

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

## Ayes—19

Hon. G. W. Berry	Hon. R. T. Leeson
Hon. D. K. Dans	Hon. L. A. Logan
Hon. S. J. Dellar	Hon. G. C. MacKinnon
Hon. J. Dolan	Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs
Hon. Lyia Elliott	Hon. F. R. White
Hon. V. J. Ferry	Hon. W. F. Willesee
Hon. A. F. Griffith	Hon. R. J. L. Williams
Hon. Clive Griffiths	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. J. Heitman	Hon. N. McNell
Hon. J. L. Hunt	(Teller)

## Noes—4

Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. S. T. J. Thompson
Hon. T. O. Perry	Hon. J. M. Thomson
	(Teller)

## Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Hon. R. Thompson	Hon. I. G. Medcalf
Hon. R. F. Cloughton	Hon. W. R. Withers

Clause thus passed.

*Sitting suspended from 9.58 to 10.00 p.m.*

Clause 21: Amendment to section 611—

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: I do not intend to oppose this clause. Section 611 lays down the number of ratepayers necessary to demand a poll when the local authority intends to raise a loan. Presently 50 persons or one-tenth of the total number of ratepayers must desire a poll when a local authority intends to raise a loan. It is now proposed to alter this provision to "a sufficient number of persons." The interpretation of "a sufficient number of persons" is 50 per cent. of the total number of ratepayers or 50 persons. I would like to point out that difficulty may arise in small local authorities with 80 ratepayers or less.

The Hon. J. Heitman: It says "whichever is the lesser number."

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: Yes, 50 per cent. or 50, whichever is the lesser. A local authority with 80 ratepayers would need to have 40 ratepayers on side before it could do anything. I point out that a difficulty would arise in the future because there would be no purpose in a loan poll if the majority of the ratepayers object to it.

The Hon. R. H. C. STUBBS: I thank the honourable member for drawing my attention to this matter. I will have it examined. The Local Government Association asked for this provision and it was included after the matter had been given consideration. I would like to deal with this Bill in Committee tonight, but I assure the honourable member that I will answer his query before the third reading stage.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 22 to 25 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Bill reported with amendments.

*House adjourned at 10.06 p.m.*

# Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 18th October, 1972

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

## QUESTIONS (49): ON NOTICE COMPANIES

1.

### Registration and Auditors

Mr. R. L. YOUNG, to the Attorney-General:

- (1) How many companies are registered in Western Australia at present?
- (2) How many companies that are registered in Western Australia are—
  - (a) exempt proprietary companies;
  - (b) public companies;
  - (c) unlimited companies;
  - (d) no liability companies?
- (3) How many exempt proprietary companies had appointed auditors up to the date of their last annual return?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) 16,075.
- (2) (a) No separate record kept but number estimated at 13,500.  
(b) No separate record kept but number estimated at 650.  
(c) Nil.  
(d) 62.
- (3) No separate record kept but a survey of 750 companies conducted by the Commissioner of Corporate Affairs in New South Wales reveal that 44% of the exempt proprietary companies included in the survey had their books and records audited.

2.

### HOUSING

#### Medina: Shop Rental

Mr. HUTCHINSON, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Is he aware that the State Housing Commission shop at 8 Pace Road, Medina, was rented until recently at \$35 per week?
- (2) Is he also aware that as from 11th September, 1972 the rent was increased to \$75 per week, which represents an increase of about 115%?
- (3) Is this increase an example of a policy being put into effect or is it a discriminatory increase?
- (4) What other similar type of shops have had such increases?

- (5) If there have been no increases of such magnitude what were the percentage increases on each similar type of shop?
- (6) Will he review the very high rental of the Pace Road shop and if a reduction is made will he make the necessary downward adjustments in other shops?

Mr. BICKERTON replied:

- (1) and (2) Yes.
- (3) The increase is in accordance with Commission policy concerning shops which have been licensed.
- (4) This licensed store is now the only one on premises which are owned by the commission.
- (5) Answered by (4).
- (6) The tenant of this shop was advised, prior to obtaining the license, of the policy of rent increasing upon gaining a license. The tenant has appealed and this is being examined for consideration at a future commission meeting.

### 3. MT. HELENA SCHOOL *Demountable Classroom*

Mr. MOILER, to the Minister for Education:

When will a demountable classroom be provided for the Mt. Helena primary school?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

It is anticipated that a demountable classroom could be provided about the middle of November.

### 4. TOODYAY HIGH SCHOOL *Demountable Classrooms*

Mr. MOILER, to the Minister for Education:

How many demountable classrooms is it proposed to position at the Toodyay Junior High School and when will they be provided?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

It is proposed to provide one demountable classroom as soon as one becomes available as a result of the completion of permanent additions to other schools. A further demountable classroom will be provided if required during 1973.

### 5. HIGH SCHOOLS *Enrolments*

Mr. MOILER, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Would he provide a list showing the senior high schools which had the largest number of enrolments for each of the past 12 years, including 1972, and the number enrolled for each year?

- (2) Is it still his department's view that the optimum student enrolment for a senior high school is 1,250 students?
- (3) Is there any overcrowding at the Governor Stirling Senior High School; if so, in what areas and to what degree?
- (4) What is the optimum number of students who can be accommodated with the present facilities at Governor Stirling Senior High School?
- (5) What is the anticipated enrolment for the years 1973 and 1974, and how are the anticipated enrolments arrived at?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) The figures below refer to the senior high school which had the largest enrolment in each of the years stated:—

Year	School	Enrolment as at 1st August
1960	John Curtin	1,910
1961	John Curtin	1,862
1962	Tuart Hill	1,627
1963	John Curtin	1,569
1964	Tuart Hill	1,719
1965	Kent Street	1,631
1966	Kent Street	1,685
1967	John Curtin	1,615
1968	John Curtin	1,588
1969	Mt. Lawley	1,524
1970	Mt. Lawley	1,501
1971	Governor Stirling	1,519
1972	Governor Stirling	1,513

- (2) The view of the department is that new secondary schools should be built for approximately 1,250 students.
- (3) There is adequate accommodation for a full secondary education to be offered for the present student numbers.
- (4) The Governor Stirling senior high school can adequately accommodate 1,600 students.
- (5) 1973 ..... 1,523.  
1974 ..... 1,555.

Anticipated enrolments are calculated on the basis of—

- (a) Contributory school enrolments.
- (b) Retention rates.
- (c) Housing development.

### 6. MUNDARING SCHOOL *Sports Ground*

Mr. MOILER, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Has either the Mundaring parents and citizens' association or the headmaster, Mundaring primary school, requested improvements to the sporting field at that school?

- (2) If so, when were the requests made?
- (3) What are the departmental proposals to improve the school's playing field?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) Representations have been made by the headmaster.
- (2) 26th March and 5th October 1971 direct to the Public Works Department.  
30th September 1971 and 20th June 1972 to the Education Department.
- (3) Proposals to install concrete surface drainage in order to prevent flooding of the playing fields will be considered in the estimates for 1973-74.

## 7. ORDERS OF THE DAY

*Bills: Inclusion of File Number*

Mr. W. A. MANNING, to the Speaker:

- (1) Regarding Bills listed under "Orders of the Day" on the Notice Paper, is it possible to include a reference to the number of that Bill on the file?
- (2) If so, will he arrange for this to be done?

The SPEAKER replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) This will commence as from next Tuesday.

## 8. IRRIGATION

*Charges: Camballin*

Mr. RIDGE, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) In view of the fact that the Australian Land and Cattle Company builds and maintains irrigation and drainage channels at Camballin and is responsible for the provision and maintenance of other facilities, does he not consider it inequitable that irrigation water charges at Camballin should be the same as at Kununurra where similar services are provided by the Government?
- (2) Is it intended to reduce the charge for water used at Camballin?
- (3) If not, why?

Mr. JAMIESON replied:

- (1) The Government provides services to the Australian Land and Cattle Company at Camballin, comparable to those provided in the Ord area.
- (2) There is no case for reduction of the charge for water used at Camballin.
- (3) Answered by (1) and (2).

## 9. WATER SUPPLIES

*Extensions in Merredin-Yilgarn*

Mr. BROWN, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) What representations have been received by his department for the inclusion of the unserviced areas of the Shires of Yilgarn, Westonia, Merredin and Narembeen for comprehensive water scheme extensions?
- (2) What areas are under review for representation to the Commonwealth Government for possible inclusion in future comprehensive water supply schemes?

Mr. JAMIESON replied:

- (1) Over a period of years, petitions and requests for extensions to the comprehensive scheme have been received from the Shires of Yilgarn, Westonia, Merredin and Narembeen and from farmers' union groups within these shires.
- (2) A request has been made to the Commonwealth for financial assistance to reticulate 640,000 acres of farmlands in the York-Bullaring and Corrigin-Greenhills areas. Although advice has been received that Commonwealth funds will not be provided, it is intended to make further representations regarding this scheme. Information is also being gathered on other areas not yet reticulated to enable consideration to be given to the case for further extensions to the scheme.

## 10. KULIN HIGH SCHOOL

*Classrooms and Additions*

Mr. BROWN, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Have tenders been called for the erection of two new classrooms at the Kulin Junior High School?
- (2) Will the classrooms be ready for the commencement of the 1973 school year?
- (3) What further additions and renovations are proposed for the 1972-73 and 1973-74 years?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) It is not expected that the rooms will be completed before April 1973.
- (3) A science classroom and extension to the woodwork centre are listed for 1973-74. External renovations are scheduled.

## 11. ROADS

*Overpass: Stokely Crossing, Maddington*

Mr. BATEMAN, to the Minister for Works:

What is the delay in bringing about construction of the overpass at Stokely Crossing, Maddington?

Mr. JAMIESON replied:

Difficulty is being experienced by the Main Roads Department in negotiating the acquisition of the necessary land. Consideration will be given to the allocation of funds in future programmes of work.

12. **OLGA STREET BRIDGE**  
*Construction*

Mr. BATEMAN, to the Minister for Works:

What is the delay in bringing about the construction of the Olga Street Bridge across the Canning River to connect Mad-dington and Thornlie?

Mr. JAMIESON replied:

Plans to enable the necessary land to be protected have been forwarded to the Gosnells Shire Council. No decision has been made on when this bridge will be constructed as there are many other projects in the metropolitan area which rate a higher priority.

13. **WATER SUPPLIES**  
*Two-water System: Introduction*

Mr. BATEMAN, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) In view of the Press publicity that water restrictions could be necessary this summer, has any consideration been given by his department for a two water system, one for drinking, which is from the reservoirs, and the other from waste water treatment works, which could be used for playing fields, golf courses, etc?
- (2) If "No", does he consider that action could be taken to bring about such a system over a period of time?

Mr. JAMIESON replied:

- (1) A two water system as proposed would be very expensive and certainly not economically viable at present. It is board policy that alternative sources are used wherever possible for the watering of sporting fields, etc., in the metropolitan area. In many country centres the effluent of waste water plants is used for this purpose.
- (2) Consideration has been given from time to time to the use of waste water by industry, for watering pine forests and for ground water re-charge. These investigations will continue and overseas practices will be followed closely so that the situation may be reviewed particularly in relation to the health and financial aspects.

14. **WATER SUPPLIES**

*Conservation: Publicising*

Mr. BATEMAN, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

What action is contemplated by the Metropolitan Water Board to publicise the urgent need to conserve water?

Mr. JAMIESON replied:

The board has under consideration proposals which will—

- (1) keep consumers fully informed progressively of the storage situation;
- (2) provide helpful information, data and hints, particularly in relation to garden watering and of interest to as many sections of the public as possible;
- (3) offer assistance to industry in conserving water;
- (4) husband its resources to avoid waste.

15. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

*Rates: Deferment by Pensioners*

Mr. BATEMAN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) Is it a fact the Government provides 6% financial assistance to shire councils to offset non-payment of rates by pensioners?
- (2) If so, do shire councils charge 8% over and above the 6% granted by the Government?

Mr. BICKERTON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No.

16. **WATER SUPPLIES**

*Desalination*

Mr. BATEMAN, to the Premier:

- (1) Because of the water problem existing in Western Australia generally, has any real consideration been given by Cabinet to bring about a research programme to investigate the possibilities of desalinating sea and inland waters?
- (2) If "Yes" can he give some idea of what is proposed?
- (3) If "No" is it Cabinet's intention to consider this important matter in due course?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

- (1) The State is fully aware of the importance of desalination to Western Australia, and officers of the Public Works Department keep themselves up to date with the latest developments throughout the world. Large sums of money

have been spent, and are continuing to be spent, by overseas companies in the development of desalination plants. The technology of de-salting sea water and brackish water is now far enough advanced to enable desalination to be evaluated along with other sources of supply when considering new water schemes. In Western Australia the use of de-salted water is now seriously considered when evaluating alternative sources of supply. For some years, the State has been carrying out reliability tests on pilot desalination plants to determine their suitability for use in Western Australia.

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

**17. ALBANY-SOUTH WESTERN  
HIGHWAYS JUNCTION  
*Redesign***

Mr. RUSHTON, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Does the commencement of the resited service station as part of the upgrading redevelopment of the Albany and South-Western Highways junction, Armadale, indicate the project will now proceed?
- (2) If not, what is holding up this work?
- (3) If "Yes" to (1), has there been any appreciable change to earlier indicated plans?
- (4) If "Yes" to (3), what are they?
- (5) What is the latest estimated cost for this project?
- (6) When is it expected the redevelopment work will begin and finish?

Mr. JAMIESON replied :

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Answered by (1).
- (3) No.
- (4) Answered by (3).
- (5) Excluding land acquisition \$300,000.
- (6) Work is scheduled to begin in December, 1972, and finish in June, 1973.

**18. ROADS  
*Safety Ramps on Hills***

Mr. RUSHTON, to the Minister for Works:

Has further consideration been given to installing safety ramps on Bedforddale, Lesmurdie and Greenmount hills for heavily loaded transport, and if so, what are the findings and decision?

Mr. JAMIESON replied:

No further consideration has been given to providing safety ramps on Lesmurdie and Greenmount hills, and after extensive investigation it has not been possible to finalise a site on Bedforddale hill.

It is considered that heavily laden trucks should proceed down these hills in low gear. Signs indicating the steep descent and that trucks should use low gear have been erected on Bedforddale and Greenmount hills. Sites for stopping places at the top of these hills are being investigated to enable truck drivers to pull clear of the road and check loads before proceeding down the steep descent in low gear.

19. *This question was postponed.*

**20. KINDERGARTENS  
*Running Costs***

Mr. HUTCHINSON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is he aware that with the increase in running costs of kindergartens many parents are having financial difficulty in keeping their children in attendance?
- (2) What steps, if any, is he taking to alleviate parents' problems in this respect?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No change in the present provisions of Government assistance will be made until the report of the magistrate who was asked to inquire into pre-school education has been studied.

**21. POSEIDON AGREEMENT  
*Modification and Ratification***

Sir CHARLES COURT, to the Minister for Development and Decentralisation:

- (1) When is the modified Poseidon agreement to be finalised?
- (2) Will ratification be submitted to Parliament this session?

Mr. GRAHAM replied:

I do not have a written reply to this question, but the answer is as follows:—

- (1) Shortly.
- (2) Yes.

**22. HOUSING  
*Building Blocks: Committee Advice***

Mr. MENSAROS, to the Premier:

During the term of his Government, at what dates has the land and housing consultative committee been formally required in

writing to advise the Government on matters and factors affecting metropolitan residential land prices?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

The committee operates under a general standing instruction to report to the Minister for Town Planning on these matters.

On one occasion only—on 5th October, 1972—has the committee been formally required, in writing, to advise the Government on these matters.

## 23. HOUSING

### *Building Blocks: Improvement Plan Machinery*

Mr. MENSAROS, to the Minister for Town Planning:

What exactly does he mean under "improvement plan machinery" mentioned in his reply on 11th October, 1972 to the motion moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition regarding the availability and price of residential land in the metropolitan region?

Mr. DAVIES replied:

I was referring to the statutory powers given to the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority under section 37A of the Metropolitan Region Town Planning Scheme Act, 1959-65.

24. *This question was postponed.*

## 25. POTATOES

### *Imports and Sales*

Mr. REID, to the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) How many tons of Eastern States potatoes have entered Western Australia—

(a) each year ended 30th June, 1970, 1971 and 1972;

(b) each month of this year between and including May and October?

(2) What has been the potato board price for locally grown potatoes in each month of the May to October period?

(3) How many tons of potatoes remain unsold in the present—

(a) first grade pool;

(b) second grade pool?

(4) How many tons have been sold by the board in each year ended 30th June, 1970, 1971 and 1972?

(5) How many tons have been sold in each month between and including May and October of this year by the board?

Mr. H. D. EVANS replied:

(1) (a) From 1st January, 1970 to 30th June, 1970—1,176 tons.

From 1st January, 1971 to 30th June, 1971—9 tons.

From 1st January, 1972 to 30th June, 1972—1,387 tons.

	Tons
(b) May	462
June	496
July	553
August	819
September	104
October	42 (incomplete)

(2) From 1st May, 1972 to 31st May, 1972—\$100 per ton.

From 1st June, 1972 to 3rd July, 1972—\$100 per ton.

From 4th July, 1972 to 29th July, 1972—\$65 per ton.

From 31st July, 1972 to 19th August, 1972—\$100 per ton.

From 21st August, 1972 to 23rd September, 1972—\$65 per ton.

From 25th September, 1972 to 30th September, 1972—\$75 per ton.

From 2nd October, 1972 to 14th October, 1972—\$85 per ton.

From 16th October, 1972 until further notice—\$100 per ton.

(3) (a) Nil.

(b) No second grade pool operated.

(4)—

	1970	1971	1972
Local Sales ....	22,398	23,423	21,049
Exported tonnage ....	7,582	4,434	1,046
Total tonnage ....	29,980	27,857	23,894

(5)—

	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.
Local sales ....	3,648	4,355	3,511	4,295	3,539	Not yet available
Exported tonnage	493	531	337	605	1,233	Not yet available
Total tonnage	4,141	4,886	3,848	4,900	4,822	....

## 26. STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION

### *Profit, 1971-1972 Year*

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

Will he advise the profit the State Electricity Commission derived for the 12 months to 30th June, 1972 from—

(a) the metropolitan area;

(b) country areas?

Mr. MAY replied:

(a) \$6,018,621 profit.

(b) \$1,530,864 loss.  
\$4,487,757 net profit.

**27. ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES***Charges: Reduction*

Mr. O'CONNOR, to the Premier:

In view of the large profit gained by the State Electricity Commission to 30th June, 1972, will he consider reducing the S.E.C. household rate?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

Considered in relation to the amount of capital employed (\$160 million) the net profit of \$4,487,757 is not large. A reduction of tariffs, such as is suggested would adversely affect the capacity of the S.E.C. to meet the demands upon it.

- (c) what are the duties of the executive;
- (d) how are they elected or appointed;
- (e) when and how were the present members elected or appointed?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (a) to (e) The Aboriginal Advancement Council is an autonomous organisation and the matters raised in the question are thus not within my jurisdiction.

Therefore I have no record of the information requested.

**31. ABORIGINAL ADVANCEMENT COUNCIL***Inspection of Youth Hostels*

Mr. GRAYDEN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) What are the duties and responsibilities (including inspections, visitations, etc.) of the executive of the Aboriginal Advancement Council in respect of the Aboriginal youth hostels Marlee and Kul-lark?
- (2) Does he agree that a person with convictions for criminal offences is an unsuitable person to occupy a position which places him in an authoritative situation in respect of Aboriginal boys and girls and includes supervision of Aboriginal youth hostels?
- (3) If so, will he arrange satisfactory alternative employment for the officer of the Aboriginal Advancement Council who has such a record and who, by virtue of his position as secretary of the Aboriginal Advancement Council, has access to the hostels and has important responsibilities in connection with their operation?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) These hostels are owned by the Aboriginal Advancement Council which is an autonomous organisation operating under its own independent constitution. The matters raised are therefore outside my jurisdiction.
- (2) Each case would depend on the circumstances.
- (3) The employment of this officer does not come within my jurisdiction. Any action taken could only be under the provisions of the Child Welfare Act and then only in respect of individual children where an allegation of neglect was involved.

**28. STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION***Income from Increased Charges*

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

Will he advise the additional income derived as a result of increased State Electricity Commission charges—

- (a) to the 30th June, 1972;
- (b) anticipated from 1st July, 1972 to 30th June, 1973?

Mr. MAY replied:

- (a) \$4,200,000 (estimated).
- (b) \$8,450,000 (estimated).

**29. LAND TRANSFERS***Increased Charges*

Mr. O'CONNOR, to the Treasurer:

- (1) Has the department recently increased the fee for lodging caveats and stamp duty on land transfers?
- (2) If so, when, and by how much?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

- (1) The fee for lodging caveats is to be increased. There has been no increase in stamp duty imposed on land transfers.
- (2) The increase of \$6.00 in the fee payable on the lodging of a caveat, will operate from 1st November next.

**30. ABORIGINAL ADVANCEMENT COUNCIL***Membership*

Mr. WILLIAMS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (a) Who are the members of the executive of the Aboriginal Advancement Council;
- (b) what are their respective ages, sex and occupations;

### 32. ABORIGINAL ADVANCEMENT COUNCIL

#### *Representation on Aboriginal Advisory Council*

Mr. GRAYDEN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (a) Is it a fact that the secretary of the Aboriginal Advancement Council was appointed to the recently formed Aboriginal Advisory Council;
- (b) if so, by whom was the appointment made;
- (c) when was it made;
- (d) how long did the appointee remain on the council;
- (e) did the appointment conform with requirements of the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act which provide that the council shall consist of persons of Aboriginal descent chosen by and from persons of Aboriginal descent living in Western Australia;
- (f) if so, how was the appointment made?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (a) to (f) The Aboriginal Advisory Council was set up as a statutory body on the 1st July, 1972 under the provisions of the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act. The Secretary of the Aboriginal Advancement Council has not been a member of this statutory body.

### 33. ABORIGINAL ADVANCEMENT COUNCIL

#### *Audit of Accounts*

Mr. GRAYDEN, to the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

In view of the statement by the secretary of the Aboriginal Advancement Council that all money used by the Council "is audited annually and presented to the Chief Secretary" and that the "audited figures are open to the public" (*The West Australian* 13th October, 1972)—

- (a) will he confirm or deny that audited figures have been received by his department for each of the years prior to the financial year that ended at 31st December, 1971;
- (b) if not received for all years, which years were omitted;
- (c) if not received in any one or more years, what action was taken in each case and when;
- (d) if audited figures have been submitted, is the audit satisfactory to his department;

- (e) if no audited figures have been submitted, have accounts been submitted;
- (f) if so, have the accounts met accepted bookkeeping standards;
- (g) has his department ever expressed concern in respect of the books of the Aboriginal council;
- (h) if so, what action has his department taken to correct the situation;
- (i) was the audit report which was submitted for the financial year ended 31st December, 1971 qualified by the auditors, and if so, in what way;
- (j) would the bookkeeping and audit for the year ended 31st December, 1971 be regarded as satisfactory by accepted Government and commercial standards of accountancy;
- (k) will he lay on the Table of the House all annual financial statements and audit reports of the Aboriginal Advancement Council that have been submitted to his department;
- (l) if such reports have not been submitted to his department will he undertake to obtain them and lay them on the Table of the House?

Mr. BICKERTON replied:

- (a) Audited figures have been received.
- (b) and (c) Answered by (a).
- (d) Auditors' reports satisfactory to 1970. Report for year ended December, 1971 has provided an adverse comment by Auditor.
- (e) and (f) Answered by (a).
- (g) Yes.
- (h) The Aboriginal Advancement Council have been informed (5th September, 1972) that steps must be taken to ensure future reports are more satisfactory than that furnished for the year ended 31st December, 1971.
- (i) (1) Yes.  
(2) See tabled paper.
- (j) Bookkeeping—No. Audit—Yes.
- (k) Yes, for a period of seven days.
- (l) Answered by (a).

*The files and audit report were tabled (see paper No. 429).*



### 34. ABORIGINAL ADVANCEMENT COUNCIL

#### *Commonwealth Grant*

Mr. WILLIAMS, to the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

- (a) Is it a fact that the Commonwealth Government has recently granted \$22,000 to the Aboriginal Advancement Council;
- (b) from what sources did the council derive its funds during each of the last five financial years and what was the extent of each amount?

Mr. BICKERTON replied:

- (a) Yes.
- (b) These figures are available from papers laid on the table of the House (*see paper No. 429*).

### 35. EDUCATION

#### *State Expenditure for Government Schools*

Mr. MENSAROS, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is it a fact that, following the Prime Minister's announcement on 11th May, 1972 for Commonwealth-State assistance for non-Government schools on the basis of 20 : 20% of the assessed cost of educating a child in Government schools, the State Ministers for Education agreed to provide information on expenditure for Government schools?
- (2) If so, what is the State's expenditure for Government schools for the purpose of this information?
- (3) What general items are included in this figure and for which year is it calculated?
- (4) How much is this expenditure expressed on a per capita basis?
- (5) How many pupils are attending in non-Government schools which are to benefit under this assistance?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) to (4) While figures have been provided to the Commonwealth in order to determine an Australia-wide average cost of educating a Government primary and secondary school pupil, it is not possible to provide this information until the basis of the valuation has been decided upon by the Commonwealth.
- (5) The estimate is 42,500 students.

### 36. NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

#### *Bursaries and Subsidies*

Mr. MENSAROS, to the Treasurer:

Could he please supply the following information relating to State Government assistance to non-Government schools—

- (a) the yearly amount since 1959-60 of bursary or fee assistance paid directly or indirectly to parents on a per pupil per annum basis;
- (b) the yearly amount since 1959-60 of subsidies and services to schools tabulated into a division of main items?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

- (a) and (b) The information sought by the Member for Floreat relates to a period of thirteen years during which time there has been a number of changes in the policy and method of payment of assistance made available directly, or indirectly, to parents of students attending non-government schools. Considerable research will be necessary to extract the information required, and the Member will be advised as soon as it is available.

### 37. ABORIGINAL ADVANCEMENT COUNCIL

#### *Meetings*

Dr. DADOUR, to the Minister representing the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (a) Approximately how many members attend the fortnightly meetings of the Aboriginal Advancement Council;
- (b) of this number, approximately how many are of Aboriginal descent;
- (c) how many Aboriginal members of the council are financial at the present time?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (a) to (c) The Aboriginal Advancement Council is an autonomous organisation and the matters raised in the question are thus not within my jurisdiction.
- Therefore I have no record of the information requested.

### 38. ABORIGINAL ADVANCEMENT COUNCIL

#### *Non-political and Non-sectarian Policy*

Dr. DADOUR, to the Minister representing the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) Is the Aboriginal Advancement Council intended to be non-political and non-sectarian?
- (2) If so, what action is taken to ensure this?
- (3) Is the Minister satisfied that a non-political and non-sectarian course and policy are currently being observed?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) to (3) To the best of my knowledge the Aboriginal Advancement Council is not affiliated with a political party or religious organisation. However, it is an autonomous body and therefore is outside my jurisdiction.

