the Employers Federation tried to do it, the employees would be the first to complain. But because of the special, privileged position in which the Government is placed it is prepared to take steps to alter the present arbitration system for its own purposes.

Much has been said of the situation in New South Wales, and it is of interest that we have had certain information from Mr. Renshaw on this subject—it was obtained, in fact, within the last hour—concerning the position that prevailed in New South Wales at the time of the change from quarterly adjustments to the Federal wage system. Mr. Renshaw points to a very salient feature with which the Minister did not deal. That is that the State basic wage at the time was much lower than the Federal basic wage and there was considerable pressure from the State union movement to raise it to the same standard.

At the time Mr. Renshaw offered the unions the opportunity of accepting the Commonwealth basic wage with a retrospective payment from June, 1964. When they accepted it he pointed out that if they wanted to be paid the Commonwealth basic wage they must accept the Commonwealth system that was used to alter the wage from time to time. However, he made the saving comment that if trade union members were to be disadvantaged in the future, he was prepared to reintroduce quarterly adjustments to the basic wage for their benefit. This was the actual position which existed under the Renshaw Government in New South Wales.

So possibly the less the Minister says about that the better. In effect, this Bill

means that by lifting a wage up to another standard the Minister is actually holding the State wage down to the Commonwealth wage that now applies in Western Australia. The attitude of Mr. Renshaw was brought about by the fact that for the sake of simplicity of Treasury administration he preferred quarterly adjustments. From the Treasury point of view quarterly adjustments could be met with greater facility, because an estimate could be made of what was required by working according to adjustments that were made from time to time instead of working with an unknown quantity following a decision based on the inquiries conducted by the Commonwealth.

This was the point I made during the second reading in respect of private employers. I said that if I were an employer I would desire to have available to me, my accountant, or my financial adviser, all the statistics which would indicate a rise or a fall in costs, so as to enable a true assessment of the situation to be made. This is particularly desirable in the construction industry where cash is not paid over the counter for jobs.

In the case of consumer goods the position might be a little different, but even then the statistics would be desirable to enable the manufacturers to have some idea of the costs for the next season's commodities, such as winter clothing, which is usually manufactured in the previous summer. If there is no proper method to base the costs it would become a matter of by guess or by God in respect of the prices they should charge.

I now turn to a report which appeared in *The West Australian* recently under the heading of "W.A. Not Low Wage State—Schnaars." I do not wish to refer to any person in particular, but this report appeared under the name of the person mentioned therein. One paragraph reads as follows—

Award rates provided a better though imperfect, basis for comparison—

I am glad the word "imperfect" is used in this report, because the Minister seems to require a perfect set of figures—but I do not know from where he will obtain them—to refute any argument he wishes to counter, because he has said the figures of the statistician are not sufficient, although these figures satisfy the Grants Commission, and when examined by various Universities have proved to be as near to the factual situation as can be obtained. Yet to the Minister they are not sufficient! The report continues—

—and the latest figures showed that award rates in W.A. for a 40-hour week were higher than the Australian average.

What a brilliant statement that is! The person concerned is well aware it is made on the eve of another award

being applied generally in the Eastern States, and the rates in that award will be at least equal to, if not more than, the rates in the awards which apply in Western Australia. It happens that the decision to grant increases was made in July, but they have not yet been applied in the Eastern States. Therefore a good reason can be given for Western Australia to be a little ahead of the Eastern States.

I would like to give an indication of how Western Australia has become a low-wage State. The other evening the Minister quoted the base rates for a fitter, indicating that the award rate in Western Australia is \$49, in New South Wales \$44.70, in Victoria \$43.90, in Queensland \$43.90, and in South Australia \$43.50; but he failed to point out that the award in Western Australia was recently adjusted, while the awards of the other States were adjusted a long time ago.

Let us examine the low-wage content of the rates in Western Australia, and here the position of the boilermakers is of interest. These workers are engaged in the construction occupation, and they are associated with the building trades workers, the electricians, and others on construction work. In Western Australia the boilermakers would be used quite extensively in the construction of big projects, such as those at Kwinana and along the north-west coast, in comparison with the other trades engaged on those projects.

After the recent adjustment of the award, the average over-award payment is \$2 per week for members of the Boilermakers' Society. In effect, it means only 50 per cent. of the shops in this State are paying rates in excess of those determined by the court. When giving their decision, the members of the Industrial Commission wanted an undertaking from the advocate of the employees that, if the decision was made, there would be no pressure for payments other than the award rates.

I refer to the actual payments that are made to the boilermakers in the Eastern States. In Brisbane 100 per cent. of the establishments employing boilermakers pay over-award rates, and the average over-award payment is \$12.90 a week; in Adelaide 100 per cent. of the establishments employing these workers pay over-award rates, and the average is \$4.10 a week; in Tasmania, a claimant State, 95 per cent. of the establishments employing boilermakers pay over-award rates, and the average is \$6.92 a week; in Victoria 100 per cent. of establishments employing boilermakers pay over-award rates, and the average is \$6.20 a week; and in New South Wales 100 per cent. of the establishments employing boilermakers also pay over-award rates, and the average is \$10.92 a week.

Taking the figures for particular areas it is interesting to note that in the Sydney district the rate is rather low in com-

parison with the others, and here the average over-award rate is \$8.55 a week, in the Newcastle district it is \$10.25 a week, and in the Wollongong district it is \$11.25 a week. These figures have been arrived at by a complete examination of all shops associated with the boilermaking industry.

I now turn to the rates paid by establishments which have branches or subsidiaries in Western Australia. Humes Ltd. pays \$9.20 over the award rate in Sydney, but only \$6 in Western Australia. Furthermore the payment in Western Australia is in the form of a bonus, which is somewhat different from an over-award payment, because over-award payments are recognised as weekly rates and apply to annual and other leave entitlements, but bonus payments do not. They only apply to increased production when the worker is on the job.

The firm of Transfield has subsidiaries in Western Australia, and here it pays \$7 over the award rate, but in Wollongong it pays \$15.80 over the award, in Newcastle \$17.50 over the award, and in Sydney \$8.60 over the award. It should be noted that none of these rates will be interfered with when future changes to the base rate are made by court decisions.

Rheem Australia Pty. Ltd. pays \$8.50 as a bonus over the award rate in Western Australia, but it pays \$10 over the award rate in all the other States. In this respect Western Australia seems to be a low-wage State. Many other firms with local branches also indulge in over-award payments, much to the chagrin of the Employers Federation. J. & E. Ledger Pty. Ltd. pays a 10c-an-hour bonus, and here again this bonus is not regarded as an over-award payment on which annual and other leave entitlements are based. Fabricated Products pays 9c an hour as a bonus.

One does not need to go any further to deduce that the majority of the establishments in Western Australia in which boilermakers are engaged tend to pay rates a little in excess of those prescribed in the awards. In fact, the margins over the award rates which many of these workers received were gobbled up by the adjustment made by the court in July last.

I do not know why people bother to subscribe to the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics publications, because the Minister does not accept the figures published! I therefore turn to the facts and figures given by other organisations. The Institute of Public Affairs, in dealing with wages in terms of what they will buy, indicated that over-award wages were widespread, and that a recent University investigation revealed that the average electrical tradesman in New South Wales was paid about \$10 a week more than his award wage. It also said that the average award wage of an electrician was about \$50; and that largely because of over-award payments, real weekly earnings of all Australian employees had increased by nearly 50 per

cent. since 1948-49, compared with only a 20 per cent. increase in real award wages.

Herein lies the problem. This Government wants to peg the base rate. I should point out that if the base rate in Western Australia is slightly higher than the Federal rate it will be some compensation for the loss of the higher over-award rates which are paid in the Eastern States.

To clear up one point which was referred to by the member for Victoria Park, from the report of the Commonwealth Grants Commission, one can say that it was not convinced that Western Australia was giving anything away by having quarterly basic wage adjustments and a basic wage which was slightly higher than the Federal wage, because the over-award payments, associated with Government and private employees in the other States, were far in excess of those paid in Western Australia. The Grants Commission has indicated that in facts and figures, and because of that there is a favourable concession to Western Australia. It is true there are aspects in respect of which Western Australia is penalised by the Grants Commission, just as Tasmania is penalised in respect of other aspects.

