

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 19th October, 1977

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West—Leader of the House) [4.50 p.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, the 25th October.

Question put and passed.

POLICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (Leader of the House), and read a first time.

METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE, AND DRAINAGE BOARD (VALIDATION) BILL

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (Leader of the House), and returned to the Assembly with an amendment.

VETERINARY SURGEONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Third Reading

THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH (South—Minister for Transport) [4.53 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

I would like to answer two queries raised during the Committee stage of this Bill by the Hon. John Williams which I referred to the Minister for Agriculture for clarification, and I take this opportunity of providing answers which I trust will prove satisfactory to that member.

The first concerned the qualifying period of 12 months residency in the Commonwealth of Australia for registration under the Act as a veterinary surgeon. This is required under proposed section 20(1) (e) (ii) and it is pointed out that the requirement is already contained in the principal Act under section 20 (1) (c) (iii) (1).

However, the Bill further provides on page 7,

and this was pointed out by the Hon. George Berry during the debate, under proposed new section 20 (2) "where a person satisfies the board that he has such qualifications in veterinary surgery as to justify the board in exempting him from all or any of the requirements of subparagraph (ii) and subparagraph (iii) of paragraph (e) of subsection (1) of this section, the board may—

- (a) exempt him from all or any of those requirements, or
- (b) if the board thinks fit, impose conditions as to his registration or restrictions on the practice of veterinary surgery by that person notwithstanding his registration; or
- (c) so exempt him and impose such conditions."

The residency period of one year may be applied in those cases where there is doubt as to the applicant's ability to communicate in a professional manner with the Australian public, taking into account local customs and farming practices.

The peculiar difficulty in deciding on applicants under proposed section 20 (1) (e) is that the university where the applicant was educated may not have been assessed and recognised by the board. Such an assessment is of great value in deciding whether a person is likely to be fully up to Australian standards. The honourable member also raised a query in respect of clause 17 of the Bill relating to proposed new subsection (2) of section 23 of the Act concerning deregistration or suspension for indictable offences. This proposed new subsection is virtually the same as the existing section 23 (2) (a) and (b) of the principal Act which has been operative since 1960. The wording has not created any problems and in the opinion of the Crown Law Department the subsection, as worded, is quite workable.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with an amendment.

CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

Third Reading

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South West—Leader of the House) [4.55 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

The PRESIDENT: I remind honourable members that this Bill requires the concurrence of

an absolute majority and in accordance with Standing Order No. 308 a division must be taken.

Bells rung and the House divided.

Division resulted as follows—

Ayes 17

Hon. G. W. Berry	Hon. W. M. Piesse
Hon. H. W. Gayfer	Hon. R. G. Pike
Hon. T. Knight	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. J. C. Tozer
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. R. J. L. Williams
Hon. M. McAleer	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. T. McNeil	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. N. F. Moore	Hon. V. J. Ferry
Hon. O. N. B. Oliver	(Teller)

Noes 8

Hon. D. W. Cooley	Hon. F. E. McKenzie
Hon. D. K. Dans	Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs
Hon. Lyla Elliott	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. R. Hetherington	Hon. R. F. Cloughton
	(Teller)

The PRESIDENT: I declare the motion carried with the concurrence of an absolute majority and the Bill will now be read a third time.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

**ACTS AMENDMENT
(CONSTITUTION) BILL**

Second Reading: Defeated

Debate resumed from the 12th October.

THE HON. D. K. DANS (South Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [5.00 p.m.]: The Opposition opposes this Bill because it simply seeks to do what has been common practice for many years. In our opinion, in addition to doing those things, the measure is mischievous and unnecessary. It seems to me to be a stunt by the Government to put across to the people of this State that it is only the Liberal Party which is concerned with law and order.

This Bill will not raise the status of Parliament in any way, or raise the status of members of Parliament. I suppose that in the final analysis, if anything at all is to raise the standard of members of Parliament, it will be the members themselves.

So far, during this current session of Parliament, we have dealt only with machinery Bills which are Public Service measures, and are not matters of broad Government policy. The Bills which have been introduced demonstrate that the Government has run out of ideas and it has run out of steam. It appears to me that is the very reason this Bill has been trotted out. It is transparently obvious the Government does not have enough legislation for Parliament to consider.

It is amusing to note that the Government

apparently thinks this legislation will prevent the implementation of Australian Labor Party policy. The Government believes this legislation will negate ALP policy. However, it is quite clear the Government has misread or misconstrued our policy. If any member of the Government would like to get some clear ideas on ALP policy, I am always available.

This legislation is both unnecessary and sinister; it is unnecessary because it is a waste of the time of this Parliament and, for a large part, it will have little direct effect under the present constitutional and electoral situation. It is sinister because it puts yet another hurdle in the way of democratic reform—yet another obstacle in the way to make this Parliament truly democratic.

The Bill sets out to do three things and, if I may, I will quote what the Minister said during his second reading speech. He said—

It is designed to achieve three main purposes. Firstly, it is to emphasise the role of Her Majesty the Queen in the Parliament of Western Australia.

Secondly, it is to protect and preserve the existence of both Houses of the State Parliament and to ensure their continued role as an integral and essential part of the lawmaking process.