### 39. TRACTORS

#### *Licensing with Police Traffic Branch*

Mr. W. G. YOUNG, to the Minister representing the Minister for Police:

When a local authority hands over traffic control to the police traffic branch, is there any change in the regulations relating to the procedure for licensing a farm tractor in respect of—

- (a) the need for flashing light signals;
- (b) the need for "stop" warning lights operated by the brake;
- (c) no license fee being charged;
- (d) third party insurance cover?

Mr. BICKERTON replied:

- (a) to (d) No.

### 40. COUNTRY HIGH SCHOOL HOSTELS

#### *Accommodation and Vacancies*

Mr. W. G. YOUNG, to the Minister for Education:

Further to my question 24 on Thursday, 12th October, how many vacancies exist at each of the hostels attached to country high schools in the South West Land Division, Esperance and Kalgoorlie?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

Albany boys' .....	7
Albany methodist girls' .....	23
Bunbury .....	75
Esperance .....	39
Geraldton boys' .....	4
Geraldton girls' .....	11
Katanning .....	11
Merredin .....	7
Narrogin .....	1
Northam boys' .....	13
Kalgoorlie (native girls' hostel) .....	26

### 41. LAND

#### *Building Blocks: Karragullen*

Mr. RUSHTON, to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) What is the present position regarding the release of building blocks at Karragullen under his jurisdiction?
- (2) To meet the present need will he release a limited number of blocks on a restricted basis of a suitable size to allow sale without provision of Metropolitan Water Board reticulated water?

Mr. H. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) Building blocks will not be released at Karragullen until provision of services is practicable.
- (2) No.

### 42. NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

#### *Per Capita Grants*

Sir CHARLES COURT, to the Premier:

- (1) With reference my question 28 on 11th October, 1972 regarding per capita grants for non-Government schools will he please be specific as to the dates and the form of discussions which he said, in answer to part (1), had continued between the Commonwealth and the States?
- (2) (a) Is there a complete statement of the Commonwealth's proposals and intentions in respect of the scheme which clarifies the conditions of Commonwealth and State contributions;
- (b) if so, will he please table it for information of members?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

- (1) On 11th May, the Prime Minister announced proposals for assistance to schools. The State Government was advised by telex of these proposals.

The Commonwealth was advised that discussions concerning the proposals, would be held by State Ministers for Education in conjunction with the Commonwealth Minister at the 1972 Australian Education Council meeting to be held in May.

The Minister for Education and Science agreed to officers of his department visiting each State to discuss the factors concerning the proposals to assist recurrent costs in non-government schools, particularly with respect to the determination of an Australia-wide average cost of educating a Government primary and secondary school student as a base for arriving at the level of assistance.

On 14th June, two officers from the Department of Education and Science visited this State for preliminary discussions on the factors concerned with this National average. The meeting was of an exploratory nature and it was evident that no finality could be reached until all States had been visited and a report submitted to the Department of Education and Science.

The Department of Education and Science, in a series of telephone discussions, sought further clarification of certain matters discussed on 14th June.

On 9th August a meeting of research officers from each State was convened in Melbourne. The purpose of the meeting was for the Department of Education and Science to seek the States' views on items to be included. This action was necessary in view of the differences which exist between State education systems.

On the basis of the discussions held in Melbourne, the Commonwealth sought additional financial and statistical information for the purpose of determining a National average cost. This information has been forwarded to the Department of Education and Science, but final details will not be known until announced by the Commonwealth.

- (2) (a) and (b) The following papers, which I hereby table, set out the Commonwealth Government's proposals on this matter—

A statement by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. William McMahon, in the House of Representatives, Canberra.

A copy of the 2nd reading speech by the Hon. Malcolm Fraser on the States Grants (Schools) Bill, 1972.

A statement released by the Dept. of Education and Science 25/9/1972.

A copy of the Bill introduced to the House of Representatives.

The papers were tabled (see paper No. 427).

#### 43. ABATTOIRS

##### *Feasibility Study: Cost*

Mr. McPHARLIN, to the Premier:

- (1) Has the Government made any financial contribution towards the cost of the feasibility study into the building of abattoirs, carried

out by Civil and Civic on behalf of the United Farmers and Graziers Association Inc. W.A.?

- (2) If not, does the Government intend to give financial assistance at a future date?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

- (1) No.  
(2) The giving of financial assistance, such as is referred to in the question, is not contemplated by the Government.

#### 44. ROAD MAINTENANCE TAX

##### *Abolition: Financial Loss*

Mr. McPHARLIN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) In the event of the road maintenance tax being abolished what would be the total financial result?  
(2) What would be the loss of additional assistance from the Commonwealth?  
(3) What is the minimum annual amount required in order to qualify for maximum Commonwealth assistance?

Mr. JAMIESON replied:

- (1) Because of the carry-over of quota funds from the two previous financial years the loss of road funds in 1972-73 could be of the order of \$3.7 million (i.e. the estimated receipts from road maintenance tax). However, in 1973-74 the loss of road funds could amount to about \$5.1 million depending on whether or not the excess quota funds had been used in the previous year.  
(2) In 1972-73—Nil.  
In 1973-74—Estimated \$1.3 million.  
This assumes that additional funds will be available from the Transport Commission and from vehicle license fees.  
(3) After excluding non-acceptable road expenditure, the State will be required to spend from its own resources, an amount of about \$16.3 million in 1972-73.

#### 45.

##### HOUSING

##### *Constructions, Block Development, and Applications*

Mr. RUSHTON, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) How many units of accommodation have been built each year since 1966—  
(a) by the Commission;  
(b) by all other means?

- (2) How many blocks each year since 1966 has the Commission—
- developed ready for urban use;
  - purchased from developers and private persons fully and partly ready for urban use?
- (3) How many outstanding applications were held in the metropolitan and country areas as at 1st March, 1971 and now, for—
- rental accommodation;
  - purchase homes?
- (4) How many applications from metropolitan and country areas have been received for—
- rental homes;
  - purchase homes,
- since the recently announced income scale of eligibility?

Mr. BICKERTON replied:

I ask for the answer to this question to be tabled. At the same time I would like to say to the member for Dale that a considerable amount of research is necessary for the type of questions he has been asking recently. If he is doing this for his parliamentary duties, I am quite prepared to make available to him an officer from the department to go through any of the information he requests.

*The answer was tabled (see paper No. 428).*

46. *This question was postponed until Tuesday, the 24th October.*

47. **MILK**

*Licenses: Annual Increase*

Mr. BLAICKIE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

Would he advise the annual yearly increase of licensed milk and the number of new licenses issued in each year since 1967?

Mr. H. D. EVANS replied:

Yearly increase in sales of licensed milk (including milk separated and sold as cream)—

Year ended	New licenses	
30th June	Gallons	Issued
1967	917,050	Nil
1968	1,277,990	23
1969	1,353,044	20
1970	1,506,889	28
1971	902,349	40
1972	482,686	39

48. *This question was postponed.*

## POLICE

### Sex Acts: Charges

Mr. R. L. YOUNG, to the Minister representing the Minister for Police:

Further to my question 10 of 17th October, 1972 and his answers thereto, and without wishing to canvass nor express any opinion on the sentences given the offenders, can he say—

- Why the police officers present when sex acts were committed which resulted in women being charged were unable to identify the men involved;
- Whether in his opinion the type of act performed would have given any officer sufficient time to enable him to make a positive identification;
- In view of his words "in most cases" in his answers how many separate acts took place;
- Was the man identified and who subsequently gave evidence against the women with whom he engaged in these acts, present by invitation of the club involved or was he there by prior arrangement with any other person or persons with a view to performing the act whether or not to give evidence at a later date?

Mr. BICKERTON replied:

(a) Police only viewed the acts through a small hole in a wall, a considerable distance from the acts performed. Police admittance to the premises was delayed as a large number of persons present were affected by liquor and difficult to handle. At no time was the view of the naked men sufficient to establish positive identification which, of course, would exclude the member for Wembley.

- Answered by (a).
- Three separate males were involved.
- The male participant who gave evidence was a member of the social committee of the club and there was no contact or prior arrangement with this person by the police.

**QUESTIONS (8): WITHOUT NOTICE****1. LAND TRANSFERS AND LOCAL COURTS***Increased Charges*

Sir CHARLES COURT, to the Premier:

With reference to *Government Gazette* No. 96 dated Friday, the 6th October, 1972, and dealing with charges under the Strata Titles Act, Transfer of Land Act, Local Courts Act—

- (1) Will he advise the extent to which the charges involved have been increased both in money and in percentage terms?
- (2) (a) Have these charges been the subject of reference to Parliament through amendments to Statutes;  
(b) If so, when were the respective amendments agreed to?
- (3) If amendments to Statutes are not required, what is the enabling authority for the increases to take place?
- (4) What reference has been made to these increases in the Budget speech?
- (5) What is the estimate of the total increase in revenue—  
(a) for the remainder of this financial year to the 30th June, 1973;  
(b) for a full financial year?
- (6) Where are these increases reflected in the Budget papers?
- (7) (a) Are there any increases in charges—other than those referred to above—that have been gazetted in the last 12 months which do not require enabling Statutes; and  
(b) If so, what are the details of these?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

(1) to (7) In the time available to me subsequent to the receipt of a copy of the question it was quite impracticable to obtain the amount of information required. Therefore I regret I must ask for the question to be placed on the notice paper.

**2. POLICE***Sex Acts; Charges*

Mr. R. L. YOUNG, to the Minister representing the Minister for Police:

I realise that the answer to the question I asked today was rather hilariously received. I would

point out that the matter involved is of a serious nature and should therefore be treated with a little less hilarity.

Mr. Graham: Are you making a speech now?

Mr. R. L. YOUNG: In regard to questions asked by me on the 17th and the 18th October in respect of the failure by police to charge men who performed sex acts at a football club function with women who were subsequently charged and gaoled, can he say—

- (1) In order that the public will not be confused and concerned as to the possibility of impropriety on the part of the police, how the male witness who took part in the sex acts was identified if he was not previously known to the police?
- (2) If it is true that the witness referred to took part in the sex acts and was subsequently given a certificate exempting him from any charge provided he acted as a prosecution witness?
- (3) If "Yes" to (2), at what point of proceedings was the certificate given?
- (4) What was the occupation of the witness?
- (5) Was the witness paid a witness fee?
- (6) How many sex acts were performed between the women charged and the men involved before arrests were made?
- (7) Approximately how many men were involved?

Mr. BICKERTON replied:

(1) to (7) To enable me to look into this matter I suggest that the honourable member puts the question on the notice paper.

**3. FEDERAL ELECTORATES***Redistribution of Boundaries*

Mr. MENSAROS, to the Attorney-General:

- (1) Is it a fact that his reported move of requesting the High Court to make a decision in the matter of 10 Federal electorates in Western Australia could not possibly result in having 10 electorates before the 1972 election?
- (2) In view of the statement by the Federal Government that the machinery for redistribution of Federal election boundaries for 10 seats in Western Australia will be set in motion after the 1972 election, is it not a fact that any

State Government move in this direction cannot achieve any practical results whatsoever and is solely contemplated to gain political advantage for the Labor Party at the expense of the State's taxpayers?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) The matter raised in the first question, in my view, is one of law and not, as alleged by the honourable member, a matter of fact. However, any final decision on this would be a matter for the High Court to determine.
- (2) The Government has already indicated that it does not intend to take any action.

#### 4. ABORIGINAL ADVANCEMENT COUNCIL

##### *Investigation into Administration*

Mr. GRAYDEN, to the Premier:

As many members of the Aboriginal Advancement Council are extremely dissatisfied with the manner in which the affairs of the council are conducted by senior officers of the council, and as allegations against council administration include—

- (a) corruption of youth;
- (b) wanton and extensive damage to council property;
- (c) matter-of-course car stealing forays by inmates of a council hostel;
- (d) failure to keep minutes which are a true and correct record of council and executive meetings;
- (e) "Rafferty rules" expenditure of council funds;
- (f) violence, and threats of violence by officers of the council; and
- (g) other serious charges,

will he appoint an independent investigator to inquire into the allegations and to make recommendations for the proper supervision and conduct of the Aboriginal Advancement Council?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

No. A submission from the honourable member to the Royal Commission on Aborigines, which has been authorised by the Government, may afford him an opportunity for the inquiry he is seeking.

#### 5. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

##### *Dossier on Financial Affairs*

Sir CHARLES COURT, to the Premier:

I do not expect the Premier to be carrying the answer to my proposed question in his head, but I

ask the question today to give him ample opportunity to get the information for tomorrow.

When he answered my question without notice on the matter of the dossier on my financial affairs three questions were involved. The first dealt with the dossier itself; the second question was a procedural one; and the third question requested him to advise when he received the dossier, from what source it was received, and who prepared it.

The Premier gave the answer, (1) to (3). As I read the answer, and his subsequent amplification, it dealt specifically with part (1) of my question.

Therefore, would the Premier be good enough to obtain the information which I requested: When did he receive the dossier, from what source, and who prepared it?

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: Is the Leader of the Opposition referring to one document, or two documents?

Sir CHARLES COURT: I am referring to the one mentioned in the first part of my question.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: Well, I did not receive that at all, and I did not quote from it either.

Sir CHARLES COURT: Well, the Premier had better look at the reply he gave to my question yesterday.

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

I am glad the Leader of the Opposition has raised this question because I had intended, at the conclusion of questions, to ask you, Mr. Speaker, to enable me to inform the Leader of the Opposition that in accordance with an undertaking I gave yesterday I referred this matter to His Excellency. I want to make it clear so there is no misunderstanding requiring any subsequent clarification that at the time I spoke previously, and made reference to a loss of \$500,000, I came by that information in a submission which was one of four which had been given to me when I was Leader of the Opposition, and I had seen it repeated in a dossier which was submitted to His Excellency.

With regard to the dossier submitted to His Excellency, which the Leader of the Opposition asked to be tabled, I sought the earliest opportunity to refer the matter to His Excellency. I was afforded that opportunity at 9.00 a.m. today, and I expressed to His

Excellency the wish of the Leader of the Opposition to have the dossier tabled.

His Excellency asked for time to consider the request and he said he would let me know, subsequently, what his decision was. His Excellency rang me at about five or 10 minutes past two this afternoon and said that he was not prepared to table the documents, as they had been submitted to him on a strictly confidential basis.

His Excellency had quite properly, in accordance with his duties, referred the dossier to me to be considered by the Government. He had received certain advice from me following the consideration of the dossier and, as a result, he replied to the person who had submitted it to him.

As the decision was one for His Excellency to make, and as he has declined to make the papers available for the purposes of tabling, I must accept His Excellency's decision in connection with this matter.

Sir Charles Court: How do we get justice in a matter like this?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: Standing Order 231 permits the Leader of the Opposition to move in the House for the tabling of the papers.

Mr. O'Connor: Will you support it?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: It depends on the case which is submitted in connection with it.

Sir Charles Court: What a place this is developing into.

6.

## EDUCATION

### *Free Books Scheme*

Mr. RUSHTON, to the Minister for Education:

(1) Following his challenge contained in the answer to my question 28 on the 21st September, will he indicate the countries—including communist and socialist—which have a central Government departmental system of writing and producing school books?

(2) Does his Government intend to continue indefinitely with the Education Department writing and producing school books instead of the freedom of choice offered by the subsidy system preferred by the Liberal Party?

(3) Does he realise Hitler's Germany did not resort to controlling school students' reading matter?

(4) Does the Government intend to cancel the present subsidy to parents of secondary students and replace it with departmentally produced books?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

It is said that beauty and truth often lie in the eye of the beholder. In this question I can detect nothing but bitterness. However, I am prepared to answer it, as follows:—

(1) It is not possible to provide detailed information on this matter, but it is common practice for educational authorities to produce materials to use in the schools.

(2) The writing and publishing of materials for use in schools in Western Australia was instituted and carried on during the life of the previous Liberal Governments. Since this policy has proved successful this Government has no intention of changing it.

(3) It is not considered that conditions in Hitler's Germany have any relevance to Western Australia.

(4) No. In fact the Budget provides for an increase in the textbook subsidy to parents of some secondary students. I add, Mr. Speaker, that the increase is at fourth and fifth year levels and is an increase of 50 per cent.

## MURDER CASE

### *Port Hedland*

Mr. NALDER, to the Attorney-General:

I regret I have not had the opportunity to give the Attorney-General prior notice of my intention to ask this question, which is as follows:—

(1) Did he read the report in today's issue of *The West Australian* of the hearing of a murder charge case at Port Hedland?

(2) If he did, will he give consideration to making available the full report which was made by the judge hearing the case, including his address to the jury?

Mr. T. D. EVANS replied:

(1) and (2) I did read the report in this morning's Press and I gather from it that the young girl concerned is due today to face a charge of stealing in the Court of Petty Sessions at Port Hedland. Notwithstanding that, it is open to

any member of the public, on application, to obtain the depositions. In this matter I will obtain the depositions and will make them available for perusal by the Leader of the Country Party.

### 8. HOUSING

#### *Construction, Block Development, and Applications*

Mr. RUSHTON, to the Minister for Housing:

I would like clarification in connection with the answer given to question 45 on today's notice paper. With reference to part (1) of that question I asked the Minister—

How many units of accommodation have been built each year since 1966—

(a) by the commission;

(b) by all other means?

The Minister replied under the heading of "Others" that 527 were built in 1965-66 and 138 were built in 1966-67, etc. Thousands were built and I ask him to give me the information tomorrow. I shall restate the question—

How many houses were built by the private sector in Western Australia for the period in question?

Mr. BICKERTON replied:

I will do my best to obtain the information for the honourable member if he places the question on the notice paper.

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

On motion by Mr. I. W. Manning, leave of absence for six weeks granted to Mr. O'Neil (East Melville—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) on the ground of urgent public business.

### CLOSING DAYS OF SESSION

#### *Standing Orders Suspension*

MR. J. T. TONKIN (Melville—Premier) [3.03 p.m.]: I move—

That until the 31st December, or until such earlier date as may be ordered—

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

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

Members will know that about this time each year it is customary for a motion of this kind to be moved to facilitate the passage through the House of Bills on the notice paper and those to be introduced. It also enables the consideration of both the Loan and Revenue Estimates to be completed.

It is not the Government's intention to be unduly strict with regard to the application of the part of the motion which concerns passing Bills through all stages in one sitting. Only when the circumstances are such as to make this step necessary will the power to do so be utilised. It is essential, as all members know, to have this power so that it may be utilised if it becomes necessary to do so.

Mr. W. A. Manning: On what date will the session finish?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: I am not clairvoyant.

MR. HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe) [3.04 p.m.]: My leader has asked me to speak briefly to the motion moved by the Premier and to indicate that our party has no intention of opposing the motion, which is the usual one introduced at about this time of the year. Its purpose is to streamline procedures for legislation—procedures which, over the years, have been found to be desirable in the interests of good Government. It is true that to facilitate Government business all Governments have availed themselves of the opportunity to move such a motion. As I have said, it is not our intention to oppose it.

I had intended to raise one query; namely, that the streamlining of procedures will not be enforced unnecessarily if members of the Opposition raise points on which they seek clarification. I had intended to ask that, if this were the case, the procedures be delayed to enable some points to be debated more fully or more time given to members. However, I have noted with pleasure that the Premier has indicated the motion would not be applied harshly if members of the Opposition feel it necessary for some delay to occur. Under those circumstances I have pleasure in agreeing to the motion.

MR. NALDER (Katanning) [3.06 p.m.]: I would like to indicate briefly to the Premier that the Country Party has no objection to the motion he has moved.

I assume from the comments which have been made and from an understanding which has been accepted over the years that private members' business will be given final consideration at some time during the session.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: That is the next motion.



Mr. NALDER: I will cover both motions in my comments and say that the Country Party supports them.

Question put and passed.

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

#### *Precedence on all Sitting Days*

MR. J. T. TONKIN (Melville—Premier) [3.07 p.m.]: I move—

That, until the 31st December, or until such earlier date as may be ordered, on and after Wednesday, 25th October, Government business shall take precedence of all Motions and Orders of the Day on Wednesdays as on all other days.

Again, this is a motion which is generally moved at about this time of the session. As I expect that almost all—if not all—private members' business already on the notice paper will be disposed of today, there will be very little difficulty in giving the assurance which the Leader of the Country Party sought; namely, that ample time will be given for discussion of private members' business. We met at 2.15 p.m. last Wednesday, which was private members' day, and we have met at that same time today. This has given a longer time than is normal for private members' business. I feel no private member will be disadvantaged at all by the motion I have just moved.

MR. HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe) [3.08 p.m.]: Again, this is a motion with which the Opposition finds itself in agreement. The Premier has given an indication that private members' business will be given due consideration. The inference I draw is that private members' business will not be crammed into a final period when members will not have a full opportunity to air their views which they feel should be given due consideration.

I wonder whether the Premier can give any further indication as to possible changes in times of sitting. He indicated at the end of last week he would give the House, as of yesterday, the new times of sitting. At the end of business last night the Premier said we would be sitting at 2.15 p.m. today. I wonder whether he can give an indication of future times of sittings to enable members so to order their private and business affairs.

MR. J. T. TONKIN (Melville—Premier) [3.09 p.m.]: It was my intention to say, when adjourning the House tomorrow evening, that as from then on, we will sit after tea on Thursdays. However, the matter has come up now and I indicate to members that we propose to meet at 4.30 p.m. on Tuesdays, as at present; at 2.15 p.m. on Wednesdays; and at 11.00 a.m. on Thursdays. We will be sitting after tea on Thursdays as from Thursday of next week.

Question put and passed.

### BILLS (5): THIRD READING

1. Youth, Community Recreation and National Fitness Bill.  
Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr. T. D. Evans (Minister for Education), and transmitted to the Council.
2. Environmental Protection Act Amendment Bill.  
Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr. Davies (Minister for Environmental Protection), and transmitted to the Council.
3. Transport Commission Act Amendment Bill.  
Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr. May (Minister for Mines), and passed.
4. Totalisator Duty Act Amendment Bill.
5. Totalisator Regulation Act Amendment Bill.  
Bills read a third time, on motions by Mr. T. D. Evans (Attorney-General), and transmitted to the Council.

### ROAD TRANSPORT SYSTEM

#### *Inquiry by Royal Commission: Motion*

MR. O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley) [3.13 p.m.]: I move—

This House is of the opinion that a full scale inquiry—in the form of a Royal Commission—should be undertaken by people with the required experience and capability into the road transport system of this State with special reference to the owner/driver section of the industry in view of the current instability of this section of the industry, and the complaints about discrimination in the administration of the permit system and collection of the road maintenance tax.

A great amount of concern is being expressed by members of the transport industry. From what has been said to me by a great number of people who have contacted me in the last few days, both personally and by telephone, it is quite obvious they are extremely concerned about many unsatisfactory elements of the industry at the present time.

I think members of this House, generally, will agree it is necessary to do something to overcome the present problems, and most members will admit that chaos exists in the transport industry in Western Australia, that frustration is rife amongst most members and operators in the industry, and that there is a great lack of work. Many operators, through lack of work and inability to obtain permits, are being forced into the position where they are likely to become bankrupt. Generally speaking, they feel there is a lack of understanding of their problems.

I hope this motion will be agreed to by the Government. I believe it is essential when it is realised that the transport industry in a State as large as Western Australia is probably one of the most important sections of the community. When we consider that approximately 66 per cent. of the cost of articles manufactured in this State is attributable to transport costs, we realise how important this industry is to the State in so many ways, especially as far as the development of the north and other country centres is concerned. Unless we have a transport system that operates efficiently, there will be a lack of deliveries and a lack of efficiency in country areas. If the present chaotic situation is not straightened out, there will be no co-operation or co-ordination in the industry itself, and there will be the possibility of it becoming more unstable through lack of work and lack of consideration.

I believe it is necessary that we endeavour to stabilise the transport industry in order to relieve the hardship that is being experienced by many operators. The only way in which I can see this being done properly and efficiently is through a full-scale inquiry in the form of a Royal Commission. I sincerely hope the Government will agree to its appointment. This decision will have an impact not only on the present position but also on the future of the industry in this State and, as I pointed out, the future of the country centres.

As we all know, the area of Western Australia is approximately 1,000,000 square miles. Without the transport industry, this State could not progress satisfactorily. Without the opening up and development of new centres, through the industry, this would be a stagnant State. We must encourage the people who are involved in the industry to operate efficiently, and we must give them sufficient work to keep them going and keep the industry stable.

Mr. Hutchinson: And operate fairly.

Mr. O'CONNOR: That is one of the most important aspects and I will touch on it at a later stage. I think the downfall of the transport industry can be attributed to the present Government. One of the major factors involved in the failure of the industry is the promise to abolish road maintenance tax. Many of those who supported the Government at the last election did so because they thought road maintenance tax would be abolished. When the election was over and the present Government took office, many of those supporters were extremely jubilant because they thought they would have no more road maintenance tax to pay or forms to fill in, and that they could operate without the problems they had experienced in past years.

However, the abolition of road maintenance tax was not to be. Following the rejection by another place of the Bill to abolish road maintenance tax, many operators, who for many months had not filled in forms and had not paid tax, were

forced to try to recollect the journeys they had made in the previous six, seven, eight, or nine months in an endeavour to bring their records and road maintenance tax up to date.

That was extremely difficult to do. Normally, the average working person who has certain moneys spends them; if he has a certain amount of profit, it goes. Because those operators had a feeling— inaccurate, as it happened—that road maintenance tax would be abolished and they would have no further costs to pay in that regard, they did not save the money to pay it. When the department asked them for it, they did not have the capacity to make up their arrears, and in many cases they did not have the capacity or the facilities to provide records of the journeys they had made in the previous months.

Much of the jubilation of these people turned to frustration when the money was demanded by the Transport Commission—as I said, money which they no longer had. The operators now know that in this State they must pay road maintenance tax, they must keep it up to date, and they must keep proper records. Here also the operators are facing frustrations. Many irregularities occur in connection with the running of the whole show and the operators are very concerned about this. Some of them have contacted the commission and different operators have received different answers. When they compare the answers, they feel that some individuals are receiving preferential treatment.

I have brought this point up in the House before, and I bring it up again now because we cannot allow the situation to continue. If no irregularities occur, the Government should have no fear in supporting this motion. It should welcome an inquiry into road transport so that the doubts of the individual operators can be fully aired, and these people will know the exact position. The commission does not appear to know what is going on. It appears to change its policy all the time.

The Government does not seem to know that the industry is completely upside down at the moment. Quite frankly, although I have asked questions in this House on a number of occasions, I do not know what is going on.

I would like to make some brief comments on the answers I have received to questions asked in the House. The answers are very relevant to the motion before us and to the reasons for my belief in the necessity for a Royal Commission to inquire into road transport. On the 4th October I asked a question of the Minister representing the Minister for Transport in this House. The question reads as follows:—

How many—

- (a) licenses; and
- (b) permits,

have been refused to road hauliers in the last six months because of their inability to meet their financial commitments?