The Minister laid great stress on the average weekly payment tables, and said the latest figures for May showed that the rate for Western Australia was \$41.30, and this was higher than the rates for all the other States except Queensland. Let us examine that one. He did not say the payment in Western Australia represented a working week based on 40 hours. He knows there is a number of awards in this State under which the rate is based on a 54-hour week, such as the awards covering the projects in the north-west. When he calculates an average by including the awards under which the working week consists of 54 hours he gives the impression that the Western Australian rate is much more than those of the other States. In fact, the Minister has given figures which are false and misleading, although from a statistical point of view they would appear to be correct.

Let me refer again to the award payments which are applied in the electrical trades. Because it did not rely on the figures of the statistician, the Electrical Trades Union of Australia had a survey of over-award payments conducted by R. A. Layton, Master of Economics and Senior Lecturer of Economics and Statistics in the University of New South Wales. He was supplied with certain requirements for extracting the necessary information to find out what award payments were being applied in the various States. He compiled various tables. They, too, are very interesting.

I hasten to say I have been assured by the local branch of the Electrical Trades Union that since the adjustment of mar-

gins in July, there are practically no organisations paying in excess of the award rate. If there are, they are paying very little in excess, because of the attitude of the Employers Federation that the over-award payments must be absorbed; that is, the over-award payments must be absorbed in making up the amount adjudged by the court.

Let us look at the position in various States with regard to the electrical trades. Mr. Layton said the average over-award payments in the metal trades is \$7.91 in N.S.W. This is very interesting. That man was so thorough in his investigation, and in the gathering of his statistics, that he even worked out the estimated error on the average over-award payment as deduced from the method arrived at. If the Minister cares to look at these figures later on, he can see how thorough the man was.

In the case of New South Wales, where the figure is \$7.91, he estimates there is a possible error of 46c. The New South Wales general award figure is \$9.55, with a maximum possible error of 50c. The Victorian metal trades award is \$9.01 average over-award payment; and again 50c is the possible error. In Victoria the general award is \$8.06 average over-award payment and the possible error is 31c.

In South Australia the metal trades award is \$5.75 average over-award payment, and the possible error is 35c. The South Australian general is \$7.60 over the award, with a possible error of 30c. In Queensland the combined awards show an average over-award payment of \$11.12 with a possible error of 49c. In Tasmania the combined awards show an over-award payment of \$9.06, with a possible error of 20c.

So there again is indicated that in every State bar this one over-award payments are made—and I defy the Minister to produce figures to show where over-award payments are made here.

The top rate affects the whole line of payments. The over-award payment goes right down the line, and everybody will be getting an over-award payment in some form or other. This is general practice.

Because the Minister quoted figures in this State, I took the trouble to get the available figures to show over-award payments, and to show the comparison with other States. Those figures indicate fairly clearly to me—although possibly not clearly enough for the Government to be bothered—that we are definitely a low wage State. Take away the temporary development which is taking place—anybody knows it is terminating to a degree; there may be a splurge for a while but that is not a good basis for any final result—and the figures tell a different story.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition said there were a number of ways in which

the State Government could increase its finances. That is true; and I suggest all Ministers present take a good look at the Commonwealth Grants Commission report, where it will be seen very clearly that the Government could pick up a few million dollars, which all the other States are getting at the present time. It is not to the credit of the Grants Commission that it does not draw the attention of this State to the fact that it is not receiving income from the source which is so obvious, when compared with other States.

It is true, of course, that over the past few years this State has—between June, 1963 and June 1965—had a fairly good increase in the average weekly earnings. This information is contained in the renowned report by Mr. Schnaars and others on the basic wage last year. Before the periods to which I have referred, our average weekly earnings were very low indeed. The position from 1963 to 1965 reflects the unusual effect of the north-west base and those other projects I have already referred to.

So the figures, as the Minister said, are not worth a tinker's cuss to hang his hat on, so far as using them for a basis of argument is concerned. The argument must revolve back to what I started with; that is, very clearly, a position of trust between the parties to awards made in this State. Surely no-one can expect to take something without giving something, and the Government is certainly not doing that. It is setting itself up with this degree of omnipotence, as mentioned earlier, where it wants to be able to interfere with the arbitration system when the system does not suit the Government, and leave the system to its own devices when it does suit the Government.

This is not a fair and proper system under which any award should operate. The Government should be prepared to allow the arbitration court to make its own determinations. The Industrial Commission, under the present Act, is not bound to make quarterly adjustments, as is clear from Mr. Kelly's statement of about a year ago. I would suggest that if the Government were acting fairly and properly, it would leave the matter to an independent body. The Government has the right to intervene on behalf of the people of the State for the welfare of the people. Because of the provisions in the Act, the employees can put their case, and the employers can put their case. Surely this is the right and proper situation if arbitration is to prevail.

However, I would say if—and this is a big "if"—the Government is to proceed with this sort of legislation, then within a few years it will have very few people subject to the arbitration system in this State. It will have redundant commissioners on its hands. I do not know what the Government will do to

put them to work, because they will not be of much help to the employers or the employees.

Strangely enough, without reflecting on the commissioners, it seems that those who come from the employers seem to give the employees a much better crack of the whip, and those who come from the employees seem to give the employers a much better crack of the whip. This has been proved under the system of arbitration in this country, and indeed it is one of those accepted hazards.

I should imagine that after a decision had been made the employers would be hostile with the person who came from their midst, and some in the union movement would be hostile with those who came from their midst. I consider that some people probably get a bit out of their realm when they take on these jobs. I did not want to point that out so much but to say that such people endeavour to be fair to all parties, even to the extent of being not fair. A fellow from the Employers Federation is going to try to see that the other fellow gets a fair go, and the fellow from the union is going to do likewise. They usually say they want all the information available before they are prepared to debate any judgment. That would seem to be an ideal way to allow a wage to be determined.

The Minister seems to be grappling with a couple of words from the report of the Grants Commission. He seems to have an extract from it. I do not know whether he has read all of it yet but I suggest he prevail on the Premier to get 12 copies of it because it could be a very interesting and enlightening document. I take the opportunity of making sure that one of the Western Australian senators—the first one I am able to get hold of when the report is printed—sends me a copy by air mail as soon as it is available.

Mr. O'Neil: My latest information—which will bear checking—is that there are 12 copies in the library.

Mr. JAMIESON: That, of course, could be interesting; 12 copies for the Ministers. They were not here the other night; I had the only copy available, which made it very awkward when quoting figures. When only one copy is available one's figures have to be accepted as fair and proper.

The Grants Commission has not indicated that its desire was to make any change. It has not indicated any adverse adjustment because our Government employees are receiving higher basic rates than those in the other States. There is very little demand for a change. However, I do think there is more behind this than meets the eye and once again, as I said in my second reading speech, I doubt whether the Minister liked bringing this Bill before the House. As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition mentioned, the Minister would have felt uneasy about bringing forward a matter like this.

I state very clearly that the Minister for Industrial Development is trying to tie up some wage system which he will be able to sell to overseas investors. If he is going to do this, he will sell the State short, and he has no justification for selling the State short. All of the people here deserve some of the things referred to in the *Daily News* editorial of Thursday last which referred to the present situation and the present proposition of the Government as being of no help to the W.A. workers, and it certainly is not.

In this State, 80 per cent. of the workers employed—or slightly in excess, nearly 81 per cent.—are under awards of this State. In New South Wales, when the last basic wage change was in evidence, there were only 50 per cent. under the State awards. In South Australia, of course, the bulk of the workers are under Federal awards because they are mostly involved in Federal industries.

Mr. Toms: In Canberra there is probably 100 per cent. under Federal awards.

Mr. JAMIESON: As the member for Bayswater interjected, he thinks that 100 per cent. would be under Federal awards in Canberra. I should imagine that might need some examination because a lot of industrial matters there are governed by the New South Wales courts, and would probably reflect the New South Wales conditions. In Queensland we have the only State which now retains any adjustment to the basic wage, because it has a considerable number of awards to cover people under State legislation.