Thirdly, it is to confirm by Statute the office of Governor and that appointments to the office of Governor and the instructions with which the Governor must comply in performing his duties are both made and issued by the Queen personally as is the present case.

The Minister also outlined more specific matters covered by the Bill. They included the spelling out clearly in the Constitution the fact that our Parliament consists of the Queen, the Legislative Assembly, and the Legislative Council. Another point he emphasised was that any future Bill proposing to abolish either House of Parliament, which would reduce the numbers of the members of either House, or which would permit either House to be constituted by members not elected by the electors at large, would have to be approved by a referendum.

The Minister also clearly spelt out that the same procedure would apply to any Bill the purpose of which was to abolish or alter the office of Governor, abolish or alter the sole right of the Queen to issue instructions to the Governor as to the performance of his duties, or alter the requirement that every Bill must be presented to the Governor for assent before it became law.

The Minister also referred to the Government's

policy statement for the period 1977 to 1979, which clearly spells out the intentions of the Government in regard to entrenching provisions in the Constitution to protect the office of Governor, and both Houses of Parliament.

Before I proceed any further let me make it quite clear that the ALP policy on these matters—from my reading of *Hansard*—seems to have been misconstrued. From my reading of the debates which have taken place there are several experts on the ALP policy. I must confess that I stick within my policy, and I am not *au fait* with the policy of the Liberal Party. I leave that to those members opposite who know more about it.

The Hon. R. G. Pike interjected.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I should imagine that any person who enters Parliament, before branching out and becoming an expert on the Opposition policy would become thoroughly *au fait* with the policy of his own party.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: I did not mention the Leader of the Opposition as a matter of courtesy, because you were not here. However, I will follow that up at another time.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I did not mention Mr Pike; I do not know whether he was present last night or whether he was absent.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: If the cap fits, the Leader of the Opposition can wear it.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Well, the cap seems to fit the member opposite. However, let us get back to the Bill. Perhaps the member's leader will explain some of the practices of this House.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: The interjection underlines my marked dislike of anybody referring to any member not being present in this Chamber. That has never been the practice, and I dislike it irrespective of whether the reference is from this side, or from the Opposition.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: And that did not happen last night.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Hon. D. K. Dans.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I want to outline clearly the ALP policy in respect of the matters outlined by the Minister when he introduced the Bill. The Minister claims this legislation is issued to protect the institutions against ALP policy. Unfortunately for the Minister, he is a little confused about ALP policy. Perhaps he was shooting a little from the hip.

Let me make it quite clear there is nothing in the ALP policy about abolishing or changing the role of the Queen in this State, or in this nation. Certainly, there could not be any such policy.

Secondly, anyone with the slightest knowledge of the parliamentary system of government would be aware that the Parliament always consists of the Monarch, plus the Parliament. In the case of the Western Australian Parliament, this means the Monarch and the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council, all having equal constitutional weight. That is not in doubt, and it is not in question. The parliamentary system would have to be abolished for the position to change. So, this aspect of the legislation is a pointless empty gesture; an exercise in political point scoring. Even if the ALP wanted to take such foolish action, it cannot be done under the present system. No-one has ever suggested we do away with the present system.

Thirdly, it is true certainly that the ALP is committed in the long term to the establishment of a unicameral system of Parliament—or legislature; a single House of Parliament. However, we recognise very clearly that that course is not yet acceptable to the people of this State. Clearly, in 1977 and, perhaps, for some time to come yet the people of this State are not ready to accept the unicameral system of Parliament. That attitude would stop us from attempting to make a change as part of our policy.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: The position is not made clear in the ALP platform.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: The member opposite has experts on ALP policy within his own party who will be able to explain the position more fully than I could.

The immediate aim of the ALP is to reform the Legislative Council in order to make it a democratic Chamber. As long as it exists, it ought to reflect accurately the will of the people of this State as it is expressed at the ballot boxes.

Without wishing to enter into a prolonged argument, I say we all know the Legislative Council is grotesquely weighted in favour of interests as against people. Our first aim is to democratise the Legislative Council.

The suggestion that the ALP proposes to reduce the number of members of Parliament, is a statement based on ignorance. Indeed, our policy goes as far as to say that should we ever be in a position to create a unicameral system of Parliament—a single Chamber Parliament—it would consist of the same number of members as are at present elected to the two Chambers. It is not correct to say, or even to imply, that we advocate a reduction in the number of members of Parliament. What we do advocate, and what we will continue to advocate, is that we should

have a unicameral system of Parliament. I have already demonstrated that is our policy. I also have to say that the people of this State do not seem to accept that proposition in 1977, but eventually they will.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: They may.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I said they will.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You should have said that they may.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: Do not let us argue; I might get around to the way of thinking of the Leader of the House and say that they may!

As to the position of the Governor, it is not possible to abolish the post simply by some action to change the Constitution of this State. Those people who say it is possible evidently do not know anything about the Federal Constitution—the Australian Constitution. I remind members that the States only exist as a result of the Australian Constitution. Certainly, the States existed before the Constitution, but the States now exist as a result of the Constitution.