The Minister replied as follows:—

There have been no refusals to date as the policy of refusing licenses or permits to those unable to pay road maintenance charges is only just being put into effect.

This answer is not quite clear. The Minister claimed that no permits had been refused to date, and members will note that this was on the 4th October. I was forced to go into this question a little more fully and I made inquiries of people who had expressed concern to me because permits had been refused. I have a letter from Mr. B. Polinelli, and he has asked me to mention his name because he is one of the frustrated people I mentioned.

Mr. Polinelli has been involved with this industry for a long time, and when the present Government took office he believed he would no longer have to pay road maintenance tax. However, he put the road maintenance tax money aside in a separate banking account so that he would be able to pay the charges if necessary. Mr. Polinelli received a letter dated the 29th September from the Transport Commission. The contents of this letter completely refute the answers given in this House by the Minister that there had been no refusals to date. I have already read the Minister's answer to that question, and members will bear in mind that Mr. Polinelli received the letter I have mentioned before the Minister replied in this House. The letter from the Transport Commission reads as follows:—

Section 36 of the Transport Commission Act places an obligation on the Commissioner of Transport to consider—

And members will recall that this letter is written to Mr. Polinelli. It continues—

- (d) the character, qualifications and financial stability of the applicant before granting or refusing a licence for a commercial goods vehicle.

Recently, the State Cabinet considered the problems associated with the road transport industry in an endeavour to achieve a level of stabilisation within the industry. As a result of this consideration it has been decided that the abovementioned requirement of Section 36 is to be adhered to in future and that licences or permits are not to be granted to applicants who have not been able to establish their financial stability to the satisfaction of the Commissioner.

According to records at this office it is apparent that you have hitherto been unable to meet the financial

commitments of your transport operations. Therefore, I am directed to advise that, unless you can demonstrate your financial stability and ability to meet your commitments, you will not be eligible in future to obtain a licence or permit under the Transport Commission Act.

The final paragraph reads as follows—

Pending the submission of satisfactory evidence in that regard, permits will not be issued to you for any transport unless all fees payable to this Commission in respect thereof (including permit fees and road maintenance charges) are paid on or before the issue of each permit.

When it is recalled that five days after the writing of this letter the Minister representing the Minister for Transport stated that there had been no refusals to date as a matter of policy, one wonders just where we are going.

Mr. Hutchinson: Has Mr. Polinelli got his permit back yet?

Mr. O'CONNOR: Yes. I asked Mr. Polinelli whether he owed any permit fees to the commission because I thought the Minister's answer would be correct. Mr. Polinelli replied that he had paid all permit fees and he signed a statement, dated this morning, to this effect—

The only fees owing by me at 29/9/72 was road maintenance tax an amount of \$799.14c. This has been paid in full.

The Transport Commission wrote to Mr. Polinelli on the 29th September stating that he was unable to meet his financial commitments. It is apparent that even the Minister does not know where he is headed on this issue. He does not know the true position because he is giving us inaccurate answers to our questions. I realise that at times Ministers have to rely on the departments concerned for the answers to questions, but I feel we are receiving many tinted answers—answers which appear to mislead us. Members on this side of the House are now wondering just what the true situation is. Therefore, to clarify the whole position, I believe the Government should support my motion.

On the 12th October I asked the following questions:—

- (1) Is the Transport Commission requiring certain individuals to pay road maintenance tax prior to carting a load to certain destinations?

And the Minister replied that it was not necessary for hauliers to pay road maintenance tax prior to carting loads to certain destinations. However, again this information is contrary to Mr. Polinelli's experience and also contrary to the letter he received from the commission.

The letter from the Transport Commission is carefully phrased so that road maintenance tax is not mentioned. However, it would appear that a road permit is not issued where a person's financial stability is not proved. This is simply a cover-up, and operators who have not paid their road maintenance tax or who are behind in payments are refused permits. In fairness to the Minister I will read the balance of the answer because it does go a little further. I point out that I had asked whether the Transport Commission required certain individuals to pay road maintenance tax prior to carting a load to certain destinations. The Minister replied:—

No. Current policy is to refuse licenses or permits to operators who are not able to meet their commitments. This is in accordance with section 36 of the Transport Commission Act which requires that the financial stability of an applicant must be considered before a license or permit is granted. In cases where an applicant demonstrates his ability to meet his commitments by offering to pay both permit fees and road maintenance charges prior to the issue of a permit, his application is considered accordingly.

Again, that is a complete contradiction within the one question, and it leaves people completely confused as to the real position. On the 12th October, 1972, I asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport the following question:—

- (1) Has the Transport Commission compiled a black list which prevents certain individuals from operating on Western Australian roads unless specific payments are made?

The Minister replied—

- (1) The Transport Commission has prepared a list of operators whose financial stability has been established in accordance with section 36 of the Transport Commission Act. Those who have not been able to demonstrate their financial stability are listed separately.

The Government is continually evading the issue and trying to keep from us the fact that these are people who owe road maintenance tax.

In answers to questions asked in this House the Premier admitted that the Government has an obligation towards these people and that it would give consideration to those who owe road maintenance tax; but he made it quite clear that that did not apply to permits. In all cases discrimination is being shown, and it is being covered up in the man-

ner of the letter I have read out and the answers I have received to questions in this House.

Mr. Hutchinson: This indicates the Government's lack of credibility.

Mr. O'CONNOR: The gentleman I mentioned is extremely upset about this. He has paid his road maintenance tax up to date. He was advised that unless he did so he would not receive a permit and he would be unable to operate his truck. He has a large amount of money invested in his truck, but he is not allowed to operate it unless he pays the total sum outstanding. If he cannot operate his truck it will stand idle; his total asset will be tied up; and he will be unable to earn sufficient to pay for his truck and to provide for himself and his family.

That type of action completely removes a man's livelihood. The gentleman in question knows of others—and so do I—who have not paid their road maintenance tax but who are operating their trucks. As a matter of fact, another gentleman whose name was mentioned in the House last week has probably one of the worst records in connection with road maintenance tax and road transport permits in this State. I do not think anyone would refute that statement. He has a shocking record in that regard. Yet last week, after contacting certain members in this House, he obtained a permit and took out a load.

However, a person such as Mr. Polinelli, who has a good record with the department and whose only fault was that he did not pay his road maintenance tax but placed it into a separate account because he felt the Government was committed to withdrawing the tax, and that if he kept it separate it would be better than paying it in and running the risk of losing it, as happened in the case of receipts duty, receives no co-operation from the Government.

Another gentleman whose name I will not mention contacted me and admitted that he was at fault in connection with his payment of road maintenance tax. He said that after the present Government was elected, for a period he kept no records of his operations and paid no tax. Therefore, he admits that he was at fault. He said he supported the Government on the last occasion, but it would be for the last time.

As I said, for a period, the gentleman in question kept no record of his operations. He has now been approached by the department and asked to bring his records up to date. This has caused him a tremendous amount of difficulty because he did not keep records. He received the following letter from the Transport Commission:—

Examination of the Certified Record of Journeys form submitted by you for the month of May, 1972 . . . indicates certain omitted journeys from that return.

You are reminded that omissions of journeys from a return constitutes an offence under the Road Maintenance (Contribution) Act, 1965-70, for which heavy penalties are provided.

Further to the above, I would point out that returns are outstanding for the months of February, March, April, June, July and August, 1972 . . . These returns must be submitted, even if you are not able to make payment at present.

The letter goes on to say—

To enable you to comply with the above, please find enclosed blank Certified Record of Journeys forms which should be completed and returned to this office within fourteen (14) days of the above date.

When your total debt is known it will be necessary for you to submit a time to pay offer on a monthly instalment basis, if you are not able to make immediate payment in full. In this respect, would you please fully complete the enclosed financial statement in order that any subsequent offer of yours may be given consideration.

Also enclosed is Road Charges Account . . . showing a debit of . . . owing by you for the month of May, 1972.

I believe that is a reasonable letter and it was considered to be so by the gentleman concerned. He thought it was fair enough because he was behind and he was at fault; and the letter gave him an opportunity to bring things up to date. He was quite willing to endeavour to do so. However, the following day he received a further letter from the Transport Commission. Once again, apparently the policy had changed and the second letter he received was along similar lines to the one received by Mr. Polinelli. It advised him that, "Pending the submission of satisfactory evidence in that regard, permits will not be issued to you for any transport unless all fees payable to this Commission in respect thereof are paid on or before the issue of each permit."

As I said, that letter arrived the day after the letter I mentioned previously. Mr. Speaker, you can imagine how frustrated a man becomes when he receives a letter from the commission offering to co-operate with him and to assist him, and asking him to complete his returns as far as he possibly can and to submit all details; and then he receives a letter couched in the terms I have just indicated.

Early in October the gentleman replied to the first letter from the commission as follows:—

In reply to your letter dated the 28-9-72 re road tax please find enclosed tax forms plus a cheque for . . . being payment for last month (Sept.). I still have money owing me which I

should receive next week so I hope to be able to send you another cheque, so as to square up say one or two of the other months. I did come out to see the Commission as I had promised, I did keep records of trips and managed to get the memory back to May, but as I have been unable to find something to go back further I must ask for your help on this. I was told that to bring my road tax up to date at that time was \$161.00 please advise, also my position has become a bit better so should have no trouble keeping my road tax up to date. I only hope you will give me the chance to keep it current and catch up on the arrears, as my only income is from the truck.

Four days later he sent another letter to the Transport Commission as follows:—

Please find enclosed a cheque for . . . being for road tax arrears which covers the months of June and July, further payments will be made as monies come to hand as stated in my last letter.

Surely that indicates he is one person who is trying to do the right thing and to bring his commitments up to date. As he indicated in his letter, he brought four months' arrears up to date in a period of two or three weeks. Bearing that in mind, and the fact that he had been in touch with the commission to seek its assistance in bringing his records up to date and in various other matters, and had indicated his willingness to pay his road maintenance tax as quickly as possible, is it any wonder he is frustrated by the fact that he cannot obtain a normal permit to operate?

He has been in touch with the department on several occasions, and he appears to be receiving less and less co-operation. As I said, this gentleman appears to be genuine. He has made efforts to bring his payments up to date. The only way he can make payments is by operating his truck, because that is his only source of income. If he has no permit and cannot operate his truck he cannot pay the amount he owes. If he is not given a permit and still operates his truck not only will he be evading road maintenance tax but also the permit fee.

This person also applied for a permit—I can supply the number of it if any member requires it—and after some time he obtained one to make a trip north with a load. He made the trip and whilst in the north he happened to pick up a load for his return trip. He contacted an officer in the department who obtained a permit for him to come back with the load. He was advised he could have the permit at a cost of \$2 a ton, but that if he were sighted on the trip the permit became invalid. I cannot understand why he was issued with a permit if this is the position.

Mr. T. D. Evans: Have you checked that out?

Mr. O'CONNOR: I have checked it out with the person concerned.

Mr. T. D. Evans: But not with the commission?

Mr. O'CONNOR: I have not had time to check it out with the commission because it was brought to my notice only today. However, I cannot understand any department issuing a permit to an individual and making a charge of \$2 a ton on the condition that, if he were sighted on the trip, the permit became invalid.

Mr. T. D. Evans: Don't you think it should be checked with the commission before you make allegations?

Mr. O'CONNOR: This is the reason I am asking for a Royal Commission to be appointed to inquire into the whole position. This is only one of the many problems that exist. No doubt the Minister has heard complaints concerning the industry and various points of view on what is happening. I know that sometimes such stories get a little mixed up, but there are stories going around, and I know that the person to whom I referred recently has an extremely bad record. He was issued with a permit only last week to travel to a certain place with a load, despite the fact that the department has written letters to various transport operators indicating very clearly that unless their arrears of road maintenance tax were paid, or satisfactory arrangements made to pay within a certain period, permits would not be granted.

Unfortunately the people who are being placed in this category are those who, in many cases, have endeavoured to do the right thing. Some operators have got into trouble, but there are those who are making a genuine effort to pay their road maintenance tax. On the other hand there is the individual whom I know very well who has made no attempt to pay his tax. In saying this I am not referring to what has occurred during the regime of this Government; I am going back a long way.

I have a form here that has been issued by the department requesting information from truck operators. It asks them to give details of their assets. The form is called, "A Confidential Financial Statement." It asks truck operators to list their assets and liabilities. It asks what property and vehicles they have in their possession; and what hire-purchase debts and bank overdrafts they have incurred. They are asked to give details of any shares they have, cash at bank, and other assets. They are also asked the average monthly revenue earned by the truck operator and his wife; the income from the vehicle, and other assets. They are asked their average monthly expenditure for hire-purchase payments on the truck, fuel, etc. In other words, this form represents a very comprehensive document.

When I asked the Minister in this House the purpose of this document he said it was to assess the ability of the truck operator to pay road maintenance tax, and he indicated quite clearly that if a person had many financial assets the department would insist on his paying the tax, but if a person were battling the department would not insist on the payment of the tax. This is a dreadful state of affairs, because, in effect, a means test is being applied in regard to the payment of road maintenance tax.

Mr. T. D. Evans: What do you suggest should happen to the fellow who has not the capacity to pay?

Mr. O'CONNOR: Perhaps it would be better if I replied to that question later, because I have some suggestions to make along those lines. I know that such problems are not easy to resolve, but the whole of the industry is in such a turmoil at the moment that the position, overall, should be investigated. We should call in someone with a great deal of experience of the industry with a request that he try to sort out the whole jumbled mess we are now in.

One way this could be done would be to grant exemptions from the payment of arrears of road maintenance tax for a period of six months. We could draw a line, and for a period of six months we could forget the amount of road maintenance tax that is in arrears. The commission could then make certain that any individual who has not paid his road maintenance tax in the past should pay that tax progressively in the future and make an effort to clear the arrears of tax over a certain period of time.

*Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.05 p.m.*

Mr. O'CONNOR: Prior to the afternoon tea suspension I was giving the details of some of the anomalies that existed in the transport industry in support of my request for the appointment of a Royal Commission. I believe many other anomalies exist, apart from the ones to which I have made reference. These anomalies are of concern to the industry, to the Government, and to us. It is time that we instituted a wholesale inquiry to ascertain what can be sorted out, in an effort to further stabilise the industry in this State.

I have expressed my views on the form that is required by the department to be filled in by road operators, on which they have to set out their assets and liabilities. I consider this virtually amounts to the introduction of a means test in the payment of road maintenance tax.

In answer to the queries raised by the Treasurer I pointed out the way in which some of these problems could be overcome. I am putting this forward as a suggestion. I suggest that the road maintenance tax be frozen at a certain point, at which the Government should declare that back taxes

from that point need not be paid forthwith. Over the following six months the Government should make sure that the individual operator pays this tax as he goes along. In the meantime he is given a period in which to make arrangements with the department regarding the payment of his back taxes.

The refusal to issue permits to operators who have not paid their road maintenance tax deprives them of business. This is certainly unfair in the case of the legitimate operators. As I pointed out, in some cases such refusal will result in vehicles being left idle, and will eliminate completely the opportunity for these people to earn an income. I am sure no-one wants such a position to apply.

We have heard some rumours, and at this stage I say they are only rumours, that the workers at the wharves and some other points will not load individual vehicles unless the operator has a Transport Workers' Union ticket. I have no definite proof of this, but if such a situation prevails then in my opinion it is tantamount to protection money. For this reason the matters which I have mentioned should be inquired into, to make sure that each and every road transport operator is given an equal chance to operate legitimately and freely in this State.

I have also pointed out the details of the operations of one transport operator. He was making a genuine effort to pay his back taxes, and he had paid back certain amounts. Still he experienced difficulty in obtaining a permit. However, other operators who have not paid taxes right from the time I was the Minister have received permits, and in one case such an operator received a permit only last week.

Cartage to the north represents a big part of the earnings of the transport operators of this State, and some people have assessed the amount it costs to cart goods from Perth to Port Hedland, and return. Some operators are not paying road maintenance tax, and they have stated that they will not pay it. Such operators have a trading advantage over those who are operating legally. Something should be done about this, because the legal operator is trying to do the right thing by paying the road maintenance tax, but he suffers a disadvantage as compared with the operator who does not pay the tax.

All these operators should be placed on the one level. From the Government and the State point of view they should be given equal rights, equal opportunities, and equal facilities. Difficulties have crept into the transport field in recent times. I am the first to admit that the present economic decline has had something to do with the adverse situation in which the industry is placed, and that such decline has contributed greatly to the existing problems.

I would now like to deal with a report that was prepared by some road transport operators in which they have assessed what they consider to be the minimum cost of running a truck between Perth and the north. It states—

#### TRUCK RUNNING COST FOR NORTH WEST TRANSPORT

This calculation is based on the expenses for a single drive prime mover and bogie trailer and based on an average of forty trips a year.

We must realise that at this point of time many operators are getting only 10 trips a year, or less than one trip per month. They are experiencing difficulties in obtaining loads. As a matter of fact some operators have not had a load for 10 to 12 weeks, and they have got in touch with me. To continue with the report—

The legal load of this unit is 17 tons per load. This calculation is based on a trip from Perth to Port Hedland.

A legal 17 ton load from Perth to Port Hedland at the rate of \$48.00 per ton	\$ 816.00
Approx. 334 gallons of fuel @ an average of 40c a gal- lon per trip	143.00
Cost of tyres, \$5.00 per tyre per 1000 miles, 14 tyres for 2000 miles return	140.00
Wages for driver per trip	200.00
Insurance on \$24,000 a unit per trip	48.00
Road Tax per trip	100.00
Approx. depreciation per trip	120.00
Interest on \$24,000 (yearly) per unit = \$1920 divided by 40 trips per year	48.00
Mechanical labour approxi- mately \$1,200 per year di- vided by 40 trips	30.00
Spare parts approximately \$1,200 per year	30.00
Grease and oil approximately per trip	7.00
Extra loading permit	0.50
Licence per trip	8.00
Expenses unexpected approxi- mately per trip	10.00
	<hr/> \$884.50 <hr/>

That is assessed on the normal cost of a 17-ton truck trip to Port Hedland, and yet at \$48 a ton the total income is \$816, which is approximately \$70 less than the expenses involved in the trip.

Today the charge for a trip between Perth and Port Hedland is down as low as \$36 and \$38 a ton, so the operators must

be running at a loss. If so, they are doing a disservice not only to themselves but also to the community and the other trucking operators in the State.

Some operators are in very grave difficulties. Some are trying to pick up the road maintenance tax to help pay their other costs. Others are experiencing difficulty in keeping up their payments on their trucks at a time when the economic climate for operators is very bad. Many of these operators need help. I am not referring to all cases because some we just cannot help. I think everyone would agree that some are beyond help. They do not try to help themselves or the rest of the transport operators.

The matter should be studied to ascertain the cost to run a trip in order to give a guide and to stabilise the industry as far as possible. Some of the operators undercut prices continually in an effort to meet a payment on their truck. They will operate for \$38 a ton when it is costing them \$50. If they operate for \$38 when it costs them \$50, they have no chance of survival. This has contributed to the rate being reduced on a number of other units and it is also responsible for the present situation.

A Royal Commission could inquire into many aspects. A full assessment should be made of the present road maintenance tax anomalies. I think we all admit that this tax does have anomalies. As the Minister who introduced it, I would be the first to admit that it has never been without problems. I have had many people on my back in connection with it and I have no doubt that the Premier and his Ministers have had their share of concern over it.

All aspects of the matter should be considered in an effort to ascertain whether some means could be devised to help overcome the problems which exist today. These problems differ greatly from the ones we experienced two to five years ago when the industry was more stabilised and all the trucks had plenty of work to keep them operating.

Mr. Bickerton: I am not against the argument you are submitting. I think it is a very good one. However, you must remember that when you introduced this measure these were the arguments we put forward from what is now your side of the House, including the problems of policing the legislation.

Mr. O'CONNOR: I do not agree because the situation is completely different today in that many anomalies have arisen concerning the road maintenance tax. So many different stories are being circulated. Answers are given to questions in Parliament and then letters are sent by the department refuting the information in the answers.

Mr. Bickerton: When you have a tax where you do your job first and pay later you are always going to be in trouble because the fellow will not line up with his payment. This is why we suggested at the time that you put it onto the registration to get the matching moneys from the Commonwealth.

Mr. O'CONNOR: I do not agree with the registration suggestion. I admit that problems are always experienced when a tax must be paid later because some people will try to evade it.

However, many operators experienced trouble following the election because they believed that when the Labor Government was returned to office the road maintenance tax would be abolished immediately. Because of this a number of them did not fill in another form, did not pay the tax, and so got behind. I am suggesting that some of these people were genuine, although I admit that some were not. We must decide who is genuine and who is not. I am all for the genuine operator who is trying to do the right thing. I have already quoted instances where some of these operators have tried to bring their payments up to date, and they have done so. These are the people we must help. Their situation is different. They were lulled into a sense of false security. I am not saying that they were correct, because the tax still applied; but many considered it did not.

Mr. Bickerton: Many were in trouble before the utterance was made.

Mr. O'CONNOR: I have distinguished between the two types of operators. When such a big group is involved doubtless problems will arise. They always have and always will. However my concern now is for the person who is genuinely trying to do the right thing, but is being continually harassed. I have already indicated that some people did not fill in the forms for a long period because they considered the tax would be abolished. After a while, of course, the department caught up with them.

One particular person I have mentioned went to the department and admitted he had not filled in any forms or paid the tax. He asked for help in assessing what he owed in order that he might try to pay it. He has sent some cheques in and during the last three or four weeks he has caught up on five months' payments. However, he is still having difficulty in getting a permit. This is the sort of person we should try to help, not the person who never puts in a return and never does anything for himself. These men must accept the responsibility and should not have an unfair trading advantage over those who are trying to pay the tax. The tax for a trip to Port Hedland and back could be \$100. If an operator does such a trip without paying the tax he can pick up



that extra money, or at least the trip will cost him \$100 less. That is what some are doing and in my opinion that is unfair trading to the greatest degree.

A full assessment should be made of the road maintenance tax anomalies and such a provision should be included in the terms of reference of the inquiry. A Royal Commission could go into the matter completely and make recommendations as to how best to overcome the problems.

I have just dealt with my concern about some operators having to pay while others do not. The State and the hauliers will be affected by the resultant huge loss of moneys because that much less will be spent on the maintenance of our roads. In answer to a question asked in the House the other day it was admitted that something over \$500,000 was owing for road maintenance tax. Naturally as time goes by more will be owing. This is understood. Something must be done about the matter because those operators who have paid their tax are working on roads they helped to maintain while those who have not paid the tax are using the same roads but are not contributing to their maintenance as they should be.

This is an unsatisfactory position. If these sums are not being collected and therefore are not being used on the maintenance of our roads, the costs of transport are kept high. All of us have studied this subject enough to know that if we have good, efficient bitumen roads of the required width the operating costs are half those involved when using gravel or narrow bitumen roads; because when a vehicle passes another vehicle on a narrow road it must get off the bitumen onto the gravel and in this way the bitumen is broken away at the edges, and the tyres of the vehicle are affected. Overseas tests on vehicles operating over several million miles have proved that the narrow bitumen roads are as expensive to operate on as are the gravel roads.

As I have said, I think we should examine the whole matter completely and set a period during which the entire industry could be stabilised. We should pull down the curtain and say that from now on everyone will have to make arrangements for back payments.

Something else which is causing concern is hire purchase in connection with transport vehicles. We know that some dealers will increase the price of a \$12,000 vehicle to \$16,000 because the prospective buyer does not have a deposit of \$4,000. The prices of the vehicles are jacked up and when this happens the repayments are extremely high. Also, the vehicle involved is usually not in good condition so the operator starts off with a bad truck and high repayments. As a result, he is usually involved in tremendous trouble and when he fails to meet his payments he begins to cut down on his road maintenance tax payments.

Mr. W. G. Young: Surely, dealers do not jack up the prices of the vehicles!

Mr. O'CONNOR: I am referring to truck dealers. When trucks are repossessed for nonpayment they are usually sold to another individual in exactly the same situation. Many people are operating trucks which they cannot afford to run. I do not blame them entirely because it is quite often the fault of the company which is selling the vehicle.

The Royal Commission should also investigate the transport needs of the future. Through the Transport Commission, or the Director-General of Transport, we should make some assessment and budget for the future requirements of the transport industry.

Mr. McPharlin: You mean other than road transport?

Mr. O'CONNOR: No, for road transport. We should budget for the anticipated movement of goods over a period of time. I know such movements cannot be assessed accurately in all cases, but an estimate could be made.

Mr. Bickerton: But the Director-General of Transport already has all those figures available. Your Government appointed Mr. Knox.

Mr. O'CONNOR: And what is the Government doing with the figures at the moment?

Mr. Bickerton: Volumes of investigations have been carried out into road transport. Does the honourable member think another inquiry would make any difference to those conducted when he was in control?

Mr. O'CONNOR: I believe those figures could be used in conjunction with an inquiry, and would assist it. We could compile all the information which is available.

Mr. Bickerton: I go along with the suggestion but does the honourable member think the answer is another inquiry, after we have had five or six such inquiries already?

Mr. O'CONNOR: I am not suggesting an inquiry into one particular point, but into road transport generally; because it is in a shocking state at the moment. I think the Minister would admit that. Two years ago road transport was at its peak in this State. For instance, the member for Pilbara would be aware of the trucks which were running to the Pilbara region.

Mr. Bickerton: That is right.

Mr. O'CONNOR: What is happening in that area now?

Mr. Bickerton: The trucks are not missing for the reason mentioned by the honourable member at all. He is talking about the period of construction by the iron ore companies and naturally many trucks were

taking machinery and other commodities to the area. However, once the construction period was concluded it was natural to have a falling off in road transport.

Mr. O'CONNOR: But the needs of the system should be gauged ahead to cover all transport operations. The Government should be able to budget for mining and other operations and keep the transport system running. It is no good having a high flow today and nothing tomorrow with many operators out of work. This aspect could be inquired into, as I believe it should be.

I believe we should try to budget ahead over a period of time. We should try to assess the number of vehicles which will be required to move equipment and other goods. In some way all these aspects should be worked in together. The setting of minimum rates is something which no-one wants. That system has been tried out overseas. However, it is a point which could be examined. Also, the matter of maximum rates should be looked into.

Another point which requires clarification is whether or not certain operators are receiving preferential treatment over *bona fide* operators. It is necessary to dispel the concern expressed by a large number of people that some operators have only to contact certain individuals and they can obtain whatever they want. If this information is inaccurate, let us clarify the position because such clarification would do a great deal of good and clear the air for everyone concerned.

I have recently received complaints concerning a truck which has come from the Eastern States. It is owned by Buntines, who have been in the haulage game for a long time. They are large operators and they have triple loaders running behind the main vehicles. At present the firm is carting 5,000 head of cattle to Meekatharra and is taking a lot of work from the local operators. In this case it is not necessary for that operator to pay road maintenance tax or to pay a license fee in this State. Operators have come to me in connection with this matter and expressed their concern.