My understanding of the position is that the figure does not nearly reach the 80-odd per cent. in Queensland that it is in this State and, as a result of our having such a high percentage of workers operating under State awards this matter should be given special consideration. However, that circumstance appears to have been given no consideration at all by the Government. The Government does not seem prepared to deal with it and, until it does, there will be very little peace within industry in this State.

Mr. Schnaars referred to the breeding of industrial discontent. The action taken by this Government is helping to breed industrial discontent, and will continue to do so until such time as some adjustment of the position is made. It is all very well for people who are receiving \$11,730 per annum, or for assistant commissioners who are on \$10,060 per annum, to make the sort of statements to which I have referred. People like that do not and will not feel the results of this sort of decision by the Government. It is those who are on, or are almost on, the basic wage, or who are receiving only a small margin, who will feel the effects of the provisions of this Bill.

As has been pointed out earlier, in many instances the families of workers in this

position are larger than those who belong to the more affluent section of the community; and, as a result, those who are on the lower wages deserve more consideration than those who are in the higher bracket. Those who are receiving higher incomes are in a position where they are able to earn more money by other means. So, in all the circumstances, this would seem to me to be a most unjust and unprincipled way for the Government to attack the working people of this State.

It is the working people who are being made to pay for any shortcomings of the Government, and the Government is allowing other sections of the community to escape its efforts to try to make up the leeway in its finances—that is, if the leeway has to be made up; and I say that because I have had a brief time to go through the latest reports of the Grants Commission and I doubt whether it is the position. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. W.A. Manning), if you have not already gained the impression that I am opposed to the measure, let me state now that I am strongly opposed to the third reading of the Bill.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Belmont) [9.48 p.m.]: A good deal has been said during the debate on the third reading about why the Bill should not be agreed to at this stage. There is little new material on this subject that I can advance but, as a representative of a district which is composed mainly of workers, I think I should indicate on their behalf opposition to the Bill.

When the last election was being fought the question of the abolition of quarterly adjustments of the basic wage was not a matter for discussion. I am certain my opponent never referred to it and, from the inquiries I have made, I am sure it was not mentioned in the Premier's policy speech. Yet at this stage the Government introduces a measure to vary the law to do something which will adversely affect most of the workers in the electorate I represent.

I am certain that had the electors known this action was to take place, my Liberal opponent would not have made such good progress as he did in the Belmont electorate. He was a glamour boy, although a very nice chap, and he appealed to many. Unfortunately many workers were taken in by my opponent's appearance—he was a younger man than I—but I am sure had they known that if he were elected he would support a Liberal Government which proposed to slash the wage system of the workers he would have got short shrift in the election.

There has been a good deal of propaganda, and we have been told from time to time about this being a State on the move—that this is a State which is leaping forward and in many ways is making

great progress. That may be so from many points of view, particularly so far as the iron ore companies in the north-west that are exploiting the wealth of this country are concerned. There is no doubt that those who have entered into agreements to exploit the natural wealth of the north-west will reap untold benefits; and possibly had the Government of the day, when negotiating these agreements, had in mind the alleged criticism of the Grants Commission it would have asked for an increased price for our iron ore. After all, the Government is the custodian of this wealth and had the Government asked for a greater price for it we would not be in the predicament in which we find ourselves today.

From the age of 18—and that is many years ago now—I have been engaged in the struggle for better conditions for workers. In those years, from the time I started work, the struggle to improve conditions was just as intense as it is now; but it appears that the employers are never satisfied. All the time they are trying to undermine the standards for which the workers fight. They try to break down those standards, and this is evident throughout our industrial history. That history has been mentioned during this debate, and workers' conditions will be broken down by the move the Government is making through the provisions of this Bill.

Governments of the political colour of the present State Government are traditionally opposed to improving workers' conditions. They set out to try to break down conditions that have been built up in this country. Earlier Labor Governments, prior to the 1930s, and before I came into this Parliament, had certain principles written into the arbitration law and those principles had the effect of improving workers' conditions. But this Government, during the elections, never mentioned it intended to make an attack on Western Australian industrial standards, just the same as no mention was made of the action it took three years ago when it broke down the old Arbitration Court system, and put the skids under the Arbitration Court judge and got rid of the other two adjudicators who were then on the bench.

In 1963 the Government brought in a new system and the idea was to introduce an El Dorado so far as industrial relationships were concerned. However, that has not eventuated for the reason that the Government would not allow the commission to function. Because the Government did not get the results it wanted from the Industrial Commission it set up, it is now whittling away the powers the commission has. Hence we on this side of the House, who represent the workers, and who are here to see that they get a fair and reasonable go so far as industrial and other legislation is concerned, protest and

strongly oppose the introduction of this legislation.

There is no doubt it is reactionary in concept, and it is designed not to bring benefits to the workers of this country but to try to take something away from them. So the struggle has gone on over the years. I do not intend to quote statistics in regard to this question; various other members have mentioned that aspect in regard to the basic wage existing in the various States in the Commonwealth. However, I wanted to deal with the matter on a general level.

I have always been interested in politics and economics, and during my lifetime I have seen the attacks that have been made on arbitration courts and the workers, particularly by the opponents of Labor. When Governments of that type find that an arbitration court is not doing its bidding, or the bidding of the exploiters of labour in Australia, attacks are made on the court. That sort of thing has been going on for years, even in the Commonwealth spheres, both in respect of the basic wage and the hours of labour.

When I was employed in heavy industry, we worked a 48-hour week. We fought hard and tried to reduce the hours to 44, but the courts would not agree to it. Then there was an industrial dispute, and for six months I was engaged in fighting for what was known as the retention of the 44-hour week. Finally we were beaten and we had to go back to a 48-hour week, and the struggle has been going on ever since. Eventually the hours were reduced to 40 per week, and then the problem arose whether the workers should get the same wages for a 40-hour week as they did for a 44-hour week.

After the war, when the 40-hour week came into operation, I can remember a former Liberal senator from Western Australia who was on the Commonwealth Arbitration Court, the late Judge Drake-Brockman, had to admit, after submissions before the Commonwealth Court, that the case for a shorter working week had been proved. He said he could not resist the voluminous evidence that had been submitted on that occasion by the Labor Party in the Commonwealth sphere and also by the four State Labor Governments.

The same sort of thing has applied in regard to the basic wage. Liberal Governments over the years have endeavoured to tamper with the industrial law for the purpose of getting results which would be advantageous to them and their supporters. That appears to be what has been done in this instance, even though not so many years ago this Government amended the Arbitration Act to put the Arbitration Court out of existence and set up what is now known as the Industrial Commission. Yet when the Industrial Commission did not come up with the results

which the Government hoped for, and because it did not bend to the will of the Government, the Government set out to put the skids under the commission and weaken its power.

Over the years that I have been in politics it has always been said that the Labor Party was the unificationist party, and that the other parties believed in State rights. But here is an instance of where those same parties are whittling down the authority of the State Industrial Commission—a State court—and are proposing to vest the power in the Commonwealth Arbitration Court. The Government is most inconsistent in connection with its policy.

There is one matter, however, in which the Government is most consistent; namely, that it is opposed to the best interests of the worker, particularly when he seeks to improve his standard of living. We know the struggle that has gone on in countries adjacent to ours, particularly as it relates to the improvement of their standards of living. If we try to break down the standards in this State and in Australia, generally, the time will come when we will not be able to play about with the workers as we are doing today, because they will be more intelligent and more wide awake as a result of the build-up in our educational standards which we are seeking to achieve.

Endeavours to stop the onrush of communism will not be successful by attacking workers' wages, and so on. The only way to achieve this is to give these workers a greater share of the wealth of the country. We are told that the country has greater wealth today, and the only way to placate the workers is to share with them the wealth that is being produced. Consequently I am vehemently opposed to this legislation.

MR. MOIR (Boulder-Eyre) [10.2 p.m.]: I cannot let this occasion pass without once again voicing my strong opposition to the measure before us. The Arbitration Court has been an institution in this State, and in all other States of the Commonwealth, for many long years. It was formed in the various States to prevent the strikes, lock-outs, and bitter industrial struggles that took place many years ago.