During the election campaign the Premier suggested—

We also have reason to believe that attempts could be made to abolish or water down the right of the Queen to appoint the Governor.

That is one of the greatest political hoaxes perpetrated in this State for a long time. I do not know how any person but the monarch—and I do not think anyone could disagree with me—could formally appoint the Governor. I just do not see how that could be done. However, leaving that aside it is true to say that we would propose not to appoint a Governor, but leave the position unfilled and appoint a Lieutenant-Governor; or for that matter, an Administrator.

It was monstrous for the Minister to imply that, in effect, the Queen actually does appoint the Governor. We know that the Government of the day appoints the Governor or, perhaps to be more correct, the Government of the day submits the name of its nominee to the Queen who, under normal circumstances, would agree to the appointment. There may be exceptional circumstances where the Queen would not make the appointment, but I do not know of any. However, it is not true to say that the Queen states to the Government of the day that she will appoint the Governor. I do not argue with the present procedure, but it is not correct to imply that the Queen wishes upon us the Governor. I thought it was just as well to make that point quite clear.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I think the Queen would retain the right to refuse if anyone put up an absurd representative.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I did say there could possibly be exceptions when the Queen has objected, but I do not know of any. Certainly no-one would argue against that fact.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: It happened in Queensland.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: There was something in the back of my mind.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: There was a breakthrough when Sir Isaac Isaacs was appointed.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: He was our first Jewish Governor-General for about one year.

Apart from our policy which is very clear and is not intended to confuse, we have never said that we would do away with the office of Governor. For the reasons I have outlined we could not do that. By abolishing the office it would simply leave the position unfilled, and we would have to retain the services of a Lieutenant-Governor or Administrator. This would bring about very many benefits, in costs and in other directions, to the State, and in addition the State would progress just the same.

I am sure we all recall one Lieutenant-Governor who was very popular for very many years in this State. I can still visualise that fine gentleman striding along St George's Terrace; of course, I refer to the late Sir James Mitchell. Perhaps he was a carryover from the days when politics did not involve as much cut and thrust. I believe he had a nick-name in his young days, and was affectionately referred to as "Moo Cow". A Labor Premier (the Hon. Philip Collier) appointed him Lieutenant-Governor of this State. He held that post for many years and performed his duties very well. Possibly he was one of our most popular public figures.

I want to clarify the situation as to what is Labor Party policy, what it is supposed to be, and what in fact it really is. Therefore the proposal to confirm by Statute the office of Governor is completely unnecessary. In any case, it may be that the Government is misleading the Parliament and the people by giving them the impression that by voting at a referendum they can abolish or alter the office of Governor. This is completely incorrect.

The Federal Constitution contains a number of references to State Governors; for example, in part II relating to the Senate, chapter I, clause 12, states—

The Governor of any State may cause writs to be issued for elections of Senators for the State. In case of the dissolution of the Senate, the writ shall be issued within ten days of proclamation of such dissolution.

Clause 15 states—

The name of any Senator so chosen or appointed shall be certified by the Governor of the State to the Governor-General.

There are no less than five separate sections of the Australian Constitution which make reference to the office of State Governor. It would appear that before the office of any State Governor can be abolished, there would have to be a referendum of all the Australian people under the terms of the National Constitution.

That was why I referred earlier to the fact that, in my unqualified opinion, the States exist only as a consequence of federation under the Australian Constitution. Mr Medcalf is not in the Chamber, but perhaps he will agree with my comment. There would have to be a national referendum, and it would have to be carried in the manner that all referendums are carried. Despite the fact that the last referendum held to determine the holding of simultaneous Federal elections was carried by 62 per cent of the Australian people, it was not carried by the majority of the States; so, the same situation still exists. Even if the Constitution of the State was amended to abolish the position of Governor that would not be enough; the Federal Constitution would also have to be amended.

Members will no doubt agree that every time we go to the people to amend the Federal Constitution we are not successful. I do not know whether the reason is that it is easier for people to write "No" than "Yes". I have the figures relating to referendums which have been held, and they point to the fact that the "Yes" vote has not been very successful.

It does appear that the Federal Constitution might already protect the office of Governor of Western Australia, regardless of what the people of Western Australia want to do about that office. Even if by some strange chance in the not-too-distant future we went before the people of Western Australia by way of referendum to ascertain whether or not they wanted the office of Governor to be retained, and even if the "Yes" vote was greater, we would still have to contend with the Federal Constitution. The fact that the people of Western Australia have expressed their wishes through the vote would not be enough. The powers of the Federal Constitution would override their wishes and their will.

In addition, the office of Governor is so firmly

entrenched in this State that it would need an absolute majority of both Houses to alter or abolish it. So, there does not appear to be any good reason for this legislation to be before this Chamber. It may be a very good exercise, and it certainly was mentioned in our policy speech, although we have not heard much mention of it. It does not appear to me that the office of Governor would be in any imminent danger as a result of ALP policy, regardless of what interpretation might be placed on it.

The proposal to require a referendum before either House of Parliament can be abolished is also phoney. It is perfectly clear that the Legislative Council of this State, now the most powerful upper House in the world, would be reinforced further.