There is no doubt whatsoever about the instability of the industry at the moment. We had a meeting here last Saturday morning with a number of operators and they all expressed similar concern. The main concern of those operators was that they wanted to make a living but, in many cases, they were not able to do so. In two cases the operators have vehicles worth \$100,000, and they are paying them off at the rate of \$400 a week. However, they have not had a load for 10 or 12 weeks. Members can imagine the position of those operators. They are also making back-payments of road maintenance tax amounting to about \$5,000. I

know that some would say that those operators are fools and should not have bought the trucks in the first place, but the position is that they have bought the trucks and they are in trouble. As a result, the Government—or the Transport Commission—is also in trouble because the operators cannot pay their road maintenance tax.

I believe a Royal Commission is necessary to bring the whole industry into gear.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: Supposing a Royal Commission recommended the abolition of the road maintenance tax. Would your party support it?

Mr. O'CONNOR: Supposing the Royal Commission recommended the retention of it, would the Premier support it?

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: No, I would not. I think it is the most inequitable tax ever imposed.

Sir Charles Court: Not as inequitable as the proposed increased license fees.

Mr. O'CONNOR: In answer to the Premier's question, I cannot speak on behalf of my party but on my own behalf I would say that if a Royal Commission recommended the abolition of the road maintenance tax and gave sufficient reason I would support it.

I think we should examine the role played by the Transport Commission in the overall transport system of this State. We should divide the State into sections: the metropolitan area; the south-west division; and other parts of the State. Those areas have individual problems and each section should be examined in an attempt to solve the problems associated with it.

If we could overcome those problems we would assist ourselves and make the work of our departments and members in this House much easier. When the industry is not operating efficiently conditions are difficult for everyone, particularly those associated with the industry.

We need to estimate the proportion of road transport that is provided by various sources of ownership, such as the major private transport corporations; the smaller privately owned companies and groups of owners; owner-drivers with single vehicles or comparatively few vehicles; Government owned and operated vehicles; and other operators.

We should take all these matters into account and assess how we can help each and every one of the individuals concerned. We should assess the financial structure of the industry, including the general financial stability of the operators. If operators could obtain a reasonable amount of work at reasonable rates today, I believe most of them would be operating satisfactorily. I

admit that, whatever happens, some of them could not be helped. Some of them have no stability. I am referring to a minor group. Such people are very difficult to help. They have never helped themselves or anyone else, I believe.

We should look into the availability of finance for vehicles and associated equipment, and the problems that arise from insufficient equity in vehicles. I have pointed out what we should do in this regard. We believe there has been discrimination amongst operators in regard to the permit system and the collection of road maintenance tax.

Another point which should be included in the reference is the degree to which the permit system is observed or not observed. I think most of the major companies observe the permit system. Most of the legitimate operators try to do so, but in recent times people have come to me saying, "I am in trouble with road maintenance tax. I have tried to pick it up but because I have not paid it the department will not give me a permit to enable me to operate. I am not now giving details of my trips. I am operating without a permit." Some individuals have made 10 trips without either recording them, paying the permit fee, or paying the road maintenance tax. They want to give the details and pay the tax but they cannot. I am making some suggestions. It is no good just being critical, without getting up and making suggestions as to what should be done.

The next matter which should be included in the reference is the amount of arrears of road maintenance tax that is uncollected; the prospects of collecting this money; the reasons for the arrears being allowed to accumulate; ways in which the arrears can be collected; and the period of time over which they should be collected. Here again, I think it is necessary to assess the ability of the individual to pay.

The next matter which should be included in the reference is the investigation of procedures adopted where an operator is in arrears with road maintenance tax, especially when he has been allowed to continue to operate and accumulate additional road maintenance tax while in arrears. We hear stories—I do not know whether or not they are true—about people who have accumulated large arrears of road maintenance tax and who are permitted to continue to operate. By appointing a Royal Commission, the Government will have a chance to prove the stories are wrong.

Another matter which should be included in the reference is an investigation into what should be done about operators who do not appear to have assets which could be used to pay or reduce indebtedness, or who do not appear to have any other way

of earning the required income in a reasonable time; and operators who have accumulated road maintenance tax and who, because of other assets or other forms of income, could be made to pay the whole or part of the arrears through various legal processes. We should investigate what action is possible under the present legislation, and the amendments that are necessary to prevent people operating without the required permit and without prompt payment of future road maintenance tax.

Other matters which should be included in the reference are an assessment of the developments in road transport needs throughout the State; the action which should be taken, both administratively and through legislation, to ensure greater stability in the industry; and consideration of operating conditions and factors affecting road safety and excessive fatigue, including the roadworthiness of vehicles.

I am sure when people are in a state of frustration, and near collapse in many cases, through fatigue and not having the money to repair their vehicles properly, there will be on the roads vehicles which are more likely to have accidents and cause problems. We want to keep those types of vehicles off the roads or ensure that they are kept in proper condition.

As I said, I do not think the Government has anything to fear from agreeing to this motion. It should therefore go ahead with the suggestion we have made and appoint a Royal Commission. If a Royal Commission is not appointed, many people in this field will continue to be frustrated, forced off the road, and forced into bankruptcy. I hope the Government will support the motion.

Mr. McPHARLIN: I second the motion.  
Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Moiler.

## **MARGINAL DAIRY FARMS RECONSTRUCTION SCHEME**

### *Inquiry by Select Committee: Motion*

Debate resumed, from the 4th October, on the following motion by Mr. Blaikie:—

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon the administration and operation of the Marginal Dairy Farms Reconstruction Scheme in Western Australia with a view to ensuring that the scheme functions in the best interests of the State, to those engaged in the dairying industry, the dairying industry in general and to make appropriate recommendations for amending legislation or otherwise.

MR. I. W. MANNING (Wellington) [4.38 p.m.]: I desire to add a few comments on the motion moved by the member for Vasse for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the Marginal Dairy Farms Reconstruction Scheme and its operation.

I believe the member for Vasse is on very sound ground in asking for an inquiry by a Select Committee at this point of time because, if we do not do something to tidy it up, as far as Western Australia is concerned the scheme can be classified as the story of the lost opportunity.

Mr. H. D. Evans: Why is it doing better than in the other States, as the figures indicate?

Mr. I. W. MANNING: I do not think it is necessary to draw a comparison between Western Australia and the other States of the Commonwealth because, with the exception of Queensland, the problem of the small, low-income, low-producing dairy farm is very much the problem of the south-west of Western Australia.

Mr. H. D. Evans: Nonsense!

Mr. I. W. MANNING: I think the inquiry into and investigation of this problem should be confined solely to the area with which we are concerned.

When introducing the motion, the member for Vasse produced a wealth of correspondence, which I have perused, from people who have been in some way frustrated by the indecision displayed and the lack of flexibility of the scheme. I would like to remind the Minister that one of the intentions of the scheme is that the agreement between the State and the Commonwealth should be capable of alteration in order to provide flexibility. I think that particular provision was directed to the 50-50 basis of the arrangement; that is, 50 per cent. of the funds being applied to farm build-up, and the other 50 per cent. being applied to writing off redundant improvements.

The farmers are becoming frustrated—men who have sought assistance under the scheme, both those who have made application to the authority asking it to purchase their properties, and those who have made application to acquire properties under the scheme in order to enlarge their farms.

In reply to a question I posed to him the Minister suggested that many farmers have applied to sell their properties but those properties have not been accepted. Some have been considered to be above the minimum standard and, therefore, ineligible for amalgamation. That means if a farm is large enough to be a viable unit the farmer is not eligible to receive assistance to amalgamate his property with another.

Mr. H. D. Evans: That is part of the agreement. That is in the terms of the Commonwealth-State agreement.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: Yes; but we have had instances in Western Australia where such properties could be included in the scheme if a little flexibility were permitted.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: That is the point I am endeavouring to make. I repeat: if we are not able to introduce some flexibility into the scheme and it becomes a rigid scheme with completely fixed guidelines, those farmers in marginal situations will not be accommodated.

Mr. H. D. Evans: That is so in the agreement.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: Yes, but it also says in the agreement that the agreement may be altered.

Mr. H. D. Evans: Yes, and that provision has been used.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: Well, I know of instances where farmers have been advised that because they have 250 acres of pasture they have viable units, whilst other farmers with similar acreages have been advised that their units are not viable. That could well be so, because much depends on the class of country, the type of soil, the locality, and whether the property has some low ground and some high ground. Many factors can contribute to the success or failure of a property as a viable unit. I want to stress again that the member for Vasse is on sound ground in asking for an inquiry because the actual implementation of the scheme is causing too many frustrations and too many disappointments.

Mr. H. D. Evans: Would you illustrate a few areas where this is occurring?

Mr. I. W. MANNING: I am not prepared to name the districts.

Mr. H. D. Evans: No, you wouldn't.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: However, I think there is no doubt about it. The Minister may peruse the wealth of correspondence which has been forwarded to the member for Vasse expressing criticism of the scheme and frustration at the fact that it is doubtful whether marginal situations may be included under the scheme. Farmers have been told that their farms will not be purchased at the moment but perhaps they should reapply at some future date.

We also have the situation of a farmer seeking to acquire an adjoining property from a willing seller, but because there has been disagreement over the value of the adjoining property the deal has fallen through and the farmer has eventually acquired a property many miles away either through the scheme or outside it. That illustrates another aspect which should not be overlooked; that is, the value placed on adjoining properties. It is all very well for a bank valuer to place a valuation on a property as a single unit; but the value of the property is much greater when it is considered in conjunction with the adjoining property.

I think you will agree, Mr. Speaker, that we have always said an adjoining owner always has an opportunity in a sale to outbid an outsider, by virtue of the fact that if he buys the adjoining property it will be added to his existing property. One of the intentions of the Marginal Dairy Farms Reconstruction Scheme was to accommodate such situations. The scheme breaks down where there is disagreement upon the value of the adjoining property, even where there is a willing buyer and a willing seller, and even where the willing buyer goes to the extent of offering to pay the additional amount from his own pocket. Such situations cannot be accommodated in the scheme.

Mr. H. D. Evans: That can be done and has been done.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: Well, according to the correspondence directed to the member for Vasse, which I have in front of me—

Mr. H. D. Evans: Under the scheme there is an obligation to stick with the valuation; but if the purchaser and the seller agree to an additional amount, that is the responsibility of the purchaser.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: Let me again appeal to the Government to consider this aspect. In my opinion it is in this direction the proposed inquiry should be largely directed.

The scheme is breaking down as a result of disagreement upon the valuation of an adjoining property; and in the minds of the people who initiated the scheme one of its great virtues was that Commonwealth money would be provided to create opportunities for adjoining properties to be amalgamated.

Of course, as the Minister said, we must have guidelines and standards within which to work. However, my understanding of the criticism of the scheme is that the guidelines are too inflexible. Where touch and go situations exist, they cannot be accommodated because they conflict with the requirements of the scheme. I think the intention originally was to make the scheme sufficiently flexible to accommodate these situations.

Western Australia has a different standard compared with the other States. The minimum standard for a property to be viable in Western Australia is that it must be capable of producing 12,000 lb. of butterfat per year, whereas in the Eastern States a property must be capable of producing 13,500 lb. of butterfat per year to be viable.

Mr. H. D. Evans: This still gives the same income, which in the long run is the criterion. The butterfat production at the 12,000-lb. level is equivalent to the

13,500-lb. level in the other States, so that the net income is the same in all States. That is the underlying policy.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: That proves the point that in Western Australia it is much more difficult for a dairy farmer to make a living than it is for one in the Eastern States. Because of the greater distances and higher costs of production in Western Australia the farmer requires a property which is capable of producing a greater quantity of butterfat than does the property of his counterpart in Victoria, Tasmania, or South Australia.

Mr. H. D. Evans: Of course, the Commonwealth decided this.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: One other interesting aspect is that before this scheme actually came into operation, the present Minister for Agriculture who was then in Opposition expressed a great deal of concern as to what the Marginal Dairy Farms Reconstruction Scheme sought to achieve and what it was likely to achieve. He expressed that concern. Surely he is now well positioned to take particular interest in this aspect of the scheme, in trying to make it work. We would achieve a great deal if it were possible by negotiation with the Commonwealth to make the scheme sufficiently flexible to accommodate some of the producers who today have been declared to be ineligible under the existing guidelines. The number of properties in this State which have changed hands is not very great.

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

Mr. I. W. MANNING: The number of properties which have changed hands is not very great. In answer to a question I asked recently, the Minister indicated that 28 farms had been purchased under the scheme, and that six others were held under option. There were 100-odd people who applied to sell their properties under the scheme, and there were some 191 willing buyers or applicants who desired to purchase properties. It would seem to me that in round figures 30-odd properties have been dealt with successfully or have been amalgamated with other properties under this scheme. That is the crux of the issue as to how successful the Marginal Dairy Farms Reconstruction Scheme has been in Western Australia. There have been 30-odd farms amalgamated with others; so there stands the success or the failure of the scheme.

When 100-odd farmers have sought to sell their properties it would seem to me—and this is backed up by the correspondence directed to the member for Vasse—there is something wrong. It indicates we are not getting the full benefits of the scheme initiated by the Commonwealth, which provides the money. It seems that the day will come when Western Australia

will say to the Commonwealth, "We have not been able to use all the money you provided."

If we do not institute some form of inquiry, and the opportunity is not given to the people who have been frustrated under the scheme to adduce evidence—as they could before a Select Committee—then I repeat that the Marginal Dairy Farms Reconstruction Scheme in Western Australia would be one of lost opportunity.

Under existing circumstances, the great objective and the primary purpose of the scheme is to build up the dairy farms to make them more soundly based. If we cannot do that then we will not achieve what we might have achieved.

I support the motion, and I urge that Parliament give favourable consideration to supporting the proposition put forward by the member for Vasse for the appointment of a Select Committee to permit an inquiry to be made into the many aspects of the Marginal Dairy Farms Reconstruction Scheme before the four-year period of the scheme runs out and we have to say, "We have missed out."

**MR. BLAIKIE (Vasse)** [4.57 p.m.]: In replying to the debate on the motion perhaps I should read it out again. It is as follows:—

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon the administration and operation of the Marginal Dairy Farms Reconstruction Scheme in Western Australia with a view to ensuring that the scheme functions in the best interests of the State, to those engaged in the dairying industry, the dairying industry in general and to make appropriate recommendations for amending legislation or otherwise.

I am afraid I was rather disappointed with the contribution of the Minister, because he attacked the substance of the motion and implied that it was audacious of me to have moved it. He referred only to the first part of the motion, which seeks the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the operation and administration of the scheme. It was on that basis that the Minister took me to task. He made no reference whatever to what I believe to be the more important part of the motion; that is, we want a dairying industry in Western Australia, and the people engaged in this industry have to make certain that in the years ahead the industry continues to exist in this State.

This is of greater significance: if there is need for a policy change under the Marginal Dairy Farms Reconstruction Scheme such change should be made now or as quickly as possible, because the scheme has been running for two years and will conclude in 1974. There would

be no point in saying to the Commonwealth in 1974, "Once upon a time we did get the message that all was not well, but we did not act on it." This motion requests the Government to take action at this point of time, because the conditions of the industry are not at all favourable.

However, the Minister still claims that everything is all right and that I do not know what I am talking about. In fact, the point is that when one refers to the Minister's speech—and once again he only referred to what I had already mentioned and did not introduce any fresh information—one finds he said that only 66 farmers had applied for assistance when, in fact, 250 are eligible to apply. That is the very point I was making, and it is quite right: only 66 eligible persons out of 250 have applied for assistance. Where are the others? As I have said previously, they will not have a bar of the scheme at present.

The scheme commenced to operate in September, 1970, and an examination of the figures showing the applications submitted during the first 12 months of the operation of the scheme reveals that 89 farmers applied.

**Mr. H. D. Evans:** And why is this the same pattern in every State—this trend?

**MR. BLAIKIE:** The Minister mentions the other States.

**Mr. H. D. Evans:** I am saying that the trend and the pattern are identical in all States; it is not peculiar to Western Australia.

**MR. BLAIKIE:** May I suggest that the Minister try to do a good job in Western Australia and leave the other States to themselves. The Minister has implied he will not take any action with respect to W.A.

**Mr. H. D. Evans:** The member for Vasse should make his case worth while and get his information and facts sorted out and correct in the first place.

**MR. BLAIKIE:** I introduced the matter in this House in March of this year. The Minister brushed me aside on that occasion so I have reintroduced the matter by way of this motion. I believe that under the present policy the scheme will fail.

It seems from the Minister's reply he does not believe that the scheme will fail. We will wait to see what happens in 1974, and we will then see who has shown hindsight. Of course, the Minister will not be sitting in his present seat at that time, and he will not have this responsibility!

The time to take action is now. The scheme has been in operation for two years and I am requesting that we investigate the position to see what has occurred, and to see if my charges are unfounded—which I do not believe is the case. The Minister is at liberty to go to the Commonwealth Government, in conjunction

with the other States, and request a policy change. There are many parts of this scheme where there should be more flexibility than exists at present.

Mr. H. D. Evans: What has been the experience in other parts of the State where the scheme is operating?

Mr. BLAIE: That is an interesting point, too. Almost 70 per cent. of the total number of those persons applying to sell are to be found in that part of the State which I represent. I can speak on behalf of that 70 per cent. because I know their reactions. If the Minister is judging the scheme on the other 30 per cent. I do not think that is a fair assumption.

Mr. H. D. Evans: But why does this dissatisfaction exist only in one area of the State? Do you think there are any other causes?

Mr. BLAIE: As I have said, almost 70 per cent. of the people are in this one area. If problems are to occur they will occur in circumstances where a large proportion of the farmers are applying for assistance.

I moved this motion for the purpose of trying to look after the interests of the people who elected me. I know that by far the greatest proportion of the money which is to be made available for this scheme in W.A. will be spent in the electorate of Vasse. It is on that basis that I am questioning the scheme because it is not functioning anywhere near as well as it ought to do or as was intended.

The Minister can speak on behalf of the Denmark Shire which he represents if he so desires, and if he believes the scheme is operating 100 per cent. satisfactorily in that area. However, let us examine the position of the Denmark Shire. There have been only eight applications to sell. The Nannup Shire is also in the electorate of the Minister, and in that district there have been only two applications to sell. There have been 56 applications in the Augusta-Margaret River Shire in my electorate, and at Busselton there have been 11.

I have not moved the motion in a light-hearted manner. I am very concerned about the situation. I have investigated the complaints which have been brought to me and I believe they have some foundation. I am of the opinion that an inquiry into this matter is necessary because we do have a marginal dairy farm problem in this State. I also know we have a greater problem in the area I represent.

The Commonwealth Government recognises our problem, and it has made adequate funds available—most certainly to Western Australia. I have no doubt that if the former member for Vasse were still in this Chamber, and still in his former role, he would have made sure that the scheme

worked satisfactorily. I know that when the scheme was formulated initially it operated satisfactorily.

To return to my first point, I agree with the Minister. I would like to know why only 66 persons out of an estimated 250 have applied. However, I do not agree with the Minister's reasoning. I believe that persons have not applied because of the frustrations they have experienced and the inflexibility of the scheme to this point in time—particularly during the last eight or nine months.

I go a step further. I know that early in the operation of the scheme Crown land in dairying areas was frozen so that farmers could avail themselves of that land for additional build-up. I refer back to the former member for Vasse when he was the Minister controlling this scheme: I believe he realised what the situation was with regard to these marginal farmers. The availability of Crown land was a tremendous advantage to those marginal dairy farmers who could not purchase adjacent farms, but who could secure some Crown land.

I make the point, and I wish members would examine the figures related to this motion. During the first 12 months the scheme went ahead like wildfire but since then it has bogged down completely to the point where, quite frankly, farmers have no confidence in the scheme. They have lost their confidence, and when they reach that stage they will not have a bar of the scheme.

Mr. H. D. Evans: What about the increased prices for butterfat and beef, and the sociological factors? Does the honourable member discount those altogether?

Mr. BLAIE: I will not say that I will deal with that later, but if the Minister raises the point at a later stage I will discuss it. I am concerned, as I have been over the past 12 months, with the way the scheme is operating.

The Minister appeared to take this whole matter lightly. Indeed, he took it very lightly and referred only to the operation of the scheme. At no stage did he go into the deeper aspects of it, and attempt to examine the future of the industry. I would like to refer to an article which appeared in *The West Australian* on the 7th April, 1972, under the heading, "Dairy plan in danger," says Evans." The article sets out that Mr. H. D. Evans is the Minister for Agriculture. For the benefit of members I will read segments of this article as follows:—

The Commonwealth-State marginal dairy farm reconstruction scheme is in danger of falling below its planned objective, according to the Minister for Agriculture, Mr. H. D. Evans.

He said yesterday that the number of farmers waiting to buy land under the scheme was well in excess of those willing and eligible to sell.

At present some farmers could not be helped and might never receive extra land unless the number of sellers increased substantially.

So it goes on. At a later stage the article continues—

The scheme's objective of correcting the serious low income problem in the dairying industry would not be attained unless many more farmers offered their properties for sale to the authority.

The policies governing the scheme would remain unchanged in its second year, except that farms over which the authorities had an option would be advertised regularly in the press.

I make the point because I believe the Press release by the Minister has some significance. Firstly, on the 7th April the Minister was quite concerned about the scheme. He said that the dairy plan was in danger. However, in almost exactly the same breath he said that the policy would not be changed.

Mr. H. D. Evans: How does one get settlers to come forward?

Mr. BLAIKIE: I do not know. I put it to the Minister that the scheme is in danger, and he agrees with me. However, from his attitude I do not believe he will support my motion.

Mr. H. D. Evans: You are dead right.

Mr. BLAIKIE: The Minister is dead wrong because he has already said he believes the dairy plan is in danger, and yet he has been prepared to get up in this House and castigate me for saying that it is in danger.

Mr. H. D. Evans: And if more settlers do not come forward it is in danger—that is, of reaching any real objective.

Mr. BLAIKIE: The Minister and I are on the same wavelength. We agree that unless more settlers come forward the scheme will be in danger. I am asking the Minister to support an inquiry because I believe I have a sound foundation on which to conduct an inquiry. However, the Minister has castigated me for raising the matter in the House, and for questioning his administration.

Mr. H. D. Evans: The member for Vasse questioned the integrity of the administration of the authority. Come back to the point.

Mr. BLAIKIE: I came back to the point, and I ask members to read what the Minister had to say. On one hand we have one situation, but on the other hand we have another situation.

Mr. H. D. Evans: Is the honourable member going to refer to increased prices and the sociological angle?

Mr. BLAIKIE: The Minister has said one thing outside the House but he has taken an entirely different attitude when speaking to my motion in the House.

I would also refer members back to the time when the Minister was the member for Warren on the Opposition side of the House. I am not sure of the date of his action, but he requested a Royal Commission to inquire into the dairying industry. One of the segments of his request was that the Royal Commission should look into the probable results of the marginal dairy farms reconstruction scheme. Of course, that was before he was the Minister. Now that he is the Minister he is getting into trouble.

Mr. H. D. Evans: He had some foresight, too.

Mr. BLAIKIE: I believe the Minister had some foresight when he was on the back bench.

Mr. Bertram: He still has.

Mr. BLAIKIE: Well, I am yet to be convinced of that. The Minister also said there had been no criticism of the scheme from the Farmers' Union. I have to be as reasonable with the Minister as one can be under the circumstances. I take the Minister up on this point. He mentioned the lack of criticism by way of interjection during my speech, and again when he made his own speech. The Minister sent me a letter dated the 10th October in which he sought to clarify the remarks he made. I quote as follows:—

When speaking of the attendance of a Senior Officer of the Rural and Industries Bank at the Farmers' Union Executive Meetings, I said—"that in this forum no criticism was voiced".

The full position is that at the first meeting considerable criticism was raised, but answered satisfactorily. At the second meeting criticism of the Scheme was noticeably absent.

I would like to take this a step further. A meeting at which one of the Minister's officers attended was held last Tuesday. Has the Minister received a report on the result of the meeting last Tuesday?

Mr. H. D. Evans: Yes.

Mr. BLAIKIE: At that meeting the Minister's officer was subjected to questions for over two hours. Apparently the Minister does not regard this as criticism of the scheme. How is a member to bring matters forward in this House when the Minister concerned is not prepared to listen?

As I have already said, there has been considerable criticism of the scheme. If the Minister's officers have not passed the information on to him, I believe the Minister should have checked my comments a little further.



Whilst I am on the subject I would like to take the liberty of reading to the House a letter which I regard as most important. It lends weight to the case I have put before the House. The letter is from the Farmers' Union of W.A. (Inc.), Margaret River Zone Council; it is dated the 14th September and is addressed to me. Incidentally, I had advised the council that the Minister stated in the House, by way of interjection, that the Farmers' Union had expressed no criticism of the scheme. The context of his remarks was sent to the council. The letter to which I have referred reads, in part, as follows:—

Your letter was received at last night's meeting of this Zone Council, which was well attended by representatives of five Branches of the Farmers' Union. The meeting was unanimous in its decision to support your endeavours to have a select Committee of Inquiry formed to investigate the operation and administration of the Marginal Dairy Reconstruction Scheme. Members voiced their indignation on your quote of the Minister for Agriculture, in which he stated that his officers had had no criticisms from the Farmers' Union. It was pointed out that at its meeting held on December 15th, 1971,—

I emphasise "1971." To continue—

—the following motion was carried:—

"That owing to the widespread dissatisfaction throughout the dairying areas regarding the manner in which the Marginal Dairy Farm Reconstruction Scheme is being administered, and the lack of success with which the Dairy Section has experienced in endeavouring to remedy this position, that General Executive be requested to actively intervene and support the Dairy Section to its utmost in the matter."

It is understood that General Executive received no satisfaction from the Minister upon presenting this motion.

I might add that the President of the Dairy Section of the Farmers' Union attended this meeting when the letter was formulated. I might also add that the President of the Dairy Section of the Farmers' Union is elected by butterfat producers throughout the entire dairying area to which I have referred. Consequently, if the Minister disagrees with what I have brought forward up to date, he should bring the President of the Dairy Section of the Farmers' Union into line.

Mr. Brown: They are fallible.

Mr. BLAIKIE: The letter continues—

Some members had been present at Dairy Executive meetings when an official of the R & I Bank had been invited. He had been asked a number

of questions to which he could not give satisfactory replies, and had left everyone disturbed on the outcome.

I have also been requested to ask our General Executive to seek the co-operation of its Political Liaison Committee to support your endeavours, and to refute statements by the Minister that there has been no criticism of administration of the Marginal Dairy Farm Reconstruction Scheme from the Farmers' Union.