In this State we have had an Arbitration Court in one form or another for several years, and by and large it has given satisfaction. It has had the appreciation of the working public, and the public at large. At times, of course, there has been dissatisfaction with the verdicts, but when a court adjudicates on various matters either one side or the other, or possibly both sides are generally not entirely pleased with the verdicts that are handed down.

So far as the Arbitration Court and its working in Western Australia is con-

cerned its verdicts have never been handed out on a plate to the workers and the employers. It has been necessary to produce facts and figures, and to put up arguments before the court is able to adjudicate and make its decision. There have been occasions when Governments have attempted to interfere with the Arbitration Court; although I am thankful to say that this has not been done by Governments of the complexion of the party to which I belong. It has been done by Governments of the same complexion as the present Government which, for the time being, occupies the Government benches on that side of the Chamber.

I would refer the House to the early 1920s when a Prime Minister of Australia tried to abolish the Federal Arbitration Court. I refer to Stanley Melbourne Bruce who moved in this direction. However, at the subsequent election the people abolished his Government and also abolished him, because he lost the blue ribbon seat of Kooyong. That indicated that the people of Australia firmly believed in the system of arbitration that was in vogue in those days; just as the people now believe in the system of arbitration today.

I have been here a few years—though not as long as some—but I have strong memories of the actions of the McLarty-Watts Government in 1952 when it saw fit to interfere with the Arbitration Act as it existed at the time. That Government amended the Act and put into it some of the most malicious penalties that could have been conceived. These penalties were very vicious and militated against the workers who came under the Arbitration Act. It was a shocking piece of legislation, and as a result of that Government's action—and I can only say it was because of that—it was defeated at the next election in 1953. I do hope that because of the action it seeks to take now, the present Government will also be defeated at the next election. This is most atrocious legislation which it seeks to put on the Statute book. It seems to be no trouble at all for the present Government to attack the worker and his living standards; it seems to do so without any compunction at all.

If steps must be taken to right the economy of the State, then surely there are other avenues that can be exploited. There must be other courses open to the Government. The point is the Government does not choose to use them; it seeks the easy way out, and is determined that the workers will not be given quarterly adjustments.

I do not think this aspect has been mentioned before, but not only will this legislation hit the low wage earner in this city it will also hit very hard the worker in the country. We know that there are certain towns in the State which the statistician takes into account in

considering the prices index, after which he arrives at what he considers to be a just and equitable basic wage.

What chance will the worker in Kalgoorlie have so far as the Federal court is concerned? The representatives of those workers in this State will not be able to put their facts and figures before the hearing of the court, because most of the unions have State registration, and their advocates are denied the right to appear before a Federal court. We know the Federal court takes into consideration the index figures for the six capital cities in the Commonwealth when making a determination.

That court is not concerned with what the cost of living may be at Bunbury, Kalgoorlie, Geraldton or in the north-west of the State. It is only concerned with the cost-of-living figures for Perth, which are not a true reflection of the cost of living all over the State. In the attack the Government is making on the low wage earner of the State—and there is a considerable number of them, despite what some members on the other side said during the second reading debate—it must be remembered that a lot of these people are finding it very difficult to get along and pay their way; they are finding it difficult to enjoy the rights and privileges that anybody in an enlightened community has a right to claim and which they deserve.

I will now refer to the question of hospitalisation. We find that this Government recently increased hospital charges by the astonishing amount of 50 per cent.; and this brought forth a protest from no less a body than the Medical Association which feared, and rightly so, that people would not only not be able to afford to go into hospital, but that they would be reluctant to go near a doctor for fear they might be placed in a hospital, for which they would not have the resources to pay.

I just want to refer, in passing, to the situation in Kalgoorlie. Here is a place in which the Government has done very little to extend hospital facilities, with the result that at times it is impossible to get an emergency bed for a serious accident case on the mines. I do not say that lightly, because I know what I am talking about.

On Friday night I attended a meeting of people who are interested in this question, and we were given facts and figures in connection with it. The ordinary worker covers himself with the hospital benefit fund or, in the case of the goldfields, with the goldfields medical fund, and he generally takes out cover for a public bed ward. In Kalgoorlie it would be a 10-bed ward. But these are not available. At the present time they are filled with elderly people who are not ill in the strict sense of the word; they are suffering from old age and have no friends or relatives.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. W. A. Manning): I must remind the honourable

member that we are dealing with the Industrial Arbitration Act.

Mr. MOIR: That is what I am dealing with. I am pointing out that this action on the part of the Government of taking away quarterly adjustments and placing the State basic wage on the Federal level where the adjustments do not come at shorter intervals than 12 months, will result in the workers on the lower wage income being that far behind in the cost of living that they will not be able to afford to pay for hospitalisation cover which they may require when they are ill. I think that is very pertinent to the Bill.

If these people do not have this cover they cannot go into a public ward, and consequently they are put into a four-bed ward, a two-bed ward, or sometimes into a one-bed ward. That means that when they come out of hospital after a few weeks they are faced with a tremendous bill to pay. I know a case where a man who belonging to a benefit fund came out of hospital and had to pay \$1,000. The Government is lacking in its duty in not making provision for these people and for taking the action it is in this Bill. The quarterly cost of living adjustment does not give the worker an increase in wages; it merely brings him into parity with the movement in prices at the end of a quarter.

If the Bill only provided that annual adjustments to the basic wage should be effected it would be preferable to the provisions contained in the measure before us; because the matter would at least be treated on a Western Australian basis, and not on the basis of six capital cities. But, as I see it, the worker in this State will go further behind, and this will be to the detriment of the State, because the younger working men will not put up with this sort of thing; they will do what they are doing at the moment and leave this State to work in industries in the Eastern States.

There is quite a large number of these younger men—particularly in Kalgoorlie—who do not come to the metropolitan area to work; they go to the Eastern States because they claim that the wages there are far better than they are in this State. So I think the Government will find, to its cost, that there will be a shortage of labour in this State if it continues with this vicious type of legislation.

We know that the Government refrained from bringing in a measure like this. It first took the action of abolishing the arbitration court and appointing a commission. It amended the legislation to provide for the commission and hand-picked its members. I believe the Government honestly thought that commission would fall in with its ideas and not make quarterly adjustments to the basic wage. The Government did everything it could to insult the commission. We know what happened at the time of the first

adjustment to the basic wage. The then Minister for Labour made a statement in the Press that the Government was prepared only to support a wage in conformity with the Federal basic wage. The commission at that time brought down its findings and brought the basic wage into conformity with the Commonwealth basic wage.

At subsequent hearings, quarterly basic wage adjustments were made which increased the State basic wage until it was about 7s. higher than the Federal basic wage. This did not suit the Government; and seeing the commissioners which it appointed did not fall in with its views, the Government decided drastic action had to be taken. That is why this Bill depriving the commission of the power ever to make quarterly basic wage adjustments and make any determination so far as the basic wage is concerned is before the House.

I was interested while the member for Victoria Park was speaking to hear the Minister for Industrial Development take him to task for his critical reference to one of the commissioners. The Minister seemed to think that that was something which should not be done; but I say the utterances of the member for Victoria Park were very mild when compared with the criticism of the commission that is being offered by the Government.

By passing this measure, the Government is showing a complete vote of no-confidence in the commissioners of the Industrial Commission. It is saying, "You are not to be entrusted with the powers. You are not allowed to adjudicate on quarterly basic wage adjustments. We will no longer permit you to make quarterly basic wage adjustments; nor will we permit you to make an annual determination. We will take that power away from you and all you will be in the future is a rubber stamp for the basic wage determinations of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court."

When the Minister for Industrial Development talks about criticism, slighting, and that sort of thing, it does not measure up one iota to the implied criticism the Government is offering to the Industrial Commission. As a matter of fact, I go so far as to say that this Bill is not only an insult to the workers, it is an insult of the first magnitude to the commission. I oppose the third reading of this Bill.