The Liberal and National Country Parties are not satisfied with the present power structure of the upper House. They want to make sure that even in the distant future, if some members of the conservative parties of this House experience blood rushing to their heads and decide to be democratic—as happened in South Australia—and go along with the proposition of one-vote-one-value, they will still have the referendum proposition to fall back on. I do not think we would have an immediate problem with members opposite suddenly becoming imbued with the true spirit of democracy.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: I think Mr Pike might.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: What this legislation is doing is to place another hurdle in the way of democratic reform, no matter how far away that may be in this State. The referendum proposal is simply a phoney attempt to give a veneer of democracy to a malapportioned, rigged, and inequitable system.

There is great irony in the fact that the Premier proposes to use a referendum, which by its very nature is conducted on the basis of one-vote-one-value, allegedly to protect this Chamber which is elected on a grotesquely weighted vote. This gives a basis of one-vote-one-value when a referendum is used to protect the rights and privileges of the Legislative Council—which basis even the most biased member on either side of the House would agree does not apply in respect of the election of its members. It seems strange to me that we should resort to the holding of a referendum on a basis of one-vote-one-value to protect the rights and powers of this Chamber. This is food for thought to people who think seriously about some of the phoney things that are being done in this amending Bill.

I do not know whether the Government is serious in its desire to consult the people on changes; whether it really wants their opinions on major issues of the day; and whether it only wants to consult the people on issues on which it wants the opinions of the people. The Government wants the power to hold a referendum on the office of Governor and on changes to Parliament, but the same Government and the same parties are violently opposed to a referendum on the single most significant issue of our time—the life and death issue of mining and exporting uranium.

The Government flatly refuses such a referendum; it contends that this is not necessary or applicable either in this State or in the Federal sphere. This evening's newspaper contains a report of some poll which has been conducted; and in these days many polls are held. It indicates that 59 per cent of the people of Australia think that a referendum on the mining and export of uranium should be held.

That is an issue which, in the opinion of some people, amounts to a life and death issue. If one looks around the world one can see how attitudes towards uranium mining are changing. It could well be that after a referendum has been held it would be all right for Australia to mine and export uranium; however, this Government refuses the holding of such a referendum. Yet, the proposition we have before us is along the lines that we should hold a referendum based on one-vote-one-value to protect the upper House! That does not seem right, and the action of the Government in this area is sinister. It appears to me to be some kind of double standard.

Invariably we have to get down to the nitty-gritty of the legislation. I think the Government should be extremely careful in travelling down this very undemocratic road because, as time goes on, as the economic position gets either better or worse, as public attitudes change, and as people realise that the Government does not truly reflect their wishes, the population as a whole—and not the people committed to particular political parties—will realise in increasing numbers that Parliament is irrelevant.

Because of the preponderance of elections and confrontation in politics, we find that the people are starting to think more deeply about parliamentary representation—not the parliamentary democracy we have, but the methods by which we operate it. I do not know whether other members of this House have that feeling. However, when people do not get the right kind of representation, or their voice is not heard in Parliament, they turn to other methods to get redress.

In many parts of the world, more and more decisions are being made outside Parliament. In one country which some people like to kick—I refer to the United States of America—the reverse process is going on. There are reasons for that. No matter how slow or cumbersome the parliamentary process may be in that country, because of the peculiar party system—there are virtually four parties, comprising the Northern Democrats, the Southern Democrats, the Northern Republicans, and the Southern Republicans—they are keenly aware of the reaction to public opinion, and they are able to transfer such reaction to the Parliament; this is quite a unique system.

I suppose someone will say that he does not agree with what I have said, because every time one opens the newspaper one reads reports of hijacks, murders, or kidnapping. Such acts relate back to politics, because some people are of the opinion they are not represented properly. That is a dangerous attitude for people to adopt. When Parliaments or Governments become unresponsive to the wishes of the people—whether the Government be a Labor Party Government or a Liberal Party Government—then the democracy or the type of parliamentary representation we have in this country is in danger.

When that day arrives it will be a very sorry one for this place and this State. When that day arrives all the blame will be attached to successive Liberal Governments and their conservative predecessors which have placed a higher value on entrenching themselves permanently in power, regardless of who is in office, than of making this State a functioning liberal democracy.

It is sheer humbug for the Government to claim it has a mandate for the measure before us. The only occasion on which the Liberal Party policy undertakings surfaced during the election campaign was when the Premier made a brief reference to them in his campaign opening.

When I commenced my speech I said the Bill before us had simply come forward. It does not do anything at this stage; it relates to the future. I have demonstrated to the House that what has been implied as being ALP policy is not the protection of the two-House system, because the malapportionment of the votes of this place provides all the protection that is needed in that direction.

One can only come to the conclusion that because we have settled on a plateau or valley in the economic situation and there is no other legislation coming forward, the Government has to create a little scene or stunt and make it very

clear that it is doing something which will protect the future. If I may quote, the Premier is like Don Quixote tilting at windmills. His efforts are just about as effective as those of that knight of the woeful countenance; the only difference is that his aim is not as good.