In conclusion, the letter states that the Margaret River Zone Council of the Farmers' Union offers 100 per cent. support to my motion. This is the basis from which the motion I moved stems. At a later stage—perhaps tomorrow, next week, or the week after—a Bill for a single dairy authority will be discussed in the House. I have no doubt that at that time the Minister will rise to his feet and acclaim the President of the Dairy Section and the President of the Whole Milk Section as being the authors of the legislation; doubtless he will say what responsible people they are. I do not disagree; they are very responsible people. However, now, the Minister has chided me for bringing before the House a motion concerned with the Marginal Dairy Farms Reconstruction Scheme. Exactly the same section of the industry has given 100 per cent. support to the motion I have moved.

The Minister, part of whose comments appear on page 3786 of *Hansard* No. 17, took me to task for saying—

... the policy would have to be changed or the scheme would be doomed to failure.

I have said before—and I repeat—I believe the scheme will be doomed to failure and that the policies will have to be changed. We will get absolutely nowhere if we continue on in this way. As it is, it is a *fait accompli*; the Minister has decided to do nothing further and not to look into it.

At a later stage of his reply the Minister referred to "superficial criticism." The criticism is not superficial, but real, definite, and justified. The Minister also said that people are not offering their farms for sale because of sociological and economic reasons. This argument is definitely not valid.

Mr. H. D. Evans: It is the fear of having to re-establish with very little equity in most cases. This is a big factor.

Mr. BLAIKIE: When the Minister made his speech I asked him—but I will ask once again—whether he can tell me why many farms are changing hands in this very area at the present time.

Mr. H. D. Evans: Could you say they are all eligible for the scheme? I am referring to the farms which are changing hands. Of course you cannot.

Mr. BLAIKIE: Can the Minister say they are not?

Mr. Bertram: The member for Vasse is making the assertion.

Mr. BLAIKIE: Yes, I make the assertion that in the areas to which I have referred there is a tremendous air of optimism and confidence in farming on the part of farmers who are buying farms there. However, they are not buying farms through this scheme and other farmers are not offering their farms for sale through the scheme. There are farms which would be sold through the scheme if it were to operate on a basis different from the present one. Indeed, that is not an assertion but a statement of fact.

The scheme has been in operation for over two years. I have referred to this previously. Initially the scheme was to have a four-year life and \$25,000,000 was allocated to it. It has now been operating for nearly 2½ years.

I ask members to look at the scheme as at now; to inquire into it and make certain it is being operated to the best possible advantage of the dairy industry of this State. The scheme has been directed at marginal dairy farmers and, most assuredly, these people want the assistance. Assistance is available; there is no question of funds not being available. Although the funds are adequate, the policies of the scheme are too inflexible to allow it to operate to the best advantage of those in the dairy industry.

I wish to thank the member for Wellington for the contribution he made to the debate. I believe he summed up my own feelings extremely well. The honourable member said that unless there were some investigation into the scheme at a later stage it could be called, "the scheme of lost opportunity." I believe this is very true indeed. I am quite convinced we must subject the scheme to an inquiry to ensure that it operates to the best possible advantage of all concerned.

I refer back to my original motion. I asked for an inquiry into the administration and operation of the scheme. The Minister has refused this but, as I said before, it is not so long ago that the Minister, who was then in Opposition, tried to seek the support of the House for an inquiry into the probable results of the marginal dairy scheme. We have the results now and I claim they are unsatisfactory. The Minister has also said they are unsatisfactory and he does not disagree with me on this point. Why does he take this attitude and still continue to disregard what I have brought forward?

Mr. H. D. Evans: Why do you take the attitude that the administration is the reason for the total lack of success? You have promulgated this as the reason.

Mr. BLAIKIE: I have advanced it as a reason.

Mr. H. D. Evans: You are wrong.

Mr. BLAIKIE: I have also stated that we want the scheme to operate in the best interests of the State, of those engaged in dairying, and of the dairy industry in particular. I have made these statements. Does the Minister disregard these as well?

It is essential to have a viable industry. By 1985 this State will require 125,000,000 gallons of milk in addition to its present requirements. Probably well before that time we will be subjected to quota control, restrictions, and limitations. The people concerned must receive definite assistance—and assistance is freely available. There has never been any question about the availability of funds. The problem is we cannot make the marginal dairy scheme attractive enough to those who could benefit and utilise the funds. The Commonwealth has recognised this disability and has provided funds.

The Minister referred to all the other States. If, as the Minister said, the scheme is not operating as well as it could in all other States, surely to goodness it is time for all the States to ask the Commonwealth to rewrite the policy and ensure it is in the best interests of each State. In saying this, I refer particularly to the best interests of Western Australia, because it is Western Australia about which I am concerned.

Before I conclude I wish to refer members to one other point which concerns a small marginal dairy farmer in my area who wanted some assistance with a debt. Millions and millions of dollars have been made available to Western Australia for debt assistance. The prerequisite for assistance is that a person, in the first instance, must make sure that he cannot receive assistance through normal banking channels. I can assure members that many farmers in this State would have no problems whatsoever in doing this, because banks usually close the door to loans of this nature. When a farmer asks for this type of assistance he receives a fairly automatic answer. The next step is to approach trading banks and, finally, the Commonwealth Development Bank. It was quite obvious that the person to whom I have referred could not receive assistance from any of these sources. The next step is to approach the Rural Reconstruction Authority. I realise this has nothing to do with the marginal dairy scheme, but I intend to reflect on it for a moment and give the reasons for doing so.

As I said earlier, this man wanted some assistance to meet an outstanding debt. After three or four months' deliberation, the Rural Reconstruction Authority wrote to him saying it could not assist him. The reason given was that he was classified as a marginal dairy farmer because he had less than 250 acres of land. He was referred to the Marginal Dairy Farms Reconstruction Authority which decided that

he did qualify as a marginal dairy farmer because of the acreage of his farm. He then applied to the Marginal Dairy Farms Reconstruction Scheme and once again his application was thoroughly considered and it was decided he did qualify for assistance. However, only two forms of assistance were open to him: The scheme would assist him to buy a farm or to sell a farm. This man did not want either of those things; he desired assistance with a \$3,000 debt, and the scheme could not assist him. There was no provision in the scheme for assistance of this nature. It was suggested that he apply to the Rural Reconstruction Authority for assistance.

This man eventually borrowed the money from a private investor at an interest rate of about 11 per cent. I make the point that with the millions of dollars available to assist marginal dairy farmers in Western Australia, and if it is proved that Commonwealth funds will not be fully utilised for the amalgamation of farms, I believe the funds should be used for other types of assistance. I could quote many similar examples but I will not waste the time of the House.

I commented earlier that I have here a sheaf of letters which I invited the Minister to study. I hoped he would do this just as I hoped he would at least investigate the complaints made by the farmers. However, he did not avail himself of this opportunity, and in these circumstances I will appeal to the House for support.

The Minister condemned and castigated me for my comments. This issue is far beyond party politics. Every member with a conscience should give a great deal of consideration to it. I assure the House that it is a vital and urgent matter. I appeal to every member's sense of responsibility and I ask all members to support the motion.

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

## Ayes—21

Mr. Blaikie	Mr. O'Connor
Sir Charles Court	Mr. Reid
Mr. Coyne	Mr. Runciman
Dr. Dadour	Mr. Rushton
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Stephens
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Thompson
Mr. Lewis	Mr. Williams
Mr. W. A. Manning	Mr. R. L. Young
Mr. McPharlin	Mr. W. G. Young
Mr. Mensaros	Mr. I. W. Manning
Mr. Nalder	

(Teller 1)

## Noes—21

Mr. Bertram	Mr. Hartrey
Mr. Bickerton	Mr. Jones
Mr. Brady	Mr. Lapham
Mr. Brown	Mr. May
Mr. Burke	Mr. McIver
Mr. Cook	Mr. Moller
Mr. Davies	Mr. Sewell
Mr. H. D. Evans	Mr. A. R. Tonkin
Mr. T. D. Evans	Mr. J. T. Tonkin
Mr. Fletcher	Mr. Harman
Mr. Graham	

(Teller 1)

Ayes	Pairs	Noes
Mr. Gayfer		Mr. Taylor
Sir David Brand		Mr. Jamieson
Mr. O'Neill		Mr. Bryce
Mr. Ridge		Mr. Bateman

The SPEAKER: The voting being equal, I give my casting vote with the Noes.

Question thus negatived.

Motion defeated.

## FISHERIES ACT

Amendment of Regulations:  
Council's Resolution

Message from the Council requesting concurrence in the following resolution now considered:—

That the Regulations made pursuant to the Fisheries Act, 1905-1969, as published in the *Government Gazette* on the 21st September, 1971, and laid upon the Table of the House on the 5th October, 1971, be amended as follows—

To insert after paragraph (a) of subregulation (2B) of regulation 3AA, a new paragraph to stand as paragraph (aa) as follows:

(aa) is in receipt of a pension under the provisions of the Coal Mine Workers (Pensions) Act, 1943-1971:

## Motion to Concur

MR. REID (Blackwood) [5.37 p.m.]: I move—

That the resolution contained in the Legislative Council's message No. 74 be agreed to.

By way of explanation, I feel this is the type of matter which is overlooked from time to time. The previous Government did not exempt pensioners and children—

## Point of Order

Mr. GRAHAM: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, should you not leave the Chair?

The SPEAKER: This is a motion. The procedure is the same as with a Bill.

Mr. GRAHAM: I do not want to make an issue of it, but I wish to be certain.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Blackwood.

## Debate (on motion) Resumed

Mr. REID: I am somewhat mystified by that little interlude. Perhaps the Deputy Premier will explain it to me later.

Sir Charles Court: That is what is meant by giving it a try.

Mr. REID: A person in receipt of a widow's, invalid, or old-age pension is exempted from the necessity to obtain an inland fishing license.

Mr. Jones: Do you know which Government introduced the penalty on pensioners?

Mr. REID: I intended to refer to the previous Government. There was no exemption for children or pensioners but an assurance was given that there would be no conviction.

Mr. Jones: Where was this assurance given? I moved that the regulation be disallowed and the previous Government voted against it. Where could some assurance be given?

Mr. Williams: You moved that all regulations be disallowed.

Mr. Jones: Certainly I moved that school children and pensioners should be exempted.

Mr. REID: It would be interesting to see instances where old-age pensioners and children were convicted under the regime of the previous Government.

Mr. Jones: They were not convicted.

Mr. REID: I made that point.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. REID: The point I am now attempting to make is that obviously there was an oversight on the part of the Government regarding people qualifying for a pension under the Coal Mine Workers (Pensions) Act. This omission was brought to light and the motion was moved purely to correct an anomaly in the regulations.

Mr. Jones: I mentioned that during my speech.

Mr. REID: I do not know what the member for Collie mentioned.

Mr. Jones: I mentioned all this. Apparently you have not done your homework.

Mr. REID: Despite the obvious feeling on the other side of the House, I state again that the motion before the House is simply to remove an anomaly which would have precluded the exemption of people in receipt of a pension under the Coal Mine Workers (Pensions) Act. A person in receipt of a coalmine worker's pension receives slightly more than an old-age pensioner. Also a coalmine worker has the right to retire at the age of 60 years. It will be remembered that many years of the working life of coalminers have been spent working underground in adverse conditions, and nobody would complain about their right to an earlier retiring age. Certainly I believe there is no reason why they should have to pay for an inland fishing license.

Mr. Jones: Did you read the *Collie Mail* of the 14th September? Did you read the first page?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. REID: The member for Collie will have ample time to have his say. I do not read everything—

Mr. Jones: You get enough in it. You ought to read it.

Mr. REID: I did not hear that interjection.

Mr. Jones: You get enough headlines, you ought to read the paper.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. REID: Obviously this is a very important matter in Collie.

Mr. Jones: Of course it is.

Mr. REID: The member for Collie has emphasised that point.

Mr. Jones: And so did your member in another place on the 14th September. It was on the front page of the *Collie Mail* that I was moving my motion. I am simply saying that I do not approve of gutter politics.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. All members will have a chance to speak to this motion.

Mr. REID: I would like to say again, it is not my intention to bring personalities into the debate. I merely rise to move the motion in this House.

Sir Charles Court: This issue has become so important that we will all have to rehearse our speeches during the tea suspension.

Mr. REID: The Coal Mine Workers (Pensions) Act was introduced in 1943. As I pointed out, a person eligible to receive a coalmine worker's pension is entitled to retire at the age of 60 years. I believe the current rate of pension payable to coalmine workers is \$78 a fortnight for a married man, \$49 a fortnight for a single man, and \$43 a fortnight for a widow. I do not intend to delay the business of the House. This is simply a matter which was overlooked.

Mr. Jones: You are in the hot seat.

Mr. REID: I am not in the hot seat. Obviously something is warming up on the other side.

Mr. O'Connor: I do not think he will be permitted to speak on this.

Mr. Hutchinson: The Government should never have forced him to withdraw his motion.

Mr. Jones: Look at the set-up and you will see why I am concerned. It is all lies.

Sir Charles Court: What is all lies?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. REID: There is no reason for the nonexemption of coalmine workers. I feel they are obviously eligible for this concession. They do not receive a significantly greater pension. There is every reason to support this motion so that coalmine workers may enjoy their retirement.

perhaps catching marron and perch without a license. I have much pleasure in commending the motion to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Bickerton (Minister for Fisheries and Fauna).

### ABORIGINES: WELFARE NEEDS

#### *Inquiry by Select Committee: Motion*

Debate resumed, from the 11th October, on the following motion by Mr. W. A. Manning:—

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report on conditions and make recommendations regarding the Aboriginal people in Western Australia with particular reference to—

- (a) health and physical needs;
- (b) finance and housing;
- (c) education of children;
- (d) vocational training,

and that the inquiry and reports be dealt with in two sections—

- (1) the South West Land Division;
- (2) the remainder of the State.

**MR. NALDER** (Katanning) [5.45 p.m.] I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Narrogin, because I believe an inquiry in the terms embodied in it are necessary and desirable at this time. When introducing his motion, the honorable member said that, in his opinion, it was necessary for a full inquiry to be made into the problems associated with the Aboriginal people in this State. I believe, more than ever, that such an inquiry is necessary. Perhaps it was necessary in the past, but an inquiry is certainly required more than ever today.

The opinion of members of the general public, not only in Western Australia, but also in other States, is that some inquiry should be made, and perhaps, not surprisingly, questions are being asked by people overseas concerning our Aborigines; but I am not certain about the validity of questions that are being asked by people in other countries. In any case, I consider that is not a problem we have to face here, although in some ways it could be.

Over a period of many years, Western Australians, and Australians generally, have been aware of the problems which surround the living conditions of the Aboriginal people in this country. Such a situation has not been aroused by emotion, or by any excitement among the people; it is one that has generally been developing over the years. The member who introduced this motion has had a long and wide experience of a section of the Aboriginal people who live in the

South-West Land Division. In my opinion it is not possible for any one section of the community to claim it has the answer to this problem.

The **SPEAKER**: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr. **NALDER**: As I was saying, as a result of the affluence of the people in this country a situation has developed. This has been brought about by the improvement of living standards as a result of various pieces of legislation being introduced to grant people more freedom to enjoy the facilities that are made available by the advancement that has taken place in our thinking and in our actions. Whether this is a step forward, I do not know, but this advancement has apparently influenced the Aboriginal people. To ascertain whether this is so calls for a full inquiry, not in one area, but throughout all parts of the State, and covering the whole picture in detail.

It is for this reason that, in his motion, the member for Narrogin has covered health and physical needs, finance and housing, education of children, and vocational training, and that the inquiry be conducted in two sections; namely, the South-West Land Division, and the remainder of the State. I believe the principle of the motion is to create greater interest in the affairs of the Aboriginal people not only among members of Parliament, but also among all those who are interested in every aspect of this problem. Such an inquiry could be conducted in no better way than by members of Parliament, because they appreciate the difficulties and they know where to obtain the sort of information that is required so that a full review of the problem may be made.

I think a Select Committee could be appointed of members drawn from both Houses of Parliament to conduct an inquiry that would cover every section of the Aboriginal community from the north to the south of the State. This would, of course, include the north-west which presents a problem peculiar to that area, as has been outlined by the member for Kimberley in the many speeches he has made on the subject. The situation in the South-West Land Division also presents a separate problem which is worthy of examination.

Such an inquiry should not be rushed. In fact, to cover the whole physical problem it should be spread over a period of 12 or 18 months. To make any contribution towards assisting the people to whom this motion refers that is the type of inquiry required.

I know that you, Mr. Speaker, have had some experience with the Aboriginal people in your electorate, and with their health conditions. You, Sir, know the difficulties that are faced when any steps are

taken to improve the health standards of these people. This is not a situation that can be fully understood until the true feelings of the people concerned are known. I do not think the average white person appreciates that the Aborigines have a standard of living different from that recognised by members of the white community. The fact that Aborigines clearly indicate that they do not want to stay for long in any one place is another aspect of their life that should be considered. Aborigines like to move around whenever the mood strikes them. I can recall that they displayed this tendency on many occasions when I engaged Aboriginal people to perform certain jobs and this trait is still displayed by them today.

I know people who, only recently, engaged Aboriginal shearers. They were brought onto the farm and were settled in under conditions which were certainly an improvement compared with those in which they normally live. However, it was found that after the first or second week they disappeared from the farm and they were not seen again for two or three weeks. I think the fact that these people continually move around from place to place does aggravate their health problem, and until we learn the reason for this nomadic tendency we will never fully understand them.

Mr. Hartrey: They go walkabout.

Mr. Lapham: So do I when I get the opportunity.

Mr. NALDER: I do not know whether the honourable member is referring to travelling, but many people would be happy to do this. I am speaking of Aborigines and some of the problems that are met in endeavouring to understand them and in making an effort to improve their health standards.

The statement is often heard that Aboriginal children in the age group of five to seven years, or even among the two to three-year-olds, have a high mortality rate. Many of these children do not reach adolescence because of their poor health standards. Therefore, there is a real problem in trying to improve the health standards of Aborigines in the early age group, in the teenage group, and also among the adults. It is one that needs to be looked at carefully and in detail to ascertain why these people are beset with poor health.

Members are aware that many references have been made to the fact that steps should be taken to provide more finance for the welfare of Aborigines, and to provide more housing. I know the disappointments that have been experienced by well-meaning people. I can recall that in one country town a group of people who were interested in the welfare of Aborigines banded together and collected a considerable sum of money to build houses on

the Aboriginal reserve. This had the full support of the Native Welfare Department. These people sacrificed their time and their efforts in an endeavour to advise the Aborigines how to live in the homes that had been provided for them. But what happened? Within 12 months the houses were practically in ruins. The Aborigines pulled up the floorboards and used them for firewood. They broke the windows, smashed the walls, and so on.

This is not an isolated case, many members have heard similar stories concerning Aborigines in their electorates. Therefore, as I have said, those who have tried to help Aborigines to improve their living standards have suffered a great deal of disappointment in view of the unsatisfactory results for their efforts. I could go on listing the various difficulties that are associated with this problem along the lines the honourable member has set out in his motion.

Concerning the education of Aborigines, only today, in this House, I was speaking to a lady who told me her daughter is a teacher in a school situated not many miles from Parliament House, and many Aboriginal children attend that school. The experience of that teacher is that they attend about one day in three weeks. This is something that is occurring today not far distant from this building. Therefore, there is no doubt we have a problem in trying to educate Aborigines. We are offering them education in the same way as we are offering it to white children, but they are not accepting it.

I know that in the electorate of Boulder-Dundas the problem could be even greater, because the Aboriginal people in that area move around quite a deal and the children, of course, are obliged to follow their parents. Consequently, there is no consistency in their attendance at school.

The lady to whom I was speaking in Parliament House today informed me that this is the experience of her daughter who is a teacher in a fairly large school situated not many miles from here. In her class she has several Aboriginal children and their attendance is most irregular. I was surprised when this lady told me that they attended school only one day in two or three weeks. There is no doubt that we should seek a solution to this problem. We know that their poor attendance is not due to the fact that their parents do not have a house, because they are living in houses alongside others which are occupied by white people in the same community.

What is the reason for the poor attendance at school of Aboriginal children? Can the Minister for Education tell us why they do not attend school regularly?

Mr. Graham: The speaker was a member of a Government that was in office for 12 years. What was done then?

Mr. NALDER: If the Deputy Premier had been listening he would realise I am only asking the Minister for Education a question. It is with a spirit of co-operation that I am making this plea. I am not making a critical speech; it is one designed to assist the Aborigines. I have the feeling—and probably the Deputy Premier has the same feeling—that anything we can do to try to solve this problem will not be too much. I am speaking for no other reason than to make a plea that something be done in an effort to help these people. I can only ask: Does the Minister for Education have an answer to the problem? I could ask the member for Moore, who was the Minister for Native Welfare in the previous Government, whether he has a full answer to this problem.

Mr. Lewis: I probably would have part of the answer.

Mr. NALDER: The move by the member for Narrogin is to try to ascertain whether we can make some contribution, in this State of Western Australia, to help these people who are in urgent need of some assistance. The Aborigines require not only financial assistance but also assistance with housing and health problems.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation.

Mr. NALDER: We are talking about the need for education and the problems the department and those associated with it face in their endeavours to assist the Aborigines. I am not suggesting that no endeavours are being made. I know that a determined effort to help has been made by many people, but I also know that some of them have been bitterly disappointed and disheartened because of the lack of results.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation.

Mr. NALDER: Many people have been disheartened because they have been unable to achieve what they desire in their efforts to help these people.

It is necessary that we do all we can in the field of education and go further than we have in the interests of the Aboriginal people of this State.

Very closely allied to education is vocational training. Here again we know that many young Aborigines have achieved some success which indicates that all is not lost. All of us have had occasion to be proud of some of the young people because of what they have been able to achieve in the particular vocation they have decided to follow, and we are thereby encouraged in our efforts to help.

I believe an inquiry would be able to study the aspects of vocational training very closely, including farming projects and any other type of industry in which

Aborigines show an interest. In this way we should be able to achieve better results than we have achieved in the past in this particular field.

I do not wish to labour the point. For some time I have believed that a combination of all parties in this House with no thought of political advantage would enable the situation to be studied in an attempt to find an answer to some of the problems which exist today and to which up to date no-one has provided the answer.

Consequently I hope the Premier and his Ministers and supporters will agree to the motion of the member for Narrogin. I believe that an inquiry comprising members from all parties and both Houses would certainly be of great benefit to the Aboriginal people in this State. The inquiry would have to sit for longer than these inquiries usually take because of the distance and great variety of problems involved. However, all this would be worth while because of the benefit that would accrue to the Aboriginal people. I support the motion.

MR. J. T. TONKIN (Melville—Premier) [6.05 p.m.]: The Government has already announced its intention to appoint a Royal Commission into this subject. To proceed with a motion for the appointment of a Select Committee in the face of that announcement takes some explanation. The reasonable course to adopt would be to have the motion withdrawn.

I can cite a number of occasions when Select Committees have been appointed and subsequently have been converted to Honorary Royal Commissions.

A Royal Commission has far more power than a Select Committee and I suggest that a Royal Commission to inquire into the matters to be referred to it in connection with Aborigines would be a far more effective way to improve the conditions of Aborigines than the appointment of a Select Committee of members from both Houses of Parliament.

I do not desire to take up a great deal of time on this subject. The case has been stated and the Government has acknowledged the need for an inquiry. It is our firm opinion that the better type of inquiry is the one the Government proposes. If the Opposition insists that the motion go to a vote, it is the Government's intention to oppose it.

Sir Charles Court: Can you give us any information on the Royal Commission, because we are in the dark as to whether it will be a single commissioner and we do not know the qualifications involved?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: It will be a properly established Royal Commission with adequate powers to inquire into the various matters pertaining to Aborigines. It was

set out clearly by the Minister in another place when he made the announcement.

Mr. Nalder: Will it cover the whole State?

**SIR CHARLES COURT** (Nedlands—Leader of the Opposition) [6.06 p.m.]: I will be very brief.

The **SPEAKER**: Order! The Leader of the Opposition has already spoken. It was on the 11th October.

Sir **CHARLES COURT**: I did not think I had. If I have, I stand corrected.

Mr. Graham: You have spoken on everything.

Mr. O'Connor: Are you sure it was not an interjection?

**MR. COYNE** (Murchison-Eyre) [6.07 p.m.]: I would like to add a few comments to those already made by other speakers. It is my intention to support the motion of the member for Narrogin and I would first like to deal with that section of the State which lies between the North-West Land Division and the South-West Land Division. That area is inhabited by a completely different type of Aboriginal. I refer to the Gascoyne and Murchison-Eyre electorates and the inland area which embraces some of the frontier towns such as Wiluna and Laverton. Some elucidation is necessary concerning the type of Aborigines who inhabit those areas and what can be done for them.

The ground has been very well covered by most other speakers, and so I wish to deal chiefly with the two aspects of home building and education.

On education, I agree with the member for Kimberley who said that some form of pre-school education is a vital necessity. One of the factors which inhibits the integration of the Aboriginal children is their lack of hygiene. When the Aboriginal children first go to school the teachers must concentrate their efforts on training the children in hygiene before they can attempt to cover the school work. The Aboriginal children lag well and truly behind the other children in the ordinary rudiments of hygiene, and so this is the first lesson they have to be taught. This is why I believe some sort of pre-education for Aboriginal children is desirable.

Aborigines represent the greatest proportion of pupils in many of the schools in this area. For instance, at the Cue School 80 per cent of the children who attend are Aborigines and it is most difficult for the young teachers, who are usually young girls in their first year out of college, when they come into contact with the Aboriginal children for the first time.

Although these young teachers have great ideals concerning how to cope with the situation, after the first four or five

months they become completely disenchanted because they find they cannot cope. It is for this reason I believe that only experienced teachers should be sent into these areas.

The ideal solution is for a husband-and-wife team to take on the job. A good example of this is to be found at the Warburton Mission where two young men and their wives, all teachers, are stationed. They are happy and contented in their work because they are able to combine their talents in their efforts to teach the Aboriginal children. On the other hand, when young girls of 18 and 19 years of age are sent to the outlying areas they find it difficult for several months to cope not only with the children, but also with the living conditions. It is unfair to young teachers to expose them to the problems in these areas for more than one year. I believe that they should be transferred after their first year and different teachers appointed.

The **SPEAKER**: Order! There is too much audible conversation.

Mr. **COYNE**: The Murchison-Eyre electorate is the largest and most scattered in Western Australia. It embraces 399,000 square miles and includes nine shire councils and approximately six Aboriginal missions. The missions are generally left to cope with the education of the Aborigines from the remote areas; and they are doing a mighty job. During the last year I visited all the missions except one, which is north of the trans.-line. I am referring to the Cundeelee Mission which I have been unable to visit. However I have visited all the others and I have been most impressed with the way they are run.

The best examples of them all are the Seventh Day Adventist missions in Wiluna and Meekatharra. The mission at Meekatharra is named the Karalundi Mission. They are two classic examples of what can be done for Aborigines.