MR. GRAHAM (Balcatta) [10.19 p.m.]: The point that strikes me most about this all-important Bill that is certain to be placed on the Statute book, is the position of obscurity in which it has been placed in a medium of communication, namely, the Press. This is a Bill which will have an impact on tens of thousands; indeed, in the ultimate, on several hundred thousands of people by reducing their

standard of living, and by and large it is getting only a passing reference in the Press.

As against that, if I might use a contrast, there is a member of Parliament from this State by the name of Senator Branson—and I suppose the same news item has been hashed and rehashed with considerable prominence, headlines, and space—who has given notice of a Bill which the Federal Government has kept at the bottom of the notice paper. Whilst I have every sympathy for the plight of those in the outback of Western Australia who are denied a facility—to wit a form of entertainment—surely it cannot, by any stretch of anyone's imagination, be regarded as one iota as important as this Bill which the Government seeks to impose on the working people and their families in the State of Western Australia.

I desire to make my protest. It would almost appear that there was some sort of arrangement under which the soft pedal had been applied, because if the relevant importance of the two matters is taken into account, this Bill and the debate upon this Bill should be featured upon the front page, and on the second, the third, the fourth, and the tenth, having regard to the amount of space which has been devoted to the matter to which I have just made reference. This, of course, indicates the cross which must be borne. Those items or features which appeal to certain people, or a certain line of political thinking, are to be promoted and those which are not favoured are to be if not suppressed, then given scant attention in the hope that the significance of them will escape the attention of the public. Therefore, the criticism which the action of this Government has warranted will not be to the extent that it should.

However, I wish to assure members of the Government that the passage of this Bill will not mean the end of this particular event, as, on every conceivable occasion, opportunity will be taken to remind the workers of this blatant party-political prejudiced decision on the Government's part.

What is the position? The Government is confronted with certain difficulties. It is experiencing trouble in making ends meet. That, let me interpose, is no novelty so far as I personally am concerned. I indicated in the second reading stage that if the Government finds itself in this position, it is primarily because of the effect on the Australian economy of the action of the Commonwealth Government in embarking on an overseas expedition in respect of which there is no warrant whatsoever. Practically the whole of the world testifies with me in that regard. Also, this is a reflection of the incompetence and mismanagement of this Liberal Party Government in Western Australia.

Even allowing for both these factors, the Liberal Government was put where it

is by the votes of the people; and whether they be good, bad or indifferent Governments for the nation and for the State, they have to be borne until the next election day.

Surely if this Government is in a mess because of Liberal Party policy, then the correctives should be applied over the whole of the community; but this Government is so blatantly party ridden that it can find as a solution to the ills of the State, an attack upon the workers, and the workers only. All of us know perfectly well there are many elements which make up costs which impose burdens, whether upon the body corporate or upon the individual. Prices of goods and supplies have been constantly increasing, not only in respect of those items which are taken into account in assessing the basic wage, but in respect of all commodities; and, of course, the Government shoulders some of the burden because of the goods and supplies which it is bound to obtain for the purpose of its ordinary duties.

But the Government is not concerned about these ever-increasing prices. So far as the citizens of the community are concerned, an important factor is that of rent—the rent citizens must pay for their homes. Here, again, there is no suggestion whatsoever that the Government will take some steps to reduce that impact upon the public and, indeed, upon business people. For those who are purchasing their homes, and making purchases of any type whatsoever, interest is a considerable factor, but there is no suggestion by the Government that there should be a control over the rate of interest which is charged.

No; prices, interest, and all the rest of it can soar heavens high and the Government feels that is as it should be because, to use its own words, it is a private-enterprise Government. I wonder why it does not allow a little privacy for the workers to decide something for themselves, or where an instrument has been set up to determine a common factor, allow that instrumentality to do its job?

Profits, as I indicated the other evening, have been creating record upon record. The company which will make £10,000 profit in the year 1958, makes £12,000 in 1959, and £20,000 in 1960; and so it goes on, in many cases doubling, redoubling, and again redoubling. The effect is that the Government is paying far more than it should for what it is buying and the hapless housewife, worker, and citizen in the community, are paying far more than they should. Again, the Government is not in the least concerned. It prefers to point its finger at one section of the community—the most helpless section of the community; those, by and large, who are in receipt of the lowest levels of income.

The Government calls tenders and contracts are considered from time to time, and it is palpable there is collusion in many cases in the matter of paint, petrol,

railway sleepers, and so on. The Government is not the least deterred at that; it does not mind paying another \$500,000 for a few items. But it throws its hands up in horror if there is an increase of a few cents accorded the workers by an independent tribunal not for the purpose of greater profits to the workers, but merely to maintain the standard of living which was slipping away from them over the previous three months.

The Government has no proposals for the curbing of fees which are charged by legal practitioners, by medical practitioners, and by those who are engaged in business and who charge a fee, or who levy a regular charge, for the services they render.

Those people are still free to increase the figures, as they have done over the years. Why does not the Government tackle them? This may interest the member for Wembley Beaches: With respect to the last two increases in medical practitioners' fees—agreed to by their organisation—I am aware of several practitioners whom I know personally who protested to me and said the rise in fees was not warranted; that more than sufficient was being made by medical practitioners with the fees at the then existing level. But the association spoke, and that was that.

Dr. Henn: The fees are lower in this State than in the other States.

Mr. GRAHAM: That may be, but I am telling you of the reaction of those people. In the same way, if the master hairdressers have a meeting tomorrow night and decide that a 10c increase is to apply from next Monday, every working man—and his children—will have to pay this extra amount whenever they have a haircut, and the Government would not be the least bit concerned about that.

But the wages of the workers must be pegged and must be allowed to slip to the tune of 70c a week, at least. Why is it wages and only wages? Nobody on the other side of the House—sitting behind the Government—is surely going to endeavour to promote the idea that the only cost is that of wages. The Government has not put a brake on the margins of top-ranking public servants. We saw in the Press this morning where some had gone up to figures in excess of \$12,000 a year.

Mr. May: Retrospective to last January.

Mr. GRAHAM: That is so; but no proposal that there should be a curb so far as those people are concerned. That is allowed to go on but the person who is receiving somewhere around \$35 to \$40 a week is a matter of primary concern to this Government and he should not be adjusted by even a few cents a week. That, of course, is an anomaly, but I am not suggesting for one moment that there should be any interference with margins. However, if there is a crisis in the

financial affairs of this State, then there should be an all-round tackling of the problem, and not this cowardly approach of having a shot at the workers, and the workers only.

Of course, side by side with this action by the Government there is legislation before this House to extend certain concessions to Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. I do not intend to debate the matter because you, Sir, will not permit me, but we are aware of this and I am only mentioning it in passing to indicate how biased and unfair is this Government. It has no genuine desire to tackle a difficult financial position. The Government sees a glorious opportunity for using the big stick to tackle the workers; something for which successive Liberal and Country Party Governments have become infamous.

I indicated, when speaking to the second reading, that there is a whole line of these Governments who prate of being non-party in their outlook, and of making all decisions on a broad statesmanlike front. But performances show that when there was an annual adjustment of the basic wage, and costs and prices were falling because of the depression, a Liberal-Country Party could not get into the House quickly enough to make quarterly adjustments so that the employers could bring wages down every three months.

We are aware, too, of the action of the Government in prescribing the activities of unions and unionists and imposing heavy penalties upon those people who might seek to join together for the purpose of protecting themselves against the likes of this Government. We had the experience just recently of the Government sacking the Arbitration Court and setting up a creation, no doubt, at the instigation of the Employers Federation.

Now, because the court is not falling into the strict party line of the Liberal Party, the court is to have its hands tied behind its back and determinations will not be made in Western Australia any more. They will be made by the Federal authority and we will have a bunch of yes-men in this State whose duty it will be to toe the line and merely go through the endorsement of what the Commonwealth authority has said. That, of course, is an insult to the integrity of those whom the Government chose to sit on the Industrial Commission in Western Australia.

This, allow me to say, is the Government which year in and year out has been telling us, and telling the public through paid propaganda merchants—whose salaries and expenses are met by the taxpayers, and who are performing the work of the Liberal Party machine; these so-called public relations officers attached to the Premier's Department and other departments—of the great leap forward which Western Australia is making, and telling us of the undreamed-of prosperity we are enjoying

and of the exciting development which is taking place in Western Australia.