It is time members opposite strongly and forcefully pointed out to the Premier that this State has real problems. It has employment problems, inflation problems, and a whole host of other problems. I am not so naive as to say that we are the only State, or indeed the only nation in the world, that has problems.

The Premier and his Government should be devoting themselves full time to solving those problems in the interests of the State instead of engaging in childish grandstanding, which is what this Bill represents to me.

The measures contained in this Bill are the efforts of frightened little men who are eternally afraid of losing their entrenched positions of power. We will never go along with piecemeal measures aimed at entrenching the Liberal and National Country Parties in power forever. The Government must come to grips with the real problems in the community. If we are going to change the Constitution of this State, then let us have a thorough review and not just self-interested fiddling.

I know full well that politics is a game of numbers, and that this Bill will pass. The Bill will not hurt me greatly as I cannot see it doing anything at all, apart from filling in time; because if people in the future want to change the system they will do so. The future will take care of itself; we cannot take care of it.

When we enact legislation like this for the future we encourage the extremist groups in the community. At one stage we used to think the Communist Party was a very extreme group, but today I look around me and I see that the Communist Party—and there appears to be four or five of them now—is a respectable organisation compared with the different groups I see demonstrating at the front of Parliament House. I can see by the way you are looking at me, Sir, that you are aware of this.

I have seen a whole lot of black flags being carried along in front of this place; and the black flag is the symbol of the anarchist movement, the fastest growing movement in the world. Then we have seen some plain red flags which I believe are the flags of the Trotsky group. If anyone has read the newspaper which is published twice a week by that group, he would be amazed at the quality and the journalistic ability of it; and this causes

one to think that these people must have supporters somewhere. We all know the Trotsky manifesto is one of struggle.

These are the kind of things that people will feed on, if not today then tomorrow. They are the kind of things which cause people in other countries rightly or wrongly to hijack aircraft, to shoot pilots, and to dump their bodies on the tarmac. There is no immediate danger of that in this country, I hope, but do not let us set the scene for people in the future to feed on this kind of legislation, because the legislation must be seen as having that potential.

It rather amuses me that it is intended to use referendums with one-vote-one-value to bolster up this Chamber, which is not elected on that basis. I ask you, Sir, or anyone in the electorate to consider that for a few moments. If you do, you must come to the conclusion that this Bill is a stunt.

I will conclude on the note on which I started: This Bill is a stunt to the extent that it is both mischievous and unnecessary. It simply gives the image of doing something. It certainly puts into effect a couple of lines in the Liberal Party policy speech, but in actual fact it does nothing apart from creating dangers for the future.

I hope members think very clearly about this Bill in the terms in which I have spoken. It will do nothing today or tomorrow, but it will create dangers for the future. It is a time-wasting exercise for both Chambers, and we totally reject the measure.

THE HON. R. HETHERINGTON (East Metropolitan) [5.36 p.m.]: When at the last State Conference of the Australian Labor Party there was a resolution moved that said words to the effect that until such time as the office of Governor was abolished, a Labor Government would appoint a Lieutenant-Governor and not appoint a Governor, the Premier was reported in the Press—and I presume accurately—as saying the Government would do something about this to prevent the Labor Party carrying out its nefarious intent. I was rather intrigued to find out how the Government would do that, because I could not see how it could bring in a Bill that would prevent the Labor Party from not appointing a Governor when the office fell vacant. It was with great interest that I read this Bill when it was introduced and found, of course, that the Government had not done that—because it could not do it.

So this whole exercise, which grew out of a typical over-reaction by the Premier to prevent the Labor Party doing something it promised to

do, is a damp squib from that point of view. Of course, when one looks at the Constitution one sees that if a Governor dies or resigns or is not there—a period of vacancy must occur, be it short or long—a Lieutenant-Governor must carry on; and if there is no Lieutenant-Governor an Administrator may be appointed.

In fact, I read the Constitution with great interest after this Bill was introduced and I found out, much to my amazement, that it does allow for there not being a Governor or Lieutenant-Governor. There can be an Administrator, who may be a politician. A member of the Government could be an Administrator. The Premier could appoint himself Administrator if he wanted to. This raises all sorts of interesting possibilities, because I thought that could not happen.

What the Labor Party conference said was that we would appoint a Lieutenant-Governor instead of a Governor, and a Labor Government could still do this; there is nothing in the Bill to prevent it. Therefore, why the Bill? It is a great smoke screen to accuse the Labor Party of doing something that it never intended to do, and I can assure the House that if members care to read an up-to-date copy of the Labor platform they will find there is no mention of the Governor in the actual platform but only in a conference resolution. I am quite prepared to provide some members, who seem to pontificate on the Labor Party but who have very little experience of it, with a copy of the platform if they want one, or to table a copy in this House.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Will you table it after your speech?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I cannot, because I have not a copy with me, but I will certainly see that the honourable member gets one if he wants one.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Why don't you save time and go to my office, where I will give you a copy.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Yes, he will give the honourable member a copy.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: They cost \$1 at Trades Hall.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I will pay for it, if that is what the member wants. What the Bill says is that we will do what we have always done; it makes loud noises about the Queen and how she will behave, and it says that the Governor will act on the instruction of the Queen, as he always has done and always must do. That is a convention of the Constitution.