The Wiluna Mission is conducted by Mr. Lynton Reynolds, but for many years it was run by Pastor Vaughan who made a great contribution to the area because of his dedication to the Aborigines. One of his projects was to help the Aborigines to construct their own homes by using a brick-making process to which I will refer later.

A large proportion of the Aborigines who inhabit these outlying areas are nomads and their first contact with civilisation is experienced in towns like Laverton and Wiluna. They very rarely move past these towns and they are the ones who are least capable of handling the problems experienced, particularly in regard to alcohol. Very little work is available for the Aborigines and they congregate around the towns. Because they become bored they turn to alcohol. Consequently one of the



aspects which must be investigated by a Select Committee or a Royal Commission is employment. Some method must be adopted to establish the type of employment which is suitable for the Aborigines.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. COYNE: Before the tea suspension I was referring to nomadic tribes and their introduction to civilised and populated areas such as Wiluna and Meekatharra. Like the Leader of the Country Party I am very mystified by the walk-about habits of the natives.

To illustrate my point I would like to mention that during the war I was associated with the coastal radar services around the Darwin coast. I was stationed at points such as North Goulburn Island, South Goulburn Island, Millingimbi, Darwin itself and, finally, at Port Keats. All these areas had mission stations adjacent to them.

I will get back to the coastal areas where there were Western Australian natives. I would particularly like to refer to the Port Keats situation—located on the coast south-west of Darwin, possibly half-way between Wyndham and Darwin—because it was there that I had my greatest experience of the nomadic habits of the natives.

As the war receded our staff was cut down. I was a technician and was put in charge of a station where originally there were about 40 or 50 personnel. Eventually we finished up with a total of 12 men. Ours was a care and maintenance job; we came on duty at prescribed times to give cover to the whole of the area, but we did not operate, as previously, on a 24-hour cycle.

While we were there we employed six or seven young natives who came from the mission station which is located about two or three miles away. These natives were very fine specimens of manhood. They carried out the fatigues, such as chopping wood, cleaning out the shower baths, and the like, and because they lived on the food we ate they developed further; they were very well muscled with well-groomed glossy black hair—they used dieselene to groom their hair.

These young natives were happy and contented. Shortly after our station was put on standby, an initiation ceremony was about to take place at Daly River, which is 60 or 70 miles to the south. The natives came in a group and asked for permission to visit Daly River for about three weeks.

We had a consultation among ourselves and agreed to let them go. We did the right thing by providing them with all the tobacco they needed for three weeks together with tinned beef and other supplementary foods to keep them going.

These young natives got within a mile of camp, sat down, and ate as much as they could. They left the rest of the food when they departed and we did not see

them for something like four weeks. When they returned, however, they were quite emaciated because of a lack of food over that period of weeks. We could hardly recognise them as the fine specimens of manhood who had left the camp four weeks previously. They were a dirty, ashy-grey colour and their skin was hanging in folds. It took some time to restore them to their natural state of health.

I am pointing this out to illustrate that there is something in these nomadic tribes which is inherent in all natives; it is something which precludes their being conditioned to live quietly. As the Leader of the Country Party has indicated, they depart at the oddest times and continue to let people down. They just cannot integrate themselves.

When introducing the motion the member for Narrogin said—

I have listed finance and housing, and it is important our Aboriginal people secure a basic understanding of how to develop their responsibility concerning their finance and housing.

I agree wholeheartedly with those remarks. The member for Kimberley developed the point further and indicated that—

Fundamental to good health is a house. A house requires rent and rent means having an income. Income means having a job for which one has training and skill. Training requires education and skill requires motivation. Motivation requires a satisfactory pattern of child rearing, which in turn requires a home. A home means having a house.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much audible conversation and it is most difficult for the *Hansard* reporter to hear what is being said.

Mr. COYNE: I feel the provision of a house is one of the basic ingredients to enable these people to improve their health and carry out their activities in regard to education and vocational training. There is little doubt that the home is the most important factor of all.

I will develop my theme in regard to housing but, before I do so, I will refer to something that happened in the last 15 months in the Warburton Mission area to illustrate the lack of co-ordination that has existed amongst people dealing with Aborigines.

About 15 months ago, as a result of a Federal Government grant, the then Department of Native Welfare sent 50 tons of cement to the Warburton Mission. The Native Welfare Department had a project in that area to make concrete bricks.

I was a little concerned that such a large amount of cement—50 tons of it—which is a deteriorating commodity should be sent out in one load, because using the basic formula of six to one we find that

50 tons of cement would make 350 tons of bricks and I wondered what these were to be used for.

I followed the matter through and asked the officers of the Native Welfare Department whether they could let me know the position. They informed me that it was a pilot scheme to help the natives and show them how to manufacture bricks.

Prior to this the department sent out a brand new Zetor tractor and trailer to cart the sand to be used in the brickmaking machine. This went on for three months. I went to the Warburton Mission while on a visit to Ayers Rock and I was anxious to see what progress had been made with these bricks and how the entire project was progressing.

Though the native welfare officers concerned were a little reluctant at first, we eventually persuaded them to let us have a look at the project. It was obviously being recommenced on that particular day, because out of the 50 tons of cement which was originally sent there there would have been at least 45 tons remaining. I doubt whether any more than 1,000 bricks had been made. An attempt had been made to make the ordinary house brick size, as we found later. That was not the type of brick suitable for that area, and the brickmaking machine was inadequate. The brick that was made was not a pressed type of brick but a moulded type and it was obvious that the natives had not had much practice in making bricks.

Mr. Lewis: What happened to the rest of the cement?

Mr. COYNE: The remainder of the cement was still there but the pressed brick was certainly not made. The cement was contained in paper bags, and to my knowledge it is still there. I feel sure it would now be almost impossible to use the cement for such a purpose, because there is little doubt that the bricks would fret. I could not establish what was to be done with the bricks when they were made.

Subsequently we went on to the Docker River Mission and we found that the people there had a completely different outlook. They knew their business; they were making pressed bricks of a size of 12" x 6" x 4". This was being done in a machine developed by the Fraser Engineering Company of New Zealand on a pattern recommended by the United Nations for one of the under-developed countries.

I was most impressed with the bricks because the brick made was a compressed brick. The natives there were using a hydraulic press, like a stainless steel cylinder. The mould went into the machine and it was not necessary to scrape and fiddle around. The lever was brought down and, because of the stainless steel interior, after it had been pressed into the mould out would come a smooth brick. As

the lever was brought back into position the brick would come up like the cylinder of a motorcar.

This procedure impressed me so much that I brought two of the bricks back to Western Australia to show to Pastor Vaughan at Wiluna. In the area I have mentioned the people are permitted to enjoy the same building conditions as are allowed in the Pilbara and Port Hedland areas, where it is permitted to build single-brick construction. It is not necessary for them to leave the cavity which is normally necessary in houses constructed with double brick walls. Because these bricks are compressed they are more waterproof than would be the case with the ordinary moulded brick. I would inform the House that this was an experience I enjoyed. I got some very good ideas from this trip, which gave me a lot of experience in the various ways in which we can assist natives to build their own houses.

A few weeks ago I visited a station in the Wiluna area and I commented on a building that had just been erected in cement bricks of the ordinary house size. I was impressed by the building and asked about it. The walls were cavity walls. The station owner said he still had the machine, and I went to see it. I now have an interest in that machine because the shire clerk in Wiluna and I purchased it with the intention of experimenting in the making of bricks by the natives in Wiluna. The machine cost \$100, so it was not a very big outlay. It was a very cheap buy because it will enable us to see what can be done as regards the making of bricks.

However, I do not believe that is the answer. I believe the larger compressed bricks should be made. They will be much more resistant to moisture. The member for Kimberley referred to the unlined tin huts at the Balgo Mission. I could not imagine anything worse than those huts in the heat of summer or the cold of winter because they are not insulated in any way. I consider the cement brick building is the best for those areas because it provides insulation and is almost indestructible.

A building project, using moulded bricks, has been in progress for some years at the Seventh Day Adventist mission. The houses have concrete floors and two or three rooms, and they are indestructible. The natives who are making the bricks can see the results of their work. They can see that every brick they make goes into the construction of a building.

As a result of a Government grant it received, the mission in Wiluna recently built a large hall in the vicinity of 60 feet long by 40 feet wide. All the bricks used in that hall were made at the

mission. This is the answer. It assists the natives not only by providing employment for them but also by providing houses which are suitable for their requirements.

The member for Kimberley mentioned the sisalcraft and spinifex type huts, which are possibly more suitable in his area, but in the area I represent homes made of cement bricks would be the most suitable. I certainly recommend that the Select Committee investigate the avenue of brickmaking. Everyone in the world will help the natives who try to help themselves. An operation similar to this was recently undertaken in the Carnarvon area, and tradesmen not only from this State but also from other States travelled to the area to help erect the houses. We will always find people who are ready to help. I think the example of the mission at Wiluna is a good one.

In the last few weeks a committee from the State Housing Commission visited the Wiluna area to investigate the possibility of building native villages outside the town limits. The committee was not sure what the natives wanted. The natives were asked whether they wanted to live inside or outside the town limits. I think the committee also had ideas of building houses on pastoral properties, for which purpose it would be necessary to excise the land from the pastoral properties in order to secure title over the houses built. Instead of pastoral companies having to find the capital to build the houses, they would be supplied by the Community Welfare Department but, in the long run, the pastoralists would be responsible for collecting the rents. I do not think that would be difficult because the rent could be deducted from the wages.

I think it might be a little late for building houses on pastoral properties. The natives have been divorced from pastoral properties because of the new awards and the more elastic laws in relation to alcohol. It is a better proposition for a pastoralist to employ white people, and I do not think we will ever again see the days when great numbers of natives gather on pastoral properties. However, that matter is being investigated at the present time.

As far as I can see, the village concept which was mooted will become only another native reserve, although perhaps a glorified one in that it would have a community meeting hall or something like that. However, it would still not be properly integrated with the town community. I think the native reserves in the Wiluna area, including Meekatharra, are absolutely shocking, and the department is wise to prohibit anyone from going into them to take photographs because the conditions in those reserves are horrifying.

Mr. Nalder: Have you any idea of the number of natives involved in those areas?

Mr. COYNE: There are 200-odd in Wiluna, spread between the native mission and the reserve. There is a similar number in the Laverton area, but although a greater number of bush natives come into the town and inhabit the reserves I believe the conditions are not so bad. There appears to be a big impact resulting from the intrusion of natives into those areas.

I think the Director of Community Welfare recently suggested more could be done to help the natives make their own bricks and erect their homes. The commodity that will be required in the greatest quantity is bricks. Most of the material is available in the area. There is plenty of sand and aggregate available. When the natives have learnt to make the bricks they can then learn to lay them.

In the Ayers Rock area the natives are building a service station which they will run themselves. Carpenters and fitters were brought in but everything else was made by the natives—not only the bricks and the concrete floors but also the segments for the French drains, the wells, the septic tanks, and so on. A tremendous number of products can be made on the site or manufactured in the area.

I do not want to dwell on aspects that have already been covered by previous speakers. I reiterate the view of the member for Narrogin and the member for Kimberley that the most important aspect of the native question is the provision of a home because everything stems from the home. When people are satisfied and happy in a home, education, health, welfare, and so on will follow. Particularly in the remote areas, it is no good building a native reserve, a village, or any other type of housing project unless employment is provided.

In the Wiluna area a crisis has developed in that the Desert Farms operation is about to close down. I have watched that project very closely. I have been active in the area since 1964—long before I had any ambitions to get into Parliament. One of the best results of the Desert Farms project is that it has given the natives in the area some prospects of employment. They are learning to work on that property, which employs 55 people and up to 70 or 80 in the picking season. From November to the end of February something like 55 people are employed each day.

The Desert Farms project presents a very difficult situation for the Federal Government, and the State Government will perhaps be approached in the near future to allow the project to proceed. However, I can foresee great difficulties. I recommend that the greatest interest be taken in the welfare of the natives concerned in an endeavour to provide them with some form of employment

which they can handle. Now that the pastoral industry has more or less discarded them, employment must be found for them in other towns.

That just about winds up what I had to say. My idea in supporting the motion was that, apart from the north of the State and the south division, there is an area in between which has completely different problems, and I wanted to relate my experience. It is with great pleasure that I support the motion.

Mr. Graham: Why are you supporting the appointment of a Select Committee when the Government has announced it will appoint a Royal Commission, which of course could investigate far more thoroughly than any Select Committee?

Mr. COYNE: The Royal Commission has not been appointed yet.

Mr. Graham: Do you not think this motion should be withdrawn? It is only wasting time.

Mr. COYNE: Exactly, but I had prepared myself to speak and I wanted to do so.

Mr. Nalder: It was a very valuable contribution, too.

Mr. Graham: It will achieve nothing. What is presented to the Royal Commission might achieve something.

Mr. Williams: We do not know when it will be appointed.

Mr. COYNE: With those remarks, I indicate that I support the appointment of either a Select Committee or a Royal Commission, and I would certainly prefer that it be a Royal Commission.

MR. W. A. MANNING (Narrogin) [7.59 p.m.]: In replying to this debate I would like to thank the members who have contributed to it. It appears they are fairly unanimous in desiring that this inquiry be instigated. I am sorry I must speak in the absence of the Minister. I do not know why he is not here.

Mr. Graham: The Minister for Community Welfare is in the Legislative Council. How could he be here?

Mr. W. A. MANNING: I presume the Government has a Minister in this House acting for him?

Mr. Graham: We are all acting for him at the moment. This is a Government.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: Then this will be a most interesting exercise.

Mr. Williams: Who is the great dictator?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. W. A. MANNING: I would like to thank the Minister for his words of appreciation for my bringing the motion forward. However, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. The Minister could have showed his appreciation by giving a little more detail of what is going on; that

would have been more helpful. After he announced that the Government intended to appoint a Royal Commission, the Minister suggested that I might withdraw my motion. I have no intention of doing that. In fact, probably you, Mr. Speaker, would not allow me to do so now that I have commenced to speak in reply. It was because I desired to reply to the debate that I decided not to withdraw the motion.

Mr. Graham: What is the position? Do you want both a Royal Commission and a Select Committee?

Mr. W. A. MANNING: The Deputy Premier knows that is not so. However, there are some other things I want and he will learn of them immediately.

Mr. Graham: If this House agreed to the Select Committee proposition the Government would surely be obliged to proceed to give effect to the will of the House.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: Just wait a minute; do not get impatient. I placed a question on the notice paper yesterday which the Minister for Education answered. I notice he is still not in his seat, so I must proceed in his absence. The question I asked was—

- (1) Will he now set out more clearly the proposed terms of reference?

The Minister replied—

- (1) These have not yet been finalised but it is intended that they will be widely based.

Of what use is that? It is now six weeks since the Minister told the House that the Government intended to appoint a Royal Commission.

Mr. Williams: Words, words, words.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: In six weeks nothing has been done; not even the terms of reference have been drawn up. Surely the Deputy Premier can now understand why I am persisting with my motion. In six weeks absolutely nothing has been done. I remember the Deputy Premier when sitting on this side of the House saying such things as, "Assurances, assurances"; "Promises, promises"; and "Words, words, words." In connection with this motion that is all we have had from the Minister—who is still not in his seat.

Mr. Graham: Surely it is proper that the Government should await the pleasure of the House. That is what it has done. It cannot anticipate the decision of the House.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: The Government is not waiting for the decision of the House at all. It is merely displaying a lack of interest, and possibly a lack of intention.

Mr. Graham: Good Lord, you fellows were in these seats for 12 years, and what did you do about the matter in the way of an inquiry? You suddenly became inspired when you were placed over there.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: There is no doubt the Deputy Premier thinks the previous Government was such a good Government—

Mr. Jamieson: Oh!

Mr. Graham: Out it went!

Mr. W. A. MANNING:—and achieved so many things that it should have achieved everything.

Mr. Graham: Including loss at the polls.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: But one cannot achieve everything, even if one has a lifetime in which to try. Obviously the Deputy Premier expected the previous Government to do so. In fact, he is merely endorsing the fact that the previous Government did so much. I would like to see the Government make an announcement about the Royal Commissioner. If it has done nothing in six weeks, what will it do in six months?

Mr. Graham: I do not think you are interested in the Aborigines, but in having a game of politics.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: That is the same old story from the Deputy Premier.

Mr. Nalder: He is running true to form.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: It is hard to get anything through to the Deputy Premier because he just does not understand. The next part of the question I asked the Minister representing the Minister for Community Welfare was—

Mr. Graham: He has seen you amateurs in operation for many years.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: I ask the Deputy Premier to listen.

Mr. Graham: I have more important things to do.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: My question was—

- (2) Is it intended to appoint more than one commissioner?

The answer was, "No." The next part of my question was—

- (3) If not, will he consider the advisability of appointing a commission of three to ensure that any recommendations are firmly based, practical and capable of implementation?

To which the Minister replied—

- (3) No. It is proposed to obtain the services of a judge.

That reply tells us next to nothing apart from the fact that, strangely enough, the Government has decided to appoint a single judge; yet it has not even discussed the terms of reference. The Minister stated that definitely only one Royal Commissioner would be appointed, and he will be a judge.

I would like now to quote a few brief extracts from the speech of The Hon. P. Howson, M.P., when introducing a Bill in the Federal Parliament. The title of the Bill was the States Grants (Aboriginal Advancement) Bill 1972. Mr. Howson said—

I think it important to bear in mind that the problems facing the Aborigines in major towns and cities and those of the Aborigines living in communities or reserves, on pastoral properties and on the fringes of remote townships differ very greatly.

I think we all agree with that. Certainly those who know anything about our native people would agree with it. Further on Mr. Howson said—

While at the time of the 1966 Census over 91 per cent. of Aboriginal Australians still lived in rural areas, the Aboriginal population of the capital cities had doubled between the censuses of 1961 and 1966.

Then he went on to say—

It is, it seems to me, our task in the urban situations primarily to remove those handicaps which prevent the Aboriginal citizens from playing a full part in the urban community.

He made that speech when he was introducing a Bill to provide grants for the aid of Aboriginal people. It is rather important, when we are receiving grants from the Commonwealth for the benefit of these people, that we ensure the funds are spent wisely. A large amount of money was allocated under that Bill. The allocation for Western Australia was as follows:—

	\$
Housing .....	2,500,000
Health .....	430,000
Education .....	548,000
Employment .....	175,000
Special work projects .....	121,000
Regional projects .....	186,000
Total	\$3,960,000

Yet the Premier gets up and tells us how far the Federal Government has left him out on a limb. Those are colossal sums of money and if the funds are to be used wisely we must have wise decisions. I believe a single Royal Commissioner cannot make wise decisions in this regard.

The Leader of the Opposition has asked me to express to the House that he agrees with the appointment of more than one commissioner. When he rose to speak a short time ago he discovered that he had already made a short speech earlier in the debate. I emphasise the fact that one Royal Commissioner will not be sufficient to produce something which is worth while.

Sir Charles Court: His background and experience will be of tremendous importance.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: That is so. It is most important that the recommendations of a Royal Commission be made in the light of great knowledge of the difficulties and problems of our Aboriginal people, and particularly in the light of changes which occur from region to region.

Mr. Bertram: He could visit the different areas.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: That is my very point: To achieve the desired result I would say it is absolutely essential to inspect the areas concerned. Even if the best judge in the Eastern States were selected, he would know nothing of our State, and he would come here and listen to evidence which he would not understand—

Mr. Bertram: Why?

Mr. W. A. MANNING: —unless he visited the various areas.

Mr. Bertram: There is nothing to stop him doing that.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: Of course, the member for Mt. Hawthorn would not know what goes on outside of Mt. Hawthorn. He cannot tell me that he would be in a position to understand the conditions of our Aboriginal people unless he has actually seen what goes on.

Mr. Bertram: Well, nobody would stop the Royal Commissioner from making an inspection.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: A Select Committee would be able to go to the areas and inspect the homes in the towns—

Mr. Graham: So would a Royal Commission.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: —and to inspect the reserves.

Mr. Graham: So would a Royal Commission.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: If we could ensure that the Royal Commissioner would indeed do that I would be far happier.

Mr. Graham: The Royal Commissioner would make his own plans in the same way as a Select Committee would.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: That is what I am afraid of; a single Royal Commissioner would not want to go running around all these areas.

Mr. Graham: How do you know the members of a Select Committee might not want to run around those areas? It is far easier for one person than for a whole bunch.

Mr. Nalder: Why?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. W. A. MANNING: If the Deputy Premier is prepared to include in the conditions under which the appointment is made that the gentleman who is appointed must do these things, the situation would be altered; and that would also be the case if a Royal Commission of three were appointed.

My purpose in raising this matter is that one man acting as a Royal Commission would face a tremendous job. Who would take on that job? Is the man the Government has in mind prepared to do that? I do not know; does the Government know? Unfortunately the Minister is not here to tell me.

Mr. Graham: He is at the present moment trying to clean up some mess made by your colleagues in another place.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: He has a fair mess to clean up in this situation.

Mr. Graham: You can say that again.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: It is a pity the Minister is not present.

Mr. Graham: That is the reason he is not.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: As I have already said, it has taken the Government six weeks to do nothing. If that is an indication of what the Government does I will not depend upon it to do anything in the future.

Mr. Graham: You people did nothing for 600 weeks in this matter of an inquiry into the affairs of natives. You did nothing about that.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: I wish the Deputy Premier would give me a chance to continue my speech instead of constantly interjecting with the same remarks.

I believe this subject is too important and there is too much at stake to appoint a single Royal Commissioner who might come up with a report of no value. I am not prepared to take that risk. We do not even know who the Royal Commissioner will be.

Mr. Graham: You do not know who the members of a Select Committee would be.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: If the report of the Royal Commission is to be used as a blueprint or plan for the future, it should be the best report it is possible to present, otherwise we will be led along the wrong track, which would be worse than not appointing a Royal Commission. If the report is received and put away in a pigeonhole, that would be worse still. We must have a report which can be acted upon, and it must be based on facts. The report must be practical, and we must be able to implement it.

Mr. Bertram: A judge could present such a report.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: If the honourable member has so much faith in the judge he must know who he is.

Sir Charles Court: A judge is not necessarily the best Royal Commissioner for a case like this one.

Mr. Graham: Is the member for Narrogin necessarily the best Chairman of a Select Committee?

Sir Charles Court: He would make a very good one.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. W. A. MANNING: I am emphasising the point that if a Royal Commissioner is appointed we must be sure he is the right person.

Mr. Graham: You are emphasising that politics come first and the Aborigines second.

Mr. Williams: Why don't you think differently?

Sir Charles Court: You only want a Royal Commissioner because certain natives have asked you for one.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Graham: You did nothing for 12 years.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will keep order.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: Sometimes we hear useful interjections, but the Deputy Premier is merely saying the same thing over and over again, and it has no relationship at all to our Aboriginal people. These answers are not worthy of the Minister. If the Minister had given me worth-while answers yesterday I would not be on my feet now, and I would have agreed to withdraw the motion. However, the Minister has given me a foolish sort of answer, which shows nothing has been done. Six weeks ago he got up and told us what he would do, but yesterday he replied to my questions in this manner. What he has said is rubbish and is not worth anything. I have no intention of withdrawing my motion.

Mr. Graham: If you had withdrawn it when the announcement was made some further action would have been taken. Would you not have considered it as contempt of Parliament if the Government had appointed an investigating authority whilst this motion was before the House?

Mr. W. A. MANNING: One of the most foolish steps I could take would be to withdraw the motion. If I did I would not have the opportunity to reply to the debate and show that the Minister has failed to do his job. I would have withdrawn the motion, except for the inadequate replies I received.

Mr. Graham: Of course you would not have withdrawn it.

Mr. Bertram: We will have a Royal Commission.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: In reply to the member for Mt. Hawthorn I am not saying anything against the appointment of a suitable Royal Commission. The honourable member has said that we will have a Royal Commission, but the fact is there is none as yet. The Minister cannot even name the terms of reference, and that is the reason I am speaking now.

Because I have not had any adequate replies from the Minister it means that the question must go to the vote. If the motion is passed—I do not suppose there is any chance of that in view of the numbers on the Government side—a Select Committee will be appointed. It is up to the Government to defeat this motion and then to show that it is prepared to appoint a Royal Commission—and not a single Royal Commissioner but a Royal Commission consisting of two or three members—to do the job and to present a report. If that is done I will be satisfied.

If in 12 months' time the Royal Commission presents a report which will be of use for the future advancement of the Aborigines, I will have something to say in appreciation of the Government's action. At the present time I have a grave doubt as to what the Government intends to do.

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

#### Ayes—21

Mr. Blaikie	Mr. O'Connor
Sir Charles Court	Mr. Reid
Mr. Coyne	Mr. Runciman
Dr. Dadour	Mr. Rushton
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Stephens
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Thompson
Mr. Lewis	Mr. Williams
Mr. W. A. Manning	Mr. R. L. Young
Mr. McPharlin	Mr. W. G. Young
Mr. Mensaros	Mr. I. W. Manning
Mr. Nalder	(Teller)

#### Noes—21

Mr. Bateman	Mr. Fletcher
Mr. Bertram	Mr. Graham
Mr. Bickerton	Mr. Jamieson
Mr. Brady	Mr. Jones
Mr. Brown	Mr. Lapham
Mr. Bryce	Mr. May
Mr. Burke	Mr. McIver
Mr. Cook	Mr. Moller
Mr. Davies	Mr. Sewell
Mr. H. D. Evans	Mr. Harman
Mr. T. D. Evans	(Teller)

#### Paira

Ayes	Noes
Sir David Brand	Mr. Taylor
Mr. O'Neill	Mr. J. T. Tonkin
Mr. Gayfer	Mr. Hartrey
Mr. Ridge	Mr. A. R. Tonkin

The SPEAKER: The voting being equal, I give my casting vote with the Noes.

Question thus negatived.

Motion defeated.

## CONTRACEPTIVES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### *In Committee*

Resumed from the 20th September. The Chairman of Committees (Mr. Bateman) in the Chair; Mr. Lapham in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1: Short title and citation—

Progress was reported after the clause had been partly considered.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2: Section 2 amended—

Dr. DADOUR: I have given notice of my intention to oppose the clause. The reason is that it seeks to amend the definition of "Public place" so that a pharmacy will no longer be regarded as a public place. That being the case it will be possible for pharmacists to display and to exhibit contraceptives.

There has been some controversy as to whether or not contraceptives may be sold in pharmacies, and this has been badgered about as being one of the main reasons for seeking an alteration to the definitions.

It was considered by the member who introduced the Bill that by amending the definitions so that pharmacies are no longer to be regarded as public places, contraceptives may be sold and displayed in these shops.

If we turn to section 4 (7) concerning publications which are distributed to certain people, exceptions are made in the case of general practitioners and also pharmaceutical chemists. The implication is that not only doctors but also registered pharmacists may sell contraceptives.

Unfortunately the amendment in the clause throws this provision in the Act wide open. It will not only give the pharmacist the undisputed right to sell contraceptives, but at the same time it will permit him to exhibit these articles.