Those people have been telling us of the mighty increases in the productivity of the State and how much better off Western Australia would be when it was removed from the shackles and burdens of the State trading concerns. We were told of the remarkable deals that this Government had achieved for the people in respect of iron ore and other industries, and the tremendous benefits that would flow to the people of this State—benefits almost the equivalent of those in connection with the discovery of oil in commercial quantities.

We were told that the golden days indeed had arrived. Whilst the drums are still being beaten and those words are still being paraded, we have the Government sending out an S.O.S. saying it is in dire trouble and in financial difficulties. However, instead of tackling the problem on a broad basis the workers, and the workers only, are being tackled.

Of course, the story does not end there. This Government has announced a whole series of increases and imposts on the public for fares, for hospitalisation, for hire-purchase agreements, and for stamp duties of all sorts and varieties, including the one which, of course, becomes virtually a sales tax. The last one will increase the retail price of practically every commodity that is purchased in the State. Whilst this is going on the wages of the workers are being pegged. There is no suggestion whatsoever that the shops and factories and the traders generally shall have their prices pegged and tied, and be forbidden to increase their prices.

No, Sir, *laissez-faire*; a private enterprise Government. Big business can do no wrong. There is no interference with the development of the State if prices are increased without limitation; if profits are increased by arithmetical or any other form of progression. The Government knows perfectly well those people can pass on any and every increase in tax or service charge which the Government imposes on them; and this Government calls itself a Government!

The Minister for Labour has obviously been writhing under the charge that this State of Western Australia is a low-wage State; and, of course, all of the business statistics could prove that point. It would appear the Minister has had to call in the Chief Industrial Commissioner to try to back him up. Having regard for a rebuke administered a little earlier—indeed, the member concerned occupies the Chair at this moment—I say no more than that the Chief Industrial Commissioner should have had more sense than to have embroiled himself in a political discussion. It is his duty and responsibility to arbitrate on the circumstances of the case as he knows them, and as the evidence establishes.

I have had my attention drawn to some figures which appear in the May, 1966, statistics of employment and unemployment. I repeat, the Government denies that this is a low-wage State, and refuses to accept the figures which are given in the statistician's periodical reports. The Minister puts forward a weak argument, or a lame one, and endeavours to get away from the subject in pointing out that there are problems. The Minister does not know that there is a greater percentage of higher paid executives in the other States than in this State. After all, there is usually a manager, departmental managers, foremen, leading hands, and the rest of them associated with a small staff of 50 odd.

I would say that would be in greater proportion than with a larger population, where there could be a staff of about 500. Yet the Minister interjects that these are facts which could make a difference. Of course they could make a difference. The wage of the average working man in Western Australia is even further below parity than the figures already quoted.

I want to quote some very interesting facts. There has been some suggestion that the ratio of female employees to male employees is less in Western Australia than in any other State. Therefore, in every other State whatever the general wage be for males, it tends to be reduced because of the great percentage of females. Therefore, one would expect that Western Australia would be nearer the other States because it suffers less this dispersement effect so far as the figures are concerned. It might be interesting to quote some of the figures which can be checked from page 4 of the employment and unemployment return for May, 1966, issued by the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics in Canberra; not by the Trades Hall in Perth.

The figures show that in New South Wales there are 2.1 males for each female worker. In Victoria, the figure is 2.3 males for each female worker. The Australian average, incidentally, is 2.4 males for each female worker. But in Western Australia there are 2.6 males to each female. So bit by bit the arguments and suggestions of the Minister for Labour are taking the knock. He has thrown these various aspects into the ring hoping and trusting there is no counter to the implication in his statement and those of the Chief Industrial Commissioner.

Judging by the attitude of those who sit behind the Government on the opposite side of the Chamber, they have never experienced, or they have completely lost touch with, the problems confronting the average worker who has a family and who is battling. He is the person who experiences the greatest difficulty in meeting the cost of only the bare essentials. I do not know the experience of other members, but I can say that many people have come to me for assistance because of the trouble

they are having, perhaps, with the State Housing Commission or with a private landlord in paying their rentals; and the difficulty they are having in paying their electricity accounts or their excess water bills. In respect of these payments the position has been made more difficult by the decision of the Government to reduce the gallonage of water allowable to homes for the rates that are paid. This results in a greater amount being paid for excess water.

This means that the landlord is absolved from payment of part of his normal water rating, and the tenant is involved in higher excess water charges. Further, whereas the landlord can claim water rates as a taxation deduction, a tenant is unable to claim excess water rates as a deduction. That is only one example of the steps the Government has taken to worsen the plight of the ordinary citizen. It would appear that the Government and those who sit behind it have forgotten that the worker cannot escape all these charges.

To cite an example in regard to rent charges, one of my constituents, with quite a large family, who is paying £6 6s. or \$12.60 in rent every week, is not acknowledged as being worthy of urgent consideration by the State Housing Commission as one who is paying an excessive amount for rent. The Government has no regard for this state of affairs and it has no sympathy for the unfortunate individual concerned. It allows the private landlord to increase the rental. I had experience of another person in a similar position who has now been confronted with an increase of \$2 in his rent. What can he do about that? His turn for being allocated a State Housing Commission home will not arise for another 12 months or so.

The people are victims of these circumstances because the Government is not building sufficient homes, and they are the ones who will be affected by this legislation. I repeat that these unfortunate individuals are paying, in some cases, rentals far in excess of what they should. In addition, they are paying insurance premiums for insurance cover of their furniture and household effects. They are obliged to meet their electricity accounts, and because of the action of the Government they now pay greater amounts for excess water.

Most of the working people are obliged to purchase requisites for their homes under the hire-purchase system. There is no control exercised over the price of those goods or even the rate of interest which the hire-purchase firms charge. Yet the working people have to meet that obligation every week, together with the obligation of meeting the cost of children's school uniforms, school books, and other requisites. They are also faced with medical, dental, and chemist expenses. In addition, they have to keep up their hos-

pital fund contributions which they must increase by 50 per cent. to meet the threatened hospital charges imposed by this Government, which come into effect, I think, as from today. The Government has imposed a 50 per cent. increase on the daily charges for beds in public hospitals.

In regard to fares and other travelling expenses, a working man cannot claim the running expenses of his car as a taxation deduction, but these can be claimed as a deduction by business people. Therefore the working man cannot escape increased vehicle registration fees, drivers' license fees, transfer fees, and the additional stamp duty which has been imposed upon every vehicle transaction; and the Government has recently increased the charges for public transport.

As for food, clothing, and general effects that are required by the family as a whole, it is left to the butcher, the baker, the hairdresser, and other tradespeople to determine for themselves how much or how little they will charge for their goods and services, and this they do. Whenever an association feels that increased charges are warranted according to its own satisfaction, those increases are made. A worker, however, is obliged to go before an independent tribunal, but this Government will not allow the tribunal to be independent.

There are a whole host of taxes and charges which are payable by any worker and his family, and I suppose that even a worker is entitled to some form of relaxation, amusement, and entertainment. Is he not allowed to have a radio or a TV set? Is he not allowed to go to the cinema occasionally, or take his family to the sea, or watch a football match? Are not his youngsters entitled to participate in some sports for which, inevitably, there are charges of some kind or another? Is he not entitled, together with the rest of his family, to cool himself on the beach on a hot summer evening, or on a public holiday, or is he, together with other members of his family, to be a menial to be locked in the confines of his rental home paying an extortionate rent and not being entitled to live as a human being?

These are the people upon whom the Government makes its assault, and upon nobody else! To make matters worse, not only this Government, but its counterpart in the Commonwealth sphere which meets its masters in a few weeks' time, is even imposing direct and indirect taxes *ad nauseum*. The business section of the community, I repeat, can pass on any additional levies that have been imposed upon it, but the working people cannot pass on the increased charges they have to bear. All a working man could hope for in the past was that if increased charges were levied upon him the industrial tribunal in this State would return him to the *status quo* and place him on the same

economic standard he enjoyed several months earlier.