We have two conventions in Australia about

the appointment of vice-regal representatives, or representatives of the Queen. In the Federal Government the Governor-General is appointed on the advice of the Prime Minister direct; and as the Hon. Robert Pike pointed out by interjection a little earlier in respect of the appointment of Sir Isaac Isaacs as Governor-General by the Scullen Government, this was forced on King George V very unwillingly, so much so that when the King finally gave in and appointed as his personal representative a person he did not want because he was an Australian, instead of saying that His Majesty was graciously pleased, the document merely said that His Majesty, on the advice of the Prime Minister, had appointed Sir Isaac Isaacs.

The note was very curt to show the royal displeasure. However, that was the end of that from then on, and Governors-General have since been appointed on the advice of the Prime Minister direct.

However, as far as the States are concerned, we still have colonial status and so we have to go through quite an elaborate charade these days. The Premier either after a Cabinet meeting or of his own initiative, depending on the kind of Government in power, has to advise the Foreign Minister and the Commonwealth Secretary that he would like a certain person appointed as Governor of the State; and the Foreign Minister then advises Her Majesty, who then makes the appointment.

It was at this stage that recently Mr Bjelke-Petersen, the Premier of Queensland, recommended that Sir Colin Hannah be reappointed as Governor of Queensland. The Foreign Minister refused to pass on that recommendation to the Queen and the appointment was not made. So the Queen does indeed still hold discretion on the advice of one of her Ministers in the United Kingdom; which leaves us fairly well under colonial rule from the point of view that the Queen acts on the advice of a British Minister.

I understand that there is some argument on whether the Colonial Laws Validity Act of 1863 still applies to the States. When the Statute of Westminster removed its application from the Commonwealth, it was expressly left applying to the States. But I understand there is some doubt that this is still the case because of something which happened in the development in the Commonwealth of Nations in 1949.

So perhaps it can be said that the Government here is reiterating what has always been so; and it has said it will prevent the Labor Party from doing something it never said it would do, because

there was no mention of it in the platform. Therefore, this seems to be a waste of time. It is another case of the fastest lip in the west—if I may speak of the Premier in that way—

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I think it is without doubt that you should not.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I retract the statement and apologise to the Chair and to the House. There is no doubt that the Premier, reacting quickly and perhaps not reading what the Labor Party had said, found himself in a position in which he had made a public statement and then had to carry it out. He has not carried it out because he could not do so, but he has brought in this Bill because he had to do something.

The other matter, of course, relates to the provisions which entrench the position of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly, and make it impossible for the numbers of either House to be reduced without a referendum. So that there is no doubt as to what is the policy of the Labor Party, which has already been outlined by my leader, I will read it to the House. It is contained on page 4 of the State platform, under the heading, "Constitution".

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Is that the one you will table when you find it?

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: You haven't got a platform.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Is Mr Hetherington reading from the platform that he said he would table but could not because he did not have a copy?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I have a photostat copy of the relevant section of the platform. I do not have the whole platform with me, otherwise I would be only too happy to let the member have it. It reads—

1. The democratic right to an equally valued vote to be written into the State Constitution Act Amendment Act. Votes shall be deemed equal if no more than six (6) seats fall outside the permissible fluctuation of 10%.

2. Reform of the Legislative Council with the eventual aim of establishing a single house of Parliament.

Of course, that will happen when the people are ready for it.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: Is that in conflict with the determination of the Federal conference of the party wherein there is a bald statement that they stand for the abolition of the Senate and the Legislative Council? If there is a conflict does not

your Federal policy have prior right over your State Constitution?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: The short answer is "No". To continue—

3. A single chamber Parliament to have the same number of members as the sum of the members of the two chambers it replaces, all members to be elected from single member electorates.

We had a bit of an argument in the party about this because some of us—and I was one of them—preferred the West German system whereunder there is a mix of single member electorates and proportional representation. That is a very sophisticated and good system but I do not think the electors of Western Australia would like it; and being a democratic party we thought we would do what would be acceptable to the electors. To continue—

4. While two Houses of Parliament exist—

- (a) The Legislative Councillors shall be elected by a proportional list system for a term equal to two Assembly terms, with half the Council retiring at each Assembly election.
- (b) If the Legislative Council refuses to pass legislation already passed by the Legislative Assembly, such bill shall become law twelve months after its third reading in the Assembly.

It then goes on, and members can read the rest.

We have quite a clear programme in that the platform at present says that we hope eventually to introduce a unicameral system. The platform proposes not only to abolish this House but also, as was pointed out to me by the Clerk in another place—and I had not thought of it in this way—to abolish both Houses and create a new unicameral Parliament as big as the present Parliament in toto or the Parliament that should be in existence at the time. The wording was put in quite carefully to allow for this. It was done quite deliberately—and I know this because in fact I drafted it—so that we do not wish to reduce the numbers of the present two Houses in the new House that we introduce. But this is something for the future. In the meantime we hope to reform this House and the other House, the Legislative Assembly.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: As a matter of interest, who would be in charge—a Speaker or a President?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I would

think we would probably follow the custom of the original Legislative Council and have a Speaker.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: I do not think our President would agree with that.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: He would not be here so we would not have to worry. We would face that hurdle when we came to it.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Is this an evil plot to get rid of the President?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Not at all; no doubt we would transpose him as the Speaker, and I am sure he would embrace that position.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Can you give any guarantee of that?