Bearing in mind that a pharmacy is no longer to be regarded as a public place or to be subject to section 5 of the Act, I would draw the attention of members to that section, which states—

Every person who—

- (a) exhibits or causes to be exhibited any contraceptives in view of persons who are in any public place; . . .

shall be guilty of an offence under this Act.

I admit there is some controversy as to whether or not contraceptives may be sold in pharmacies. The amendment in this clause will bring about two things. Firstly it will remove the controversy as to whether pharmacies may sell or display contraceptives.

Mr. Lapham: They can only do so on their own premises.

Dr. DADOUR: I believe that a pharmacy is a public place, because members of the public go into these shops. Merely by screening off contraceptives from the public these articles are to be permitted to be exhibited in the shops in the future.

That a controversy relating to the sale of contraceptives by chemists does exist is illustrated by the fact that over the years no prosecutions have been launched against pharmacists. In reading the debate which took place on this Bill in

another place, I notice the Minister said that the Commissioner of Police has no intention whatsoever of taking action against pharmacies for selling contraceptives.

I suggest if there is any doubt the Minister should update the existing legislation which was enacted in 1939. At that time the Legislature did not foresee the use of oral contraceptives; it dealt only with mechanical contraceptives.

Mr. BRADY: I am not happy with this Bill, and I think the member who introduced it in another place would have been well advised to hold his horses for the time being, to allow the Minister for Health to introduce a Bill which was acceptable to all the people, without emotion or controversy.

To some extent I am sympathetic with the point of view of the member for Subiaco in regard to excluding pharmacies from the definition of "Public place." The fact remains that for the past 25 to 30 years the general public have recognised that the chemist shop is the establishment where these articles may be purchased.

There is a saving feature in that section 5 of the Act provides that every person who exhibits or who causes to be exhibited any contraceptive in view of persons who are in any public place is guilty of an offence under the Act. Of course, a chemist would be very unwise to take the risk of exhibiting these articles in his shop, either on the counter or in his window display.

Another angle to this matter is that it is said these contraceptives are commonplace in many countries, such as England; they are more or less taken for granted; they are exhibited and no harm is done. I do not take that point of view at all.

While we are discussing this Bill the Minister for Labour has a Bill on the notice paper for the appointment of an advisory committee to control the distribution of indecent publications. I take it the Bill will include indecent illustrations. For that reason I do not think the pharmaceutical chemists would be wise to display this type of article publicly.

As the member for Subiaco has pointed out, the amendment could be interpreted to permit chemists to exhibit these things publicly. However, I am hoping that the ethics of the pharmaceutical profession will prevail and that chemists will not go to that extreme. If they do then they can expect amendments to be introduced promptly.

I have heard people discussing this particular amendment to the Act and to my amazement I have heard married women say on television that they want their children to have access to these things, and to see them exhibited in chemists' shops



and in other places. That viewpoint staggers me and illustrates the permissiveness of our society. I do not go along with that thinking at all.

I regard the body of pharmaceutical chemists as a responsible organisation and I believe that the ethics of the profession will prevail and contraceptives will not be exhibited to children.

I do not intend to vote against the clause. I have spoken in these terms in the hope that the people handling the goods will see that the right thing is done by the community.

It has been recognised for many years that pharmaceutical chemists sell contraceptives. However, we heard the member for Kimberley say that in the north-west a chemist did not feel disposed to sell contraceptives because of his religious beliefs. Under the provisions of the amendment such a person will not be forced to stock contraceptives if he does not want to do so.

When the parent Act was introduced in 1939 it was generally recognised that pharmaceutical chemists would be the people to handle this type of article. However, chemists are prevented from advertising contraceptives and severe penalties apply to any breaches of the Act.

One speaker to this measure said that some people could not go along with the provisions of the Bill because of their religious persuasions. Whilst I believe there are people with such religious beliefs, I did not go to my local clergyman for advice on how to vote.

Common decency sets a limit on what can be done with this type of article if it is to be sold in chemists' shops. Religious beliefs really do not matter. I was pleased to hear the member for South Perth say that he was a Presbyterian, and that he did not go along with the idea. However, to my amazement I received a letter from a well-known church stating that the church agreed with the amendment to the Act, and that these things should be made available to the public because of the family planning aspect. I am in favour of family planning but I do not think that family planning should be used as a vehicle for these things to be available willy-nilly.

I intend to vote for clause 2 but I reserve the right to move an amendment to the following clause so that this type of article will not be advertised on television, on the radio, or in the news media.

Mr. LAPHAM: I thought the member for Subiaco said that he intended to move an amendment. I take it, Mr. Chairman, that that is not so.

The CHAIRMAN: He intends to vote against the clause.

Mr. LAPHAM: Thank you; I wanted to clear up that point. The main problem is in the definition of "Public place." The definition is so embracing that it almost precludes all persons from selling any type of contraceptive except contraceptives which chemists can sell under the Poisons Act. The proposed amendment is to overcome this difficulty.

The matter was discussed with the Parliamentary Draftsman and he advised that the Act should be amended in the manner set out in this Bill. I do not think there is any need to mention the extremes to which chemists might go because there are ample safeguards within the Act itself. If a chemist displays a contraceptive in view of persons in a public place the chemist is immediately contravening the Act and is subject to penalty. If we agree to the provisions contained in this Bill a chemist's premises will not be a public place and he will then be able to display the article to the person purchasing it.

There are plenty of safeguards. As a matter of fact, the Act itself is an absurdity and we have to amend it purely for the purpose of allowing family planning clinics to operate. I have not the slightest doubt that a chemist will not unwrap the articles, blow them up, or display them in that manner. I imagine he will simply hand over the article in the package the same as he would a bottle of pills or a bottle of cough medicine. I have not the slightest doubt that the ethics of the pharmaceutical profession will continue to be maintained.

There is no need to get hot under the collar regarding this Bill and I recommend that members should vote for the clause. We will create a real hazard if we do not pass the Bill because now that the question has been raised regarding who can sell the articles the issue could be taken up and a prosecution launched. I recommend the amendment in the Bill.

Mr. JAMIESON: I was not here when the second reading debate on this matter took place. On this aspect of the legislation I think it is high time we grew up a little and accepted the situation that contraceptives do exist. Despite what the member for Swan said, and in view of the fact that he was aware he had a very junior audience here tonight—I have no doubt they all knew what he was talking about—if this sort of thing is hidden more trouble will be created, and quite possibly embarrassment caused.

If a chemist is able to display contraceptives a person will know that they are available in that shop, and he will be able to purchase them without any embarrassment. However, if a person does not know whether contraceptives are available in a particular chemist shop then surely that is when embarrassment could occur.

Until a few years ago the city of Adelaide always had the reputation of being the city of churches, and of being a more backward, refined, or conservative area than the city of Perth. However, some years ago, before all this progressive legislation was introduced, I was rather surprised—although not shocked in any way—to walk through an Adelaide arcade and see contraceptives on display. They were not in chemists' shops, but in other shops. They did not offend me, although I was somewhat surprised because I was not used to seeing that sort of thing on display. I did not notice any crowd of people stopping and staring into the shops.

While in Toronto recently I saw lots of things other than contraceptives on ready display and I did not notice those articles offending people on evening shopping jaunts.

Nobody seemed to worry about this. It did not appear to offend people but, if it offended some, doubtless they kept their religious and personal views to themselves. If people want to avail themselves of contraceptives in any way, shape, or form, they should know where those contraceptives are available. It is old hat to hide from ourselves and hide such contrivances under a counter or on a shelf. We must get away from that. If we do not want to use contraceptives, that is our choice. Equally, it is our choice if we want to use them. We are entitled to know where they are available.

The freedom which is being sought is not excessive. The suggestion is quite practical. After all, members of the medical profession use gory-looking instruments for various types of operations which could be objectionable to many. However these are usually freely available and displayed in the places which sell them. There is no reason for their not being displayed. They are a feature and part of life and every-day activity, as are contraceptives. If anyone, in this day and age, tries to take action to put them on a shelf or hide them under a counter because of a feeling that they could be obnoxious, that person would be fooling himself. He would not be fooling the young people in the community—or the older ones, too, for that matter.

I suggest the move which has been made is reasonable. I would not like to see contraceptives restricted any more than has been proposed in the Bill.

Mr. GRAYDEN: I think most of us are at cross-purposes on this clause. I spoke against it when the matter last came before the Chamber, but not because I find anything repulsive about it.

It comes down to what members on both sides of the Chamber frequently talk about: the quality of life. Are we to encourage permissiveness? I believe that

members who have spoken against the legislation have thought in terms of whether this would detract from the quality of life. Without doubt this is the question.

What we are virtually saying with this legislation is that contraceptives should be commonplace; they should be known to all; they should be displayed on every possible occasion; they should be hawked into high schools; and they should be hawked from door to door. Of course, the Bill later makes provision for all of this. The situation would be that we would be saying to young people, "This is part of the permissive society; indulge in this conduct by all means, because it is a new way of life."

When young people become promiscuous in this way, they cannot ever hope to reach a relationship of consequence with a person of the opposite sex. If they reach a relationship it would certainly not be to the same depth as it would have been had the alternative been the case. It is as simple as that. Can members imagine any promiscuous young person ever reaching a relationship of consequence with another person? It would not be possible. I ask why we should encourage anyone in this world to be promiscuous?

There is in Perth at the moment a musical called "Hair." I believe it uses all the four-letter words in the dictionary.

Mr. Davies: Love?

Mr. GRAYDEN: I have not seen the musical, but this is what I have heard.

Mr. Jamieson: It might be an education for you to see it.

Mr. GRAYDEN: Perhaps it does not use all the four-letter words, but I believe it uses many of them. I believe, too, it demonstrates some forms of conduct upon which most people frown.

The situation is that the mass media and others, for their own ends, encourage permissiveness in the society in which we live. I imagine that any member who has expressed opposition to the measure would have done so for this reason.

In 1939, possibly in consequence of what was happening in this State, someone said, "There is a need for legislation on contraception. We should introduce this legislation to prevent people hawking contraceptives around the countryside, from displaying them openly, and from encouraging young people to be promiscuous."

In consequence, it is reasonable for members of this Chamber to express some doubts as to the wisdom of altering that legislation. People come along and say that it should not be altered for religious reasons. I have said to them that I am a Presbyterian, but I do not go along with anything which encourages permissiveness.

This goes beyond that. Most of us watch television in our homes at various times and we often see, say, advertisements for toilet paper. I think this kind of thing should be banned on television. I would go much further than the contraceptive legislation. This kind of thing is only rubbish.

Mr. Jamieson: How Victorian can anyone get?

Mr. GRAYDEN: It is not a question of being Victorian.

Mr. Jamieson: You are becoming smaller every minute.

Mr. GRAYDEN: We would find people appearing on television demonstrating all kinds of contraceptives.

Mr. May: They do not demonstrate with toilet paper.

Mr. GRAYDEN: Members opposite may think this is a wonderful thing and an advance, but I think it would be a backward step. There are many things which should not be flaunted before people when they are watching television.

I have risen to my feet to say that, personally, I could not care less whether or not the clause goes through, but I do not think it would be a progressive step. I would have preferred it had the legislation not been introduced. I want to clarify my position; I emphasise that this would be a retrograde step.

Mr. FLETCHER: I would like to see a few points clarified. I know the member for Subiaco was not responsible for bringing this Bill before the Chamber, but I notice he is responsible for two or three amendments which appear on the notice paper. The honourable member wants to delete clause 2. I am opposed to the deletion of this clause, because this was the whole purpose of the exercise when the Bill was introduced in another place.

I said at the second reading stage that I was surprised the previous Minister for Health had opposed the provision. The purpose of clause 2 is to make it possible for contraceptives to be sold in chemists' shops.

Mr. Williams: Was not the purpose of the Bill connected with family planning clinics?

Mr. Davies: It was connected with family planning, not clinics.

Mr. FLETCHER: Perhaps the member for Subiaco may clarify the situation in relation to clause 2. Part of his comments appear on page 3496 of *Hansard*. After deploring the fact that contraceptives are too readily available he went on to say—  
... and the whole function of a family planning clinic is to educate people so that they can plan their family in a proper fashion and space the birth of their children accordingly.

The display of contraceptives in chemists' shops does not make any difference to the situation.

That remark, by the member for Subiaco, seems to condone the sale of contraceptives in chemists' shops and is rather out of character with his desire to delete clause 2 from the Bill. I hope the honourable member understands the point I am making.

Dr. Dadour: Yes, I do.

Mr. FLETCHER: Whilst I am on my feet I would like to commend the member for Swan for his indication that he will support the retention of clause 2, despite his reservations on the subject. Since the member for Swan is big enough to accept this, despite his original attitude and reservations, I ask others to do likewise.

Mr. Hutchinson: Did not the member for Swan mention that he would move an amendment?

Mr. FLETCHER: That would be subsequent to clause 2. The question I have raised specifically perhaps can be answered by the member for Subiaco.

Mr. Hutchinson: I would like to know whether the member for Swan intends to move an amendment.

Mr. FLETCHER: I suggest the member for Cottesloe should look at the notice paper.

Mr. Hutchinson: It is not on the notice paper.

Mr. Bertram: It is under another name.

Mr. FLETCHER: I would like the member for Subiaco to clarify the doubts which are in my mind.

Dr. DADOUR: Once again, I think we are going through the old old gamut of confusion. The Bill was originally introduced to give family planning clinics, which I wholeheartedly support, the opportunity to function—and to function correctly.

It was found that, because family planning clinics dealt with contraceptives, they came under the Contraceptives Act, which Act bans the advertisement of contraceptives. This meant that the clinics could not advertise where they were situated, their hours for consultations, any lectures they might be giving, or any literature they might wish to distribute.

Originally this was the reason for the introduction of the measure. When the Bill was looked at, it was discovered that chemists' shops possibly could not sell contraceptives legally. The amendment was included to exclude a chemist shop from the definition of "Public place." The effect of this would be that chemists' shops could not only sell contraceptives but could exhibit and display them.

No-one would take offence at contraceptives being displayed in a box on a shelf. I know of a few pharmacists, doctors, and professional men—in fact, members opposite constantly have a go at us—who would be out of line. This is the only thing I am against. Some chemists will attempt to take advantage of the situation in the way they exhibit contraceptives. It certainly does not worry me, as I am sure it does not worry any other member of the Chamber, to see these exhibited. I am sure most of the children in the gallery have seen these things. However we can well take exception to the manner in which they are exhibited.

I am sure members of the Government feel the same way; otherwise, we would not see the Indecent Publications Act Amendment Bill on the notice paper. We try to protect the 18-year-olds and those who are younger.

Since I have looked at the Bill and have talked to many people my whole way of thinking has altered. I still believe it would be possible for one or two chemists to become almost orgy shops if they so desired.

Mr. Nalder: One or two in Western Australia or in a certain suburb?

Dr. DADOUR: One or two in the metropolitan area of whom I know could take advantage of the situation.

I believe we will go along in the same old way, following societies in other countries. We will experience the good things and the bad things and we will take no shortcuts—we will follow the same old cycle. We may be able slightly to dampen some of the bad effects, but let us be honest with ourselves—we will not alter the whole situation.

I believe that the answer to the problem may be a reframing of the clause. The author of this Bill has approached the problem incorrectly. No safeguard is contained in the legislation, and that is the basis of my objection.

I am well aware of the necessity for the sale of contraceptives. Every day I tell 20 or 30 people to buy them and how to use them. I hope this will answer the honourable member's question.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I gathered from the comments made by the member for Swan that he has in his mind an amendment to the next clause. If this is correct, some of us on this side of the Chamber may be encouraged to vote for the clause if we know what is in the amendment.

Mr. Brady: If the member for Subiaco does not move the amendment on the notice paper, I intend to move it.

Sir CHARLES COURT: I want to state clearly that this Bill in its present form does not do what it was intended to do. I

have said this before, but I feel I must repeat it again tonight. We support the principle expressed by the author of this legislation. We wish to see legal inhibitions removed in respect of family planning organisations and sale of contraceptives by pharmacists. I must make this clear at the outset.

The amendment to be moved by the member for Subiaco was discussed during the second reading debate. I wish to emphasise again that if the Committee passes the next clause, section 4 of the parent Act will be repealed. The intention of the Bill was to allow chemists to handle contraceptives without any doubt as to the legality of their actions, and for family planning organisations to be able to advertise that they are available to give advice. We support the principle involved in both these cases.

I am amazed that the Government has not asked the Crown Law Department to redraft the Bill to give effect to the intention of the author. This is the problem confronting members on this side who wish to be co-operative. It is too late when the Bill is passed to discover loopholes.

Mr. Jamieson: What are you frightened it is going to do?

Sir CHARLES COURT: If the Minister reads the parent Act without section 4, he will realise the significance of my remarks. Everybody would have an open go—not just the chemists—particularly in respect of exhibition and advertising. I realise some people believe this would not happen, but they are confusing exhibition and advertising with the final sale of the goods. Even amateur draftsmen or lawyers, such as we are in this Chamber, with the exception of one or two members on the other side who are qualified lawyers, will realise that the result of the repeal of section 4 would go far beyond the original intention.

I wish to ensure that we do our best to give effect to the author's intention; namely, to remove any legal doubts as far as chemists are concerned, and the right of family planning organisations to make known that they are available to give advice, and in fact, to give that advice.

Listening to the member for Swan I gained the impression that he intended to move an amendment to clause 2. However, I now understand that he intends to support the amendment which is to be moved to clause 3 by the member for Subiaco. I do not have the same faith in certain chemists in the metropolitan area as some members do. I have no qualms about the majority of our chemists, but I do not accept the remarks of the member for Swan that good sense, good taste, and the ethics of their profession will prevent excesses in all cases. Even in the last

few years we have seen the pharmaceutical profession embarrassed by the methods of merchandising used by some of its members. This happened under the provisions of the existing law. If the inhibitions of this law are removed, such people will be the first to take full advantage of the situation. Do not let us fool ourselves; even if this applies to only 5 per cent. of the profession, it is 5 per cent. too much in my opinion.

If the Committee accepts the amendment proposed by the member for Subiaco, my understanding is that we will then rely on the good faith of the chemists not to indulge in excesses in regard to exhibition and advertising on their own premises. I realise this is a calculated risk and I do not feel we could draw up regulations to control the situation. If the Committee supports the amendment, the exhibition of contraceptives will be left to the good sense of the Minister of the day, his department, and the pharmaceutical profession. On reflection I am prepared to take a calculated risk as long as we thoroughly understand what we are doing.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3: Section 4 repealed—

Dr. DADOUR: I intend to vote against the clause, and if the Committee supports me, I intend to move the amendment standing in my name on the notice paper. Members will see that the proposed new clause has been altered and I feel the result will be very satisfactory.

Proposed new paragraph (e) will apply not only to the Family Planning Association, but also to other family planning bodies which already exist or which may be established. Such a body will be able to advertise the fact that it is functioning at a certain place, such as King Edward Hospital or St. John of God Hospital. It may advertise the method of contraception it advocates, the hours of consultation, and any lectures or classes which it intends to give. It will also be able to disseminate literature which it has had printed. I feel this is the result desired by the originator of the Bill—family planning clinics functioning without any hindrance. More and more clinics will be needed as time goes by, and I hope that with better education in this direction, the problem of abortion will decrease in the future. I move that—

The CHAIRMAN: You must vote against the clause.

#### *Point of Order*

Sir CHARLES COURT: I wish to be sure that we know what we are doing. The amendment on the notice paper provides for the deletion of the clause and

the substitution of the amendment. You have ruled that we must defeat the clause first.

The CHAIRMAN: That is correct.

#### *Committee Resumed*

Clause put and negatived.

Dr. DADOUR: I move—

Page 2—Insert a new clause to stand as Clause 3, as follows:—

3. Subsection (7) of section 4 of the principal Act is amended—

- (a) by deleting the word "or" in line twelve;
- (b) by deleting the expression "practitioner—" in line twenty-five and twenty-six and substituting the expression "practitioner; or"; and
- (c) by inserting after paragraph (d) a paragraph as follows—

- (e) any statement issued by any organisation approved by the Minister as an organisation concerned with the dissemination of information concerning matters of family planning.

The proposed clause would enable family planning clinics to function without hindrance, and I am sure all members wholeheartedly support family planning clinics.

Mr. BRADY: I support the amendment moved by the member for Subiaco because I feel it will avoid the difficulties which have been mentioned.

Section 4 of the parent Act protects the public from the dangers of advertising and public exhibition of contraceptives. In actual fact four pages of law show that Parliament took a very strong view of this matter and ensured that the general public, and teenagers in particular, would not be confronted with these articles everywhere.

Proposed paragraph (e) provides that any organisation approved by the Minister may disseminate information concerning family planning. These are the key words—the Minister may now grant permission to any of these family planning clinics to distribute their literature. The member for Karrinyup pointed out the other night that half a dozen organisations have had literature printed which they are not allowed to issue to their patients or to make public because it may be regarded as contrary to the Act. If we accept the new clause, we will retain section

4 of the parent Act but we will add a saving paragraph to allow such institutions to function. I support the new clause and I hope the Committee will agree to it.

Mr. LAPHAM: Proposed new clause 3 seeks to amend section 4 of the principal Act which is not as bad as has been portrayed. It prohibits the advertising of contraceptives.

Mr Hutchinson: But that is out now, is it not?

Mr. LAPHAM: It is not out yet.

Mr. Hutchinson: We have just deleted it.

Mr. LAPHAM: I am merely referring to what we seek to do. Section 4 provides that the publication of a statement relating to contraceptives constitutes an offence. The section covers a number of pages dealing with the liability of a newspaper proprietor who publishes such a statement in a newspaper in this State. It also deals with the liability of a seller of a newspaper printed outside this State which contains such a statement.

This Act has been in force since 1939, but contraceptives have been advertised and sold in newsagents' shops despite the fact that this is illegal. That practice has been going on for years to my knowledge but it does not seem to matter a great deal.

Section 7, to which the amendment relates, deals with exceptions. The exceptions mentioned in this clause concern statements that are made in pharmaceutical documents, handbills, and other such publications. It also deals with the gratuitous delivery of an article of that type to a qualified medical practitioner or to a registered pharmaceutical chemist. The amendment proposes to grant a similar exemption to those organisations that have been approved by the Minister as being concerned with the dissemination of information on matters of family planning.

The sole purpose of this Bill was to get family planning off the ground, but all sorts of issues have crept in since. People have become fearful as a result of their own imaginings. I am prepared to accept the amendment because it seeks to achieve the purpose of the Bill. However, there are some difficulties associated with the amendment. I had some discussions with the Parliamentary Draftsman who has pointed out that the amendment will provide some rather curious results. Of two identical statements emanating from different sources, one may contravene the law whilst the other may not. So an organisation that has been approved by the Minister could legally issue a statement, but another person making an identical statement could be committing an offence.

As I have pointed out when dealing with amendments to this legislation, it is not the advertising of the article that creates

the difficulty; it is purely the method of advertising that is used. If an advertisement is handled in a discreet manner there is nothing to offend, but if there is anything crude about it it becomes offensive and that is another matter. I believe newspapers that print magazines and other publications would be very careful not to publish any offensive advertisements.

Many advertisements on contraceptives are published in newspapers that come into the State from overseas. However, they are delicately displayed and they do not offend me. I doubt whether they would offend the average person and I consider that I am an average person. I think the amendment will overcome some difficulties, but will create others. As long as members understand what they are doing when they vote for the new clause that is all that matters. They will overcome the problem that exists in relation to family planning clinics or to organisations approved by the Minister who wish to disseminate information on matters concerning family planning clinics. As I have said, I have discussed the matter with the Parliamentary Draftsman and he has suggested that if we establish family planning clinics people will be obliged to attend those clinics only. There could be many church organisations, anti-abortion groups and others who may wish to set themselves up as authorities on family planning.

The amendment will give those organisations the right to obtain the approval of the Minister and if this is obtained they could set themselves up as family planning clinics. I commend the amendment to the Committee.

Mr. R. L. YOUNG: I seek your leave, Mr. Chairman, to ask a few questions so that I may obtain the answers which may help me to sort out a few doubts I have in my own mind. I understand that clause 2 has been agreed to by the Committee. I also understand that the premise on which the member for Subiaco has based his argument is that he does not want contraceptives displayed in pharmacies and in other places and that this is supported by other speakers, with the exception of the member for Karrinyup. Is that correct?

Dr. Dadour: For the purposes of this Bill the object is to get family planning clinics off the ground and get them functioning.

Mr. R. L. YOUNG: I am not trying to knock anyone; I am merely trying to obtain some information. Do the member for Subiaco and other members want contraceptives advertised in pharmacies?

Mr. Brady: We do not want any more than that which already exists.

**Mr. R. L. YOUNG:** Very well. I gather that the member for Subiaco and other members do not want contraceptives advertised in pharmacies. The point is that if we have agreed to clause 2 and deleted clause 3, section 4 of the Act still remains.

By agreeing to clause 2, any "Public place" now excludes a pharmacy. The way I see the position now is that unless this amendment is agreed to, the intention of members who have spoken up to this point will not be covered by the Bill.

**Sir Charles Court:** Yes it will. We agreed to accept a calculated risk that pharmacies would observe plain, good common sense.

**Mr. R. L. YOUNG:** That is why I was seeking the help of those who have spoken to ascertain this point. If members of the Committee are of the opinion that pharmacies should be allowed to advertise contraceptives within their shops, everything is all right.

**Sir Charles Court:** Yes, within their shops. Some of us were not happy about it, but we accepted a calculated risk that decency and common sense would prevail.

**Dr. DADOUR:** I will make a few concluding points. Number one is that the whole purpose of the Bill is to get family planning clinics and other family planning groups functioning as quickly as possible. The other point is that we should update our thinking to meet 1972 standards. I believe the whole Act needs to be brought up to date. As the member for Wembley has said, it is full of inequities and old-fashioned ideas. I strongly suggest that it should be reviewed and the Parliamentary Draftsman be requested to frame a new piece of legislation in modern terms.

**Mr. DAVIES:** We have all decided that we want family planning clinics to be able to sell and advertise contraceptives, but I do not know that we are going about it in the right way. In reply to the Leader of the Opposition I would point out that, following the speeches made on an earlier occasion, I sent one very prominent speech to the Crown Law Department for an opinion, but the department returned it saying that it could not understand the speech and asked if I would supply some further information. I have not had time to do that, and I do not really think it is my duty to supply further information, because, as members will recall, this legislation comes under the control of the Police Department, although I do not think it rightly belongs there.

**Dr. Dadour:** I did not mention the Minister.

**Mr. DAVIES:** I have not mentioned the member for Subiaco yet. I think all members are finding common ground on this. I am trying to point out to the Leader of the Opposition that at least I made some

attempt to obtain an interpretation of a speech that was made on an earlier occasion and I was told by the Crown Law Department that it could not understand it.

**Sir Charles Court:** Why did they not get on to me about it?

**Mr. DAVIES:** I am not talking about the speech made by the Leader of the Opposition. If the Leader of the Opposition had been listening he would have heard me say that I was talking about "a speech."