There are, of course, anomalies everywhere. We have Governments that slavishly stand behind potato marketing boards, onion marketing boards, and dairy marketing boards, with a view to restricting production, and to allowing only certain people to produce by imposing, from time to time, artificial prices on products. It is all right for those people. The Government bends over backwards to assist them, and in some cases there is some degree of merit in its action, but it should show a degree of consistency. The Government cannot help those people on the one hand by allowing them to make increased charges for their products all the time—and, in addition, handing out concessions and favours to C.B.H. and other people—whilst on the other hand it makes a vicious attack on those who are generally regarded as being the least fortunate elements of the community.

What is the result of this policy that has been followed by the Government? The general community, and indeed the Government itself, is concerned over what is termed child delinquency; the irresponsibility of our youth in so many ways, mainly because of the facility with which they are able to move from place to place by having motor vehicles available to them. A great deal of child delinquency is attributable to the fact that mothers are obliged to work in order to meet the imposts, the increased charges, and rising prices of today.

The Government should be taking steps in the opposite direction. Why does it not do something to approach the Commonwealth Government to increase child endowment payments, and maternity allowances, or perhaps to bring into effect wives' allowances which are paid in some other countries? Instead of a married couple being able to rear a family, which is desirable from a social and national point of view, the delightful state of matrimony becomes a burden and a handicap to young couples and this can only be resolved or eased if the mother neglects her children by going out to work.

I will recount an experience that occurred to me during the last few days. I had occasion to visit a home where there were six young children, the eldest of which was under 12. I called at the home to see one of the parents and I discovered that the father is away all day working as a storeman, and the mother leaves the house at 7 a.m. to perform a dressmaking job, and when she ceases this work in the evening she then commences work as a cleaner in a Government school and does not get home until about 9 p.m. I know that for a fact because I was in the house speaking to the husband when the wife and mother arrived home. I know this to be a fact because when I first called at the house six little faces appeared at the

door and I was surprised to find that the mother and father were away all day. On inquiring of the 12-year old how they managed for food and general attention, he replied that he was able to get something for the younger children.

That is an example of what is happening in thousands of homes today to a greater or lesser degree. Is it any wonder, therefore, that children are virtually being trained in vandalism, to have a lack of respect for the property of other people, and to have a lack of moral fibre? This state of affairs has been brought about for the simple reason that there is no mother or father in the home to give them loving care and all the requisites that are needed to rear young children to normal adult citizens in the community. The Government is aggravating the existing situation by making the position of the average worker worse than it has been over the years of which I complain.

We know perfectly well there must be a loss of at least 70c a week. We have no idea of the extent to which prices and charges will increase over the next period, and we have no idea whatsoever as to when and to what extent the Federal wage determining authority will spring to action—whether it will be three months, 12 months, or two years, or whether the adjustment will be a nominal 50c, \$1, or \$5.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. Davies): The honourable member has another five minutes.

Mr. GRAHAM: The Government has not a clue in connection with this, but again the Government does not care a damn because it is only the workers who are being kicked about. The fact that their situation goes from bad to worse is of no concern to the Government. It is quite prepared to let everybody else increase and inflate charges, overcharge prices, and profiteer; and if prices soar—as they well might—the workers are still to be tied by this legislation, because no member in this Chamber has any idea of when the Federal authority is likely to move in this direction, and, if so, to what extent.

Why is the Government showing such bias? Why is it so deaf to the appeals which have been made to it? Why is it so unconcerned about the many factors which are responsible for the financial mess into which it has got, because of its irresponsibility and the creeping up of increased charges about which it will do nothing?

I am reminded that the Federal Government, after dilly-dallying year after year, decided to introduce a rather anaemic piece of legislation to deal with profiteering, and conspiracy on the part of business firms in tendering, but the Government of this State will not have a bar of it. It does not seem to care what happens to the other charges it is called upon

to bear; the only one which concerns this Government is the charge for wages. It is not unduly worried about the salary charges, because apart from those which have taken place and those which are in the process of being put into effect—such as the one reported in the Press this morning—it recently agreed to the re-appraisals of the salaries of school teachers being made at more frequent intervals than hitherto. Only in recent weeks legislation has been passed to increase the salaries of the judges in this State, and their salaries have been increased substantially on four or five occasions during the life of this Government.

I am not protesting against the increases that have been granted, and no doubt they were amply justified, but in respect of the matter before us in our addresses to the House we are not asking for increases to be given to the workers. We are merely asking the Government to keep its hands off the machinery which has allowed the wages to remain at the level which enables the workers to have, as far as possible, the same purchasing power in their pockets this month as they had last month. It would appear that all our pleas have fallen on deaf ears. Because of the Press presentation and the adamant attitude of the Government we have been able to do nothing but to talk and talk. As has been said so often in this Parliament, when the party room has spoken that is the end of the matter, and it is the numbers that count—not the arguments. Therefore shortly we will witness the spectacle of conscripted greed imposing its will on the unfortunate workers of Western Australia.

MR. O'NEIL (East Melville—Minister for Labour) [11.4 p.m.]: We have had roughly a further five hours of debate on this measure during the third reading. I will not do as the member for Kalgoorlie did; that is, repeat the remarks which he made during the second reading.

In the third reading debate we have not heard any new material brought forward. We have only heard the same arguments being developed in a different manner. Perhaps there are a few general observations which I can make. We have heard a reference to the working class by members of the Opposition. I would like to point out that this reference was not made by members on this side of the House. We also heard from members opposite that those on this side of the House, including members who are farmers, cannot be classed as workers.

I do not want to paint a pitiful picture of my life, but I well remember the days of the 1930s. I was a member of what the Opposition deems a working class family. As a young child at school I went through the same sort of experience during the depression that members opposite

seem to revel in referring to. I went through the experience of many other families of which the father was on the dole. He was given employment for so many weeks and then put off for so many weeks. I was fortunate that by winning scholarships and by working during holidays I was able to obtain an education. This fact was rather slightly referred to by the member for Victoria Park who seemed to imply that because I was formerly a school teacher I set myself up on a pedestal.

Mr. Davies: I was speaking in relation to the averages, and apparently you were not listening.

Mr. O'NEIL: I have not set myself up as an expert on industrial affairs, but I was remarkably surprised by the contribution of the member for Swan who mentioned his wide background of industrial experience. I was amazed when he indicated that this legislation will remove quarterly adjustments of the basic wage, and replace them with adjustments every 12 months. The legislation does not seek to do that, and most members opposite will agree. The member for Swan became quite confused with the total wage concept, as distinct from the national wage.

In my introductory speech during the second reading, reference was made to the determination of the Federal basic wage by a national wage case, but this is entirely different from the concept of a total wage. The member for Swan made reference to representations which were made to the Federal Industrial and Arbitration Commission by Mr. R. J. Hawke in relation to production. I would remind him that the term is "productivity." Mr. Hawke's representations on the question of determining productivity were regarded as an acceptance in part by the trade union movement of a concept which ultimately will bring about the introduction of a total wage, in preference to the present two-wage structure.

I was a little disturbed by the insinuation that the Chief Industrial Commissioner and I had got together in respect of the speech I made in reply to the second reading debate. The member for Victoria Park referred to the fact that none of my reply appeared in the Press. I interjected and said that the reason might be the Press deadline, but looking through my speech I found that I commenced at 9.7 p.m. so there was adequate time for the Press to report the reply that I gave to the second reading. If it did not care to publish any part of my remarks, that is the business of the Press. I see the member for Balcatta has taken the Press to task for not reporting this issue fully.

Mr. Graham: As compared with other matters—

Mr. O'NEIL: I agree.

Mr. Graham: —of far lesser importance.

Mr. O'NEIL: I agree also. In the statement to the Press the Chief Industrial Commissioner expressly said that he made the statement because of his concern with the functions of the commission in maintaining industrial stability, and because he did not want certain sections of the community, including the leader writers, to publish articles which were designed to create industrial unrest.

Mr. Jamieson: If he wants to be treated like a judge, he should act like a judge.

Mr. O'NEIL: It is true that his statement and mine are somewhat similar. Probably they are, and from a perusal of them it is evident that they were extracted from the same source of information; namely, the figures of the statistician which are published from time to time and which are available to all members.