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I cannot give any guarantee at all. What interests me is that at a time when the Government is boasting of its record majority—and I have not checked the figures to see whether it is a record—when it has a huge majority in this House well entrenched by an electoral system which I do not call truly representative, and when, according to the Press, the polls show that Labor Party support is fairly low, the Government seems terribly afraid of what the Labor Party is going to do. Apparently any moment now we are going to gain control of both Houses and suddenly overnight change the whole Constitution. Really!

I think the Government probably is recognising the fact that despite its numbers it might have to face the fact that its popularity is about to decline because of its declining performance. But if the Government is fearful of the Labor Party, well and good. I hope the day comes when it needs to be because we certainly hope that we will replace it with a better Government in less than three years' time.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You never have yet.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That is a matter of opinion.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Every time it has happened it has been a better one than before.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: We on this side do not really accept the Minister's statement, but we often do not. I am sad about that. Although I do not disapprove of a written Constitution—and last night I was arguing that we should have a written Constitution with fairly close definitions which the courts could interpret, but was overruled by the wisdom of this House—I can understand people who think highly of a system of government trying to entrench it by making some special provision.

It seems to me there would be some argument

for a referendum to be held under two conditions. The first is that both Houses of the Parliament were elected democratically so that it would be possible for the Labor Party to gain control of both Houses; and this, of course, is the thing of which the Government is fearful.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: You can if you are good enough.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: We would need to be supermen or to go in for miracles, but, as I said in my maiden speech, we intend to try to get into the miracle game and we will try to be good enough. At the same time we will try to convince members opposite that there is such a thing as democracy, although the Leader of the House did not seem to know what it was. I shall not try to define it for him now because he would not want me to talk for an hour. There is such a thing as democracy and members on the other side of the House might one day come to believe in it because it has happened previously that people who believed in representative systems desired to make them democratic.

It appears to me that if there were two democratic Chambers whereby it was possible for either party to gain control of both Houses there might be some argument from a conservative point of view for entrenching the Constitution by making provision for a referendum to be held. If this is what the Government is doing I would find it very difficult to argue against it; but of course it is not.

The other way in which I think a referendum would be well justified, if we are going to maintain our kind of non-representative upper House as a so-called House of Review, would be to allow the lower House, the more representative House—if its Bills were rejected, say, twice with perhaps an election intervening—to appeal to the people to obtain the real will of the people by referendum after the upper House had caused the pause in time. If the Government were advancing this I would be prepared to accept it as a step along the way to something better.

But what it has done is to make sure that in no way can a system which is based on malapportionment be overturned unless hurdle after hurdle has been overcome. In other words, to overturn this system we must firstly win the lower House and then in two successive elections, with the electorates weighted against us, the Labor Party has to win the upper House. Then if there were a constitutional majority in each House—and I am sure Mr Withers does not expect that to happen too soon, as I do not—even if we did try we would have to get a referendum

passed. One of the problems with referendums—although they sound highly democratic—as we all know from our Federal experience, is that if one major party opposes a referendum the people tend to vote for the status quo.

However, this is something to which I would not object particularly if we were to reform our present parliamentary system, because then I could see some point in it. As it is, it is a sort of window dressing. One day when I have time I shall try to work out the percentage of the vote of the State we would need to get control of this House, but if we ever do get that vote we will also get a referendum passed at a gallop.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: I hope this is always a House of Review with individual representation.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I like to hear the honourable member's words. As a matter of fact, they remind me of a debate I used to have some years ago with the present Federal member for Angas, the Hon. Geoffrey Giles. He is a very delightful person and he had the ability to skirt all around a question with great honesty and integrity.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: He would be a Labor member, I hope!

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: No, he is a member of the Liberal Party, but he is quite a delightful person all the same. He used to talk about the independence of members of the upper House and one day I said—

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Perhaps you cannot understand it on that side because you are always whipped into line.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: He could understand it because he was studying politics and he did quite well. I nearly got an admission out of him one day—but he stopped just at the vital moment—that if the numbers were low and if the Government were at stake, he would be whipped into line. One of the things which members of the Liberal and National Country Parties in this House can do is to make a gesture occasionally. Those parties can afford some people of genuine independence such as the honourable member who sits opposite me, but this would be less likely to happen if the numbers were closer. They can afford to make these grandiose gestures when they have the numbers.

One of the things which interested me when I was elected to this Parliament was to find that the disciplined Labor Party did not seem to be nearly as disciplined as the undisciplined Liberal Party in many ways, but perhaps I just have a wrong impression. I remember when the Menzies

Government was in office a couple of members were notorious for every now and again ostentatiously abstaining to show how independent they were. This happened until the Menzies Government had a majority of one, and then, of course, nobody abstained because the realities of the modern system of Government are that if the numbers are close members will be whipped into line, because in principle they prefer their party to the other party.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: But you have never been close to us, so why are you whipped into line?