**Sir Charles Court:** I was listening, but I am talking about this Bill.

**Mr. Hutchinson:** We could not understand you, anyway.

**Sir Charles Court:** We thought you were talking about this Bill, or that you were trying to.

**Mr. DAVIES:** The Leader of the Opposition is at his insulting best again.

**Mr. Hutchinson:** You are not doing a bad job yourself.

**Mr. DAVIES:** I do not try to be pleasant when I am insulting. As long as this is recognised and acknowledged we know where we stand. The fact remains that points raised in a particular speech could not be interpreted when I sought an interpretation from the Crown Law Department.

It was not the speech of the Leader of the Opposition on which I sought an interpretation. We must decide whether or not we want chemists and any other organisations to sell contraceptives. We want to know whether the Act at present prohibits this, and there is considerable doubt about this at the moment. We all know that chemists sell contraceptives and we know that contraceptives are advertised. I do not consider that the amendment will, in the end, give us the power we need to permit family planning clinics and chemists to advertise and sell contraceptives.

I agree with the member for Wembley who indicated he wanted chemists to be allowed to advertise and sell contraceptives, but no-one answered him when he asked whether this was what we were trying to achieve. I imagine it is, but I cannot see how the new clause will overcome the difficulty. It refers to any statement issued by any organisation approved by the Minister. This is leaving it fairly wide open. The Minister for Police will have to decide whether or not an organisation is a family planning organisation. He may be well qualified to do this; I do not know. However it does not seem right that matters relating to family planning, which are generally looked upon to be within the purview of the Health Department, should be handed over to the Minister for Police.

We are becoming more and more confused as time goes by. I have never seen us all so united in our objective, and yet we are unable to gain a clear understanding of how that objective can be achieved.

I agree with the honourable member who said that the whole of the Act needs to be reframed because at present the law is certainly not being observed. Contraceptives in their various forms are being advertised. I have seen such advertisements myself in magazines, but no action is being taken about them. Consequently either the Act is ineffective or no-one is very much concerned about the present practice.

I do not believe that this amendment will overcome our difficulty. The Minister for Police may, of course, refer the matter to my department, but personally I would not be able to give a judgment on it and would find it necessary to seek the opinion of some of my officers. I do not intend to oppose the new clause although I do not think it will be effective in accomplishing what we desire.

We are not concerned with family planning clinics, whatever their title, advertising contraceptives. We are concerned with those organisations dispensing them. This is not a large part of their function, but it is an important part. The sales at the overseas clinics I investigated are tremendous. I doubt whether the sales in Western Australia will ever reach such proportions, but the fact remains that the clinics should be allowed to sell contraceptives.

I repeat that I am not opposing the new clause although I am sure that we will still experience difficulties.

New clause put and passed.

Title put and passed.

### *Report*

Bill reported, with amendments, and the report adopted.

## **LAND: BUILDING BLOCKS**

### *Availability and Price: Motion*

Debate resumed, from the 11th October, on the following motion by Mr. O'Neill (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):—

This House views with concern the deterioration of the position relative to the availability of reasonably priced residential lots in the metropolitan region, which has resulted in:—

- (a) an escalation of land prices, and
- (b) public concern as to future availability and cost.

The House also expresses concern at the conflict between statements made by the Government and those made by real estate developers as to the real position and calls upon the Government to give a clear and precise statement of the position showing:—

- (a) location and numbers of useable residential allotments in the region, and

- (b) details of action being taken and proposed to be taken to maintain stability in the supply and price of residential land.

**MR. MENSAROS (Floreat) [9.37 p.m.]**: The underlying substance of this motion is not unlike that of one we dealt with last week, which was moved by the member for Mt. Lawley. That one concerned the lack of Government action in the metropolitan planning concept. In regard to the inherent dangers to the population and the economy of the State in connection with the availability and price of land, unfortunately we have experienced the same lack of action by the Government in the 19 months since it has been in office as we did in connection with the other matter. However I think the Government is guilty not only of lack of action, but also of not even watching and assessing the situation. As the Leader of the Opposition so aptly expressed the position last night in the Budget debate, the Government has not even wound up the clock in this matter.

The Government was completely disinterested when the price of land was fairly stable. I must point out that it was stable only as a result of actions taken by the previous Government. This Government did not take any notice, let alone any action, until the prices commenced to rise, and the rise inevitably created public concern. The tendency of the prices to rise induced the news media to highlight the matter and no-one can blame it for that because we all acknowledge this is its duty. The Opposition also did its duty by asking searching questions as to the possible reasons for the rise in land prices and finally the motion was moved which triggered this debate.

I am sorry to say that the first reaction of the Minister to the debate was to level abuse at the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. The Minister said he considered that the motion and speech of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition were irresponsible and he also implied that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition started what he called the scare and price boom. He said that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition had used alarmist tactics.

All this abuse and name calling was indulged in because the Minister had no proper arguments and because the Opposition had done something. Yet, at the same time, the Minister became somewhat ironical about Parliament not taking any action between the time the motion was moved and when he replied to the debate. He said that this inaction was probably due to the fact that the public did not take much notice of the motion or because the Deputy Leader of the Opposition had not made enough impression in this regard.



I must remind the Minister that he did not check the obviously wrong advice he received because during the two sitting days between the time the motion was moved and the Minister's reply, four questions on this subject were placed on the notice paper—two by the member for Dale and two by me. So that argument does not hold. What the Minister should have said was that no action was evident in the answers the Government gave to the questions because they did not contain any information except that the Minister, when present, would make an announcement at some time.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition could more eloquently and efficiently retaliate by replying to these allegations, but as he is away on official parliamentary business I take it upon myself to reject emphatically the unjust accusations and abuse levelled by the Minister at the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Indeed I would like to return the accusations and repeat that neither the Minister nor the Government has taken any action. Furthermore they refused even to watch carefully the situation that is developing. Indeed they brushed aside any warning by Parliament and by other concerned people outside Parliament.

I think the Government was caught completely off guard. Let me prove this assertion by quoting the Government's own words. On the 1st August the Premier completely brushed aside the well-founded concern of one of his own supporters; and in this regard I commend the member for Mirrabooka for having asked a question of the Premier about the escalation of land prices. Of course, being a Government supporter, he was not accused of being a price and scaremongering member. On the 1st August he asked—

Is there a generally agreed upon index which measures movements in land prices both within and outside the metropolitan area of Western Australia?

The Premier replied, "No." The member for Mirrabooka then asked—

Is there any body which regularly and officially advises the Government on the question of land prices and their control?

The Premier replied that there was the Land and Housing Consultative Committee, but that it advises the Government only as required on matters such as the supply of housing land and other factors affecting land prices.

This implies, of course, that this is not regular advice and there was no query—at least not by the member for Mirrabooka—as to how often this advice was required. Today I asked the Premier a question and, in his reply, he said something different from this. He said that

the committee operates under a general standing instruction to report to the Minister for Town Planning. However, to the member for Mirrabooka he said that it only advises when it is required.

I further asked how many times, indeed, did the Government require the committee to advise it and the Premier said, "Only on one occasion." That was on the 5th October and, I might mention, after the subject had been brought forward by the Opposition by way of questions and a motion.

Finally I would like to make a most interesting point. The member for Mirrabooka asked whether, if there is no index, the Government will consider the implementation of some such device which will act as an aid in preventing excessive escalation of land prices. The Premier replied—

While a close watch is kept on land price trends, there are major technical difficulties in constructing a meaningful index of building lot prices.

In the last part of his question the member for Mirrabooka asked—

Is the Government satisfied that there is no likely repetition of the calamitous land boom experienced under the previous Government?

Members will appreciate the political edge in this question. The Premier's answer was, "Yes." Apparently, the Premier was satisfied there was no likelihood of such a thing.

Mr. Thompson: What was the date of those questions?

Mr. MENSAROS: The 1st August. That is not all, however. On the 13th September the Leader of the Opposition placed searching questions on the notice paper. The Leader of the Opposition's question appears as question 19 on the notice paper of that day. The reply given by the Premier, although quite lengthy, did not show a great deal of concern and was sprinkled with remarks which were aimed at gaining political mileage. The Premier said, in part—

I consider that a price range of between \$3,000 and \$4,500 for fully-serviced blocks compares extremely favourably with the situation at the time of the land-price boom.

That was part of the answer which the Premier gave. In the same question the Leader of the Opposition asked, in part—

Has the Government any plans for placing on the market substantial numbers of residential and industrial blocks?

The Premier replied that the Government had no plans at the present moment beyond those building blocks which are being made available by the Rural and Industries Bank.

To substantiate my statement that the Government has not given any attention to this during its term of office, the Minister for Town Planning, in his speech, freely admitted that little had been done before the Opposition drew attention to the question of land prices. The Minister said on the 11th October that an investigation, which had been promised over a period of a fortnight, had resulted in his statement. He went further and said that he could not make the statement on Friday, because he had just returned from the Eastern States and could not absorb the report which was given to him. We know the Minister's capacity for comprehension and his political skill. Had he been occupied with this question previously he would have been able to absorb the report easily. It was because the Government—and the Minister—had not looked into this question—that he could not absorb something, which he perhaps saw for the first time in his life, in a short period. This is further proof that no action had been taken at all.

If we need any further proof, I refer to the Premier's first statement. When pressed, he said that well over 40,000 blocks were available in the metropolitan area. Mr. Speaker, I ask you to mark the words "metropolitan area." The Premier repeated this statement on two occasions. An article containing his comments appeared in *The Sunday Times* on the 1st October and another article appeared in *The West Australian* on the 7th October. The Premier spoke directly of the metropolitan area, not of the metropolitan region or statistical division. So that he would not be mistaken, he even mentioned "south of the river." Who would understand Rockingham as coming within this area? When we speak of south of the river we understand the metropolitan area. So did the Premier.

Afterwards, of course, the Minister for Town Planning said that this should be understood as the metropolitan region, which is the statistical geographical division. He said this was the only area about which we could talk.

Mr. Rushton: It may include Yundurup.

Mr. MENSAROS: I will come to that. The absolute disinterestedness and unpreparedness on the part of the Government culminated in a misleading and unfactual statement, for either the Premier was right in talking about the metropolitan area, or the Minister for Town Planning was right in talking about the metropolitan region—the statistical division. All this unpreparedness was exposed at a period when a number of outside organisations and members of Parliament were interesting themselves in the matter and asking for some action. I refer to an article which appeared in *The West Australian*

on the 14th October. The Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, Land and Housing Committee said—

The Committee had been trying for months—

I emphasise the words "for months." To continue—

—to get statistics on the numbers of vacant building blocks in the metropolitan area.

The committee had been trying for months but nothing had happened.

Contrary to what the Minister said—and I am sorry he said it—our action was responsible and not irresponsible. We have at least achieved something by way of questions asked in the Parliament and by way of this motion. At least the Government woke up from its dream—its could-not-care-less and she's-all-right-Jack attitude—because, finally, the Minister looked into the matter and came out with a statement.

I think I must mention at this point that what members of the Opposition said—and upon which we have been accused as being irresponsible—comes nowhere near what the mentor of the Government, or the Labor Party—the Federal Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party—said. Mr. Whitlam is reported as having said that prices in Perth were increasing at quite a monstrous rate. He further said that the failure to keep down land prices was a failure of the present system of government. We did not say that. We did not talk about monstrous increases in land prices. We simply reminded the Government that a danger exists; that prices are already increasing; that these could accelerate; and that something should be done.

Quite objectively, I ask that if the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is called irresponsible for his action—if he is called a scare and price monger—under the circumstances, what would we call the Federal Leader of the Opposition—the leader of the Labor Party—who talked of monstrous price increases?

Mr. Bryce: When did he say that?

Mr. MENSAROS: He was reported as having said it on the 14th October.

Mr. Bryce: Whereabouts? Where was it reported?

Mr. MENSAROS: It was reported in *The West Australian* newspaper. For the benefit of the honourable member who has interjected, it was also reported that his own leader in this State did not agree with his Federal leader. This happens sometimes.

Finally, we saw the action which was taken hastily by the Minister for Town Planning, because some information had to be made available. His information reveals a 6,400 deficit in the number of blocks available. The Minister said that

this represented only a small mistake and it was quite understandable, he claimed, for the Premier to make such a mistake. This again proves the Government is at fault. The Premier had to go to a dusty file of 1971, because nothing else was available. He had to go back over a period of 18 months to, as I have said, a dusty file. Having seen that at that time 40,000 blocks were available—and the Minister for Town Planning admitted this—the Premier estimated that the blocks sold and those put onto the market over a period of 18 months could have balanced out and there could still be approximately 40,000 blocks available. That is what the Premier said.

The Minister for Town Planning made a quick review through his department and came up with a deficit of 6,400. This deficit does not only mean that the figure of 40,000 blocks was reduced by 16 per cent. It means much more than that. I will explain what I mean.

If the yearly demand is 10,000 blocks, as the Minister said—although I think he is using the word "demand" mistakenly—this demand is only replaced by 3,600 blocks. Initially it was estimated that 40,000 blocks were available; this figure was subsequently reduced by 6,400; the yearly demand is said to be 10,000 blocks; and the annual replacement is 3,600 blocks. This is only a 36 per cent. replacement on the yearly demand.

Does this not have an inbuilt inflationary result? Is this a fact or is it scare-mongering? Frankly, I do not think it is either. No matter how convenient it would be for me to take the Minister's statement on this, the much-abused Mr. Worthington said in an article which appeared in *The West Australian* on the 10th October, 1972, that the number of blocks actually created in 1971-72 was 5,360. This is a much higher figure than the conclusions we reach from what the Minister said.

Even though there were 1,760 more blocks than the Minister said, it still would not keep up with the demand which the Minister claims exists each year. By making his statement, the Minister must have made a mistake—even to his own disadvantage.

The important fact is that 40,000 blocks of land were not available in any metropolitan "area" or "region" at any time. Also, prices have risen in comparable areas and, in saying this, I am not only referring to prestige areas, which apparently have been thrust aside by the Premier, because the Government does not give consideration to localities which, perhaps, are a little better than others in some respects.

A report appeared in the *Weekend News* of the 8th April that blocks auctioned by the Shire of Bayswater in Morley brought between \$3,650 and \$4,300. That was on the 4th April. Only 5½ months later

—on the 30th September—the very same Shire of Bayswater auctioned blocks in the very same area for an average price of \$6,050. This, too, was reported in the *Weekend News* of the same day. This means we were confronted with almost the doubling of prices for land in the same area and, as I have said, these were not prestige blocks.

It is also a fact that the number of new building blocks actually created fell from 7,627 in 1969-70 to 5,360 in 1971-72, which is a fall of 30 per cent. when the need for building blocks possibly increased somewhat because, for instance, fewer flats were built as alternative accommodation.

We quite agree it is correct for the Government to say it is necessary to have an adequate supply of blocks; but it is not sufficient merely to say so. Correct information and action based on that information are necessary. In the way the information was supplied by the Minister, it was not convincing. Judging from the public response, I do not think it has convinced anyone, and it has been proven wrong. We read in the *Daily News* on the 13th October that in fact only 282 blocks were left at Whitford out of the 1,300 which the Minister claimed existed.

Mr. Davies: I think you must look at this and be quite fair about it.

Mr. MENSAROS: I will come to that.

Mr. Davies: Wait a moment! We have never said those blocks were there for sale. We said they were there to be built on.

Mr. O'Connor: Available.

Mr. Davies: Available in one way or another.

Mr. MENSAROS: The figure given was 33,600, but it was never said at that time, "Be careful—this does not mean there are 33,600 blocks available for immediate sale for the building of houses. They include such-and-such." When the Minister was challenged, he later said only that there were so many unimproved blocks. It was wide open for misunderstanding. Therefore, I am not being unjust in saying this was misleading in a way. When it was pointed out that this number included many blocks other than blocks for immediate sale, the Minister agreed that was so, but he did not make a proper statement in the first place. It is not a matter of dots on aerial maps; it is a matter of the blocks that are available for immediate sale to those who want to build houses.

We all know the previous Government had the same problem but it was not content to say blocks should be offered and supplied; it supplied blocks from a far worse start than that of the present Government. The previous Government solved the problem by action. It realised it was not enough merely to zone subdivisions but that blocks must be produced.

Hence, it negotiated subdivisions with big subdividers; it laid down conditions regarding the price of some subdivided blocks and the time of making them available. At the same time, it made an attractive offer to the subdividers and, without using anything in the way of compulsion, it solved the problem.

Mr. Davies: The system has not changed.

Mr. MENSAROS: That is also true. I was about to say the situation has changed and the same remedies will not necessarily work in a changed situation. The same pattern cannot be applied when the situation changes. There might now be the same high prices and the same lack of available blocks, but the reason for those circumstances might have changed very drastically. I am quite sure they have changed, and the incentives and curbing action might require to be different. Some of the measures taken by the previous Government might not work now, and I think that is partly being recognised.

For instance, in regard to land tax, it was quite all right at that time to curb individual speculation and apply higher land tax on unimproved land but, although it might have been a good measure at that time, once the situation has been curbed the higher land tax might become a burden and work in the opposite way at the present time.

I go back to what I said previously and point out to the Minister in an objective way that I do not think he quite understood the situation when he made his statement. He said 10,000 blocks was the demand. I maintain what he meant to say was 10,000 blocks might be the need. There is a tremendous difference between need and demand. It is easy for the Minister to calculate from immigration, population growth, and other circumstances what the need for building blocks for houses might be, but it is difficult to calculate demand.

Unfortunately, the price of blocks does not depend on need but on demand, and when the land price boom occurred the previous Government was confronted with a tremendous demand which was far in excess of need. People did not buy blocks only for the purpose of building houses but also for various other purposes. They bought them for sheer speculation, for building spec homes, for their children to build on 15 or 20 years hence—

Mr. Davies: You can be assured I will not be concerned with the speculators—you or anybody else.

Mr. MENSAROS: I am saying demand and need are two different things. Need can be calculated. Unfortunately, demand cannot be calculated; it depends on circumstances. It might very well depend—as I think it did at that time—on the state of the Stock Exchange. Some people invest in the Stock Exchange. If there is a collapse on the Stock Exchange, they might

invest in land, thus immediately causing higher demand and higher prices. Therefore, I agree with the Minister that different circumstances need different solutions.

I repeat that the previous Government achieved something by taking some action. I have proved conclusively that the present Government, after 19 months has not done anything.

The Minister replied to this motion by stating three propositions. He said, "I will give 600 blocks to the Rural and Industries Bank to service and put on the market." That is fair enough; no-one objects to that. The second proposition, which I queried, was—

Mr. O'Connor: There was not much at all in the rest of them.

Mr. MENSAROS: That is what I am saying. The second proposition was that he would implement a particular section of the Metropolitan Region Town Planning Scheme Act, which, when one reads it, deals with nothing more than compulsory resumptions, constructions, and demolitions. If the Minister seeks to solve the problem in that way, I do not think he will go very far.

His third proposition was to have a look at land tax to see what effect it has on prices today and to review the circumstances in order to find out how it might or might not be changed. This is commendable.

Apparently, he subsequently spoke to the Premier and the Cabinet discussed the matter. His subsequent statement does not contain very much. He said the Government would introduce over-the-counter sales. I do not think that will be a solution to the problem. It will apply to a very few blocks, and the Government will leave itself wide open to the accusation of favouritism. What will be the system of over-the-counter sales? It can be done if a contract is made with a big subdivider, obliging him to sell at a set price a large number of the subdivided blocks.

Thirdly, the Minister said he might try to induce the owners of the endowment land to handle sales of that land somewhat differently. I am curious as to just what he meant by that.

I was indeed most surprised to hear the Minister's last suggestion; that is, to create an urban land commission. The Minister must have suggested that with his tongue in his cheek, especially when we consider his often-repeated attitude when in Opposition against the proliferation of boards and other bodies. I agreed with the Minister then and I still agree with that attitude.

I maintain that experience shows that except in extreme circumstances the Government should not revert to creating more and more autonomous bodies. We witnessed today a series of questions that were put to the Minister for Education,

but they were simply brushed off with the reply that the particular body is autonomous. Therefore, the Government virtually disclaimed its responsibility to govern. That is the reason I am against the proliferation of such boards and bodies; and it is the reason—and rightly so—that the Minister was against them when he was in Opposition. I hope the Minister is listening to me now. Now he says the solution will be found in the creation of another board. Well, good luck to the Minister and more good luck to the State; but I do not think that will solve the problem at all.

There are many other aspects to this problem which should be mentioned if time allows. There is the problem of land which was subdivided before the coming into force of regulations stating that land may be subdivided only after it has been serviced. The best example of this is, of course, the land in Daglish. In this connection I would not like to suggest something positive, but I think a point which should definitely be looked at is that such subdivisions, which can be placed on the market without being serviced simply because the land was subdivided prior to the statutory regulations stating that such land must be serviced, should not be placed on the market piece-meal in that condition.

I think there may be some merit—I am not saying there is, but it is something which should be looked at—in asking or compelling the owners either to service the land or to sell it within a certain period.

Then, of course, another aspect is that some services such as sewerage headworks are (a) costly, and (b) not supplied in time. Every member who has had anything to do with land subdivision, or who has even advised subdividers, would know that if a subdivision is proposed at a certain place and another subdivision is proposed alongside the first, the developers play a waiting game because they know that if one puts in the sewerage headworks the second does not have to pay anything. So they wait for each other to do the work.

I think that problem could be overcome and blocks could be placed on the market more quickly if there were some sort of equal division of the costs involved, or a refund such as that paid by the State Electricity Commission. If a person wishes electricity to be connected to his residence and there are no houses nearby and the power must be brought from some distance away, he must pay to have the line installed; but his money is refunded when people build adjacent to him and use the power line which was originally provided at his cost. This is another suggestion which should be considered.

A further aspect to which consideration could be given—and the Minister said he would consider it—is that of land tax concessions, perhaps in direct proportion

to the period of time between the subdivision of the land and the time it is actually placed on the market for sale.

Another aspect which has been highlighted by estate agents' associations is that immediately land is zoned as urban land the valuation rises and consequently the local authority rates rise. Some may say that it is all right because the local authority receives an income, but it works towards higher prices and I cannot see a great deal of justification for it because the local authority does not supply any services at the time simply because the land is rezoned. That is a further matter which should be looked at.

Then there is another general aspect which, unfortunately, applies under almost every Government, and that is red tape. I cannot see any reason why this matter should not be investigated with a view to decreasing the length of time involved, as so many subdividers claim that the time taken to get blocks onto the market is too long.

A further suggestion was made by Mr. Cyril Peet, and perhaps members have seen the newspaper article in connection with this. Mr. Peet is a well-known estate agent, and he said that in many subdivisions today cul-de-sacs may carry only seven or eight vehicles a day because there are only a few houses in them, yet the road is still required to be 24 feet in width. He asked, and rightly so, why subdividers should be compelled to provide such roads in cul-de-sacs when if the road were reduced to 18 feet the price of the land could be reduced by up to \$150 a block. That is another suggestion which should be investigated.

Then, of course, we have the problem of finance for subdividers who, in most cases, must pay cash in advance for services to be provided. They must then wait for a long time before the services are installed.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member has five minutes.

Mr. MENSAROS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, the Government may be able to do something in the way of either not compelling subdividers to pay immediately, or helping them out with bridging finance.

There are, of course, many other aspects but, unfortunately time will not allow me to deal with all of them. It may be possible to implement building conditions as was done under the Brand Government. There could be merit in perhaps releasing some unserviced blocks. I am not suggesting that we should revert to that practice, but possibly it would help the situation if it were done occasionally.

I hope and trust the Government will consider these and many other propositions. It has advisers available to it to consider the propositions and to recommend action. Instead of accusing the

Opposition of being irresponsible and of all sorts of other things, the Government should realise that these things must be done. I hope the Government will do something instead of indulging in fancy and luxurious block development, such as the one it has guaranteed at Yundurup.

I do not think for a moment that the blocks at Yundurup are luxurious. Indeed, I am sorry for the people who may buy them because they have a small frontage and front onto stale water which will silt up and ultimately create a slum. However, I am quite sure the price is luxurious even though the blocks are not. Prices of \$7,500 to \$15,000 for land 60 miles from Perth must be considered to be luxurious. This is the type of area with which the Government is concerning itself, instead of concerning itself with the vital problem of marketable blocks.

Mr. O'Connor: Who is supporting that stand?

Mr. MENSAROS: I am sure the member for Mt. Lawley is well aware of my attitude to this development.

The motion before the House is not unlike the one we moved last year in connection with daylight saving. It does not condemn the Government; it simply asks the Government to do something. It is hard to imagine that any member would be opposed to the motion, because all members must view with concern the deterioration of the position relative to the availability and price of domestic land.

All the Minister could do was deny the fact that such a problem exists, and I do not think he did that convincingly. With regard to the second part of the motion, can anyone oppose our wish to receive a clear and precise statement of the position? I do not think anyone could. I say the Minister has not complied with the wish of the motion with regard to the second part, and he has not provided a clear and precise statement. I hope he will again try to do so. I support the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Rushton.

*House adjourned at 10.20 p.m.*

## Legislative Council

Thursday, the 19th October, 1972

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver) took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### INLAND SUPERPHOSPHATE WORKS *Feasibility Study: Tabling*

THE HON. W. F. WILLESEE (North-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [2.33 p.m.]: In tabling the second phase of the study on the feasibility of estab-

lishing an inland superphosphate plant, I mention that in September, 1971, the Government commissioned Davy Ashmore, consultants, to prepare a report in two phases. The first report was tabled earlier in the year in the Legislative Assembly, copies of which are available in the Legislative Council.

### QUESTIONS (2): WITHOUT NOTICE

#### 1. CLOSE OF SESSION *Legislative Programme*

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH, to the Leader of the House:

As the Leader of the House has given notice of two motions to suspend Standing Orders, would he, between now and next Tuesday when he moves those motions, endeavour to give us some idea of the programme the Government intends to carry out in the coming weeks?

I have in mind the state of our notice paper which is not too bad. But when one looks at the notice paper of the Legislative Assembly one finds that it contains a considerable amount of legislation. I think all members would appreciate knowing what is the intention of the Government in relation to its legislative programme.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied: Yes, I will endeavour to do that.

#### 2. ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

##### *Halls Creek: Reduction of Charges*

The Hon. J. L. HUNT, to the Leader of the House:

(1) With reference to the recent Press statement regarding cost of electricity from isolated generating stations and as Halls Creek power was not mentioned, will the Government give consideration to reducing cost of power at this town?

(2) If so—

(a) what would consumers expect to pay per unit under the new rate, and

(b) what was the cost under the old schedule?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE replied:

(1) Halls Creek was not mentioned in the Press statement as the scheme announced referred to electricity undertakings not under the control of the State Electricity Commission. Tariffs at Halls Creek were reduced as from the 1st October, 1972.

(2) (a) From the 1st October, 1972. Industrial Commercial and General.