By way of interjection when the member for Beeloo was speaking, I said that about 12 copies of the report of the Grants Commission had been made available. These arrived from the Eastern States recently, and are obtainable in the Parliamentary Library. I understand from the information given to me that each year 10 to 12 copies of these reports are made available to this Parliament and are readily obtainable by members. I join with the remarks made by members of the Opposition that all members should take the opportunity of reading these reports.

The member for Boulder-Eyre made some reference to the fate of Governments which had introduced amendments to the Industrial Arbitration Act. He seemed to infer that this Government had sealed its fate by introducing this measure, because the Bruce Government had done the same thing years ago and was not returned to office. I would remind him that exactly the same sort of suggestions were made in 1963 when much more extensive amendments were made to the Act than are proposed on this occasion.

Most members can be reassured by the fact that the industrial arbitration set-up in Western Australia is recognised as being efficient and as one of the best in Australia.

Mr. Moir: Why interfere with it then?

Mr. O'NEIL: I hazard a guess that if members of the Opposition were to contact the leaders of the industrial wing of the Labor movement they would find that the industrial wing, whilst publicly not prepared to accept this fact, will privately agree to it.

Mr. Graham: You are kidding yourself.

Mr. O'NEIL: I suggest the honourable member make inquiries for himself. Very little new material has been introduced in the third reading debate, and I take this opportunity to refute some of the statements which have been made.

Mr. Davies: Were you going to say something about the Grants Commission?

Mr. O'NEIL: The honourable member has once again prevailed on me to continue for longer than I intended as he did when he asked me to refer to matters contained in an advertisement in the Press. He referred to paragraph 235 on page 117 of the report of the Grants Commission for 1964-65, in which the commission discussed the financial results of the Railways Department. It makes some comments in respect of freights and fares, and states—

As a result of quarterly adjustments the average basic wage in Western Australia for 1963-64 rose by about \$1.32 above the Federal wage for that State and in consequence the general level of wages paid by the W.A.G.R. was above that in the standard States.

If members will refer to paragraph 230 of the 32nd report of the Grants Commission they will see that the unfavourable adjustment for the effect of the excess basic wage on all State business undertakings was \$600,000, after taking into account a small offsetting favourable adjustment in respect of differing industry allowances paid by the several State railways.

Mr. Davies: That was the loss of the State Shipping Service.

Mr. O'NEIL: The honourable member who asked me to make some comment on the report keeps on interjecting, and whatever I tell him he will not accept. I conclude the third reading debate by making a final quote from the document referred to by the honourable member. I quote from the Grants Commission report as follows:—

However, following the \$2 rise in the Federal Basic Wage in June 1964, the difference between the two wages was greatly reduced and during 1964-65 the Western Australia basic wage was, on the average, only about 20c higher than the Federal Wage. This difference was further reduced during 1964-65 because in that year the charge against railway revenue for services or industry grants in Western Australia was lower than that in the standard States. In 1964-65 Victoria introduced a State Incremental Payments Scheme for many State Government employees, including most railway employees. Payments made under the Scheme depend upon length of service and the wage margin for skill. The annual cost was estimated by the Victorian Railways at approximately \$4m.

I stress this part—

No corresponding wage increase was paid to employees of the Western Australian Railways until 1965-66. Accordingly during 1964-65 the level of wage payments in that State was lower than the level in the standard States.

Two factors entered into the wage adjustment for 1964-65. The State basic wage was higher than the Federal wage by the unusually low range of 10c. Following

the commission's normal method of calculation this would have meant an unfavourable adjustment of about \$120,000.

I said I would conclude my remarks with the statement I made from the Grants Commission and the following paragraph, but now I must go further as a result of the figures quoted by the member for Victoria Park. In that year, Victoria introduced for Government wages employees a scale of additional pay graduated according to length of service—the State Incremental Payments Scheme referred to by the commission.

This State successfully argued that a favourable adjustment should be allowed for the fact that we had not at that time brought in a similar scheme and that this favourable adjustment should offset the unfavourable adjustment for the excess basic wage. As is apparent from its 33rd report, the commission agreed. Hence the commission's statement that in 1964-65 the average level of wage payments to railway employees was lower than in the standard States.

However, in 1965 the Government agreed to a service pay scheme for Government employees in this State similar to the Victorian scale and broadly equal to the "standard" rate.

Consequently, the offsetting favourable adjustment only applied to 1964-65 and will not be available to us in 1965-66 when the unfavourable adjustment for the excess basic wage in that year is expected to be \$870,000.

That explains, I think, to some degree some of the points raised by the honourable member; and I would recommend to him and to all members of the House that they make copies of the Grants Commission's reports available to themselves and read them with intelligence.

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

Ayes—24

| | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| Mr. Bovell | Mr. Hutchinson |
| Mr. Brand | Mr. Lewis |
| Mr. Burt | Mr. W. A. Manning |
| Mr. Court | Mr. Marshall |
| Mr. Craig | Mr. Nalder |
| Mr. Crommelin | Mr. Nimmo |
| Mr. Dunn | Mr. O'Connor |
| Mr. Durack | Mr. O'Neill |
| Mr. Gayfer | Mr. Runciman |
| Mr. Grayden | Mr. Rushton |
| Mr. Guthrie | Mr. Williams |
| Dr. Henn | Mr. I. W. Manning |

(Teller)

Noes—18

| | |
|---------------|--------------|
| Mr. Bickerton | Mr. Jamleson |
| Mr. Brady | Mr. Kelly |
| Mr. Davies | Mr. Moir |
| Mr. Evans | Mr. Norton |
| Mr. Graham | Mr. Rhatigan |
| Mr. Hall | Mr. Sewell |
| Mr. Hawke | Mr. Toms |
| Mr. J. Hegney | Mr. Tonkin |
| Mr. W. Hegney | Mr. May |

(Teller)

Pairs

| | |
|--------------|--------------|
| Ayes | Noes. |
| Mr. Hart | Mr. Curran |
| Mr. Mitchell | Mr. Fletcher |
| Mr. Elliott | Mr. Rowberry |

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

House adjourned at 11.23 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 2nd November, 1966

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The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

BILLS (8): ASSENT

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

1. Bills of Sale Act Amendment Bill.
2. Bread Act Amendment Bill.
3. Health Act Amendment Bill.
4. Corneal and Tissue Grafting Act Amendment Bill.
5. Education Act Amendment Bill.
6. Fisheries Act Amendment Bill.
7. Strata Titles Bill.
8. Companies Act Amendment Bill.

QUESTIONS (6): ON NOTICE

POTATOES

Current and Standard Gauge Railway Freights

1. The Hon. V. J. FERRY asked the Minister for Mines:
 - (1) What are the current scales of rail freight on potatoes sent from—
 - (a) Sydney to Perth;
 - (b) Melbourne to Perth; and
 - (c) Adelaide to Perth?
 - (2) What will be the anticipated scales of freight charges on potatoes imported by rail to Perth from Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide when the east-west standard gauge railway is in operation?
 - (3) Is there any variation in the scales of rail freight charges on potatoes sent from Perth to either Sydney, Melbourne, or Adelaide?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) (a) \$36.50 per ton;
(b) \$23.25 per ton;
(c) \$18.53 per ton.
- (2) It is not anticipated that standard gauge operations will vary the freight rates.
- (3) No.

BOATS

Air-Sea Rescues, and Provision of Radio to Mr. Hugill

2. The Hon. R. THOMPSON asked the Minister for Fisheries and Fauna:
 - (1) Is the Minister aware of the valuable assistance that has been rendered by Mr. Robert Hugill in the sea rescue and saving of many lives along our coastline during recent years?
 - (2) Is an effective air-sea rescue organisation operative north of Fremantle?
 - (3) Is it desirous of having at least one craft fitted with a sea-air-police radio link up?
 - (4) As Mr. Hugill is finishing a new all-weather craft, would the Government install, without cost to the owner, a radio, which would remain the property of the Government, capable of contacting police aeroplanes, and other rescue organisations, to co-ordinate such rescues?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) This is not considered necessary, and in any case it is not desirable for the police radio frequency to be used by persons outside the Police Department.