The Hon. Lyla Elliott: What happened to the liquor Bill?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That is a sore point. You are not supposed to talk about that.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: We could bring up some other Bills.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I am sure the honourable member could bring up all sorts of things! I make no apology for Labor Party discipline.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You are making terribly heavy weather of this.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I am sorry that I seem to be worrying the Leader of the House.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Not worrying me—boring me.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I am sorry I am boring the Minister, so I shall go on doing so.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You have given us this lecture twice before.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: The Minister is not the only one.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I am sorry about that too, but I am not going to let it worry me.

The PRESIDENT: It is worrying the Chair that I am not hearing anything about the Bill from the honourable member.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I am sorry, Mr President. I am trying to address myself to the Bill but I keep being diverted. I am still a little inexperienced in the ways of the House and I will try to follow your instructions.

The PRESIDENT: I suggest you ignore the interjections.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: You do not believe that any more than you want us to believe it; you do not believe it at all.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I do not believe what at all?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: That your inexperience is a handicap.

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: Is the Minister accusing me of stating something that is not true?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON: I am sorry, Mr President, but I object to people saying I do not believe something that I have said. I find that very offensive.

It seems to me that this whole Bill is, as my leader said, a charade which will not make very much difference. It is an attempt to assert a nonexistent principle; it is an attempt to get some publicity; and it is an attempt by the Government to say it has saved the State from some other wicked ploy of the Labor Party, which we have neither the intention nor the ability to carry through. From that point of view the Bill is obnoxious and the Opposition will vote against it.

I have no doubt members opposite will carry it through with their numbers, but I believe it is a Bill which brings the Government no credit. I have found to my amazement that there have been a number of Bills that do this and I did say when I first stood up to speak in this House that I was amazed at the paucity of positive proposals coming from the Government. I have continued to be amazed.

When I first got into Parliament I thought we would spend more time on positive legislation but the Government does not seem to have any, so even a person with my so-called experience can be disillusioned. With that I oppose the Bill.

Sitting suspended from 6.01 to 7.30 p.m.

THE HON. V. J. FERRY (South West) [7.30 p.m.]: My remarks will be reasonably brief, but I wish to record my support of the Bill which relates to the office of Governor and also to the Parliament itself. It contains provisions to maintain the status quo in some respects.

I do not propose to range over a whole area in dealing with the legislation, but I think I could comment with great confidence that the Hon. R. Hetherington submitted a non-argument against the Bill. His argument did not hold up at all in the light of day. He did a poor job, when I expected something better of him. I was disappointed tonight. Maybe next time round, with a little more practice on these sorts of Bills, he will do better.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I think he did an excellent job. It is a matter of opinion.

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: The provisions of the Bill do touch on this Parliament, and during the debate certain projections have been made regarding the winning of seats or the inability to win seats. I advance the thought again to this House, as I have on other occasions, that if the ALP is concerned about controlling the House, all it has to do is win seats, and it can do this. It has demonstrated its ability in the past, but it does not have confidence or the courage of its convictions.

At present we do have representing the same province members from different political parties, and it has been that way for a long time. It was that way in 1965 when adult franchise was first introduced, and even before that when there was a restricted franchise.

I have mentioned before—and I think it is relevant to the debate to mention it again in view of certain remarks made—that in 1958 the North Province had three Labor members; the North East Province had three Labor members; and the Suburban Province had two Labor members and one Liberal member. This demonstrates it is possible for the Labor Party to win seats.

Since 1965 the representation has changed a little, bearing in mind we now have two members for each province. In 1965 the North Province had the Hon. Frank Wise and the Hon. Harry Strickland as Labor members; and then the representation became the Hon. W. R. Withers, Liberal, and the Hon. J. L. Hunt, Labor; and at present the representation is the Hon. W. R. Withers and the Hon. J. C. Tozer, both Liberals.

In 1965 in the Lower North Province we had the Hon. E. M. Heenan, Labor, and the Hon. G. E. D. Brand, Liberal. Then the representation became the Hon. G. W. Berry, Liberal, and the Hon. S. Dellar, Labor. At present the representation is the Hon. G. W. Berry and the Hon. N. F. Moore, both Liberal members.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: Where is this mentioned in the Bill?

The Hon. V. J. FERRY: It deals with the representation of the House. In 1965 in the North Metropolitan Province the representation was the Hon. H. R. Robinson and Hon. A. F. Griffith, both Liberal; and then it became the Hon. R. F. Claughton, Labor, and the Hon. A. F. Griffith, Liberal; and now it is the Hon. R. F. Claughton, Labor, and the Hon. R. G. Pike, Liberal. You yourself, Mr President, represent a certain province, and the other member who represents your province is the Hon. Grace Vaughan, a Labor member.

So the Labor Party has the capacity to win

seats if it is good enough. The plain simple fact is that it is not good enough. It was not good enough to win a majority under the old restricted franchise system, and it seems that the ALP has accepted this and is adopting a defeatist attitude in regard to the future. Certainly since 1965 the ALP has failed dismally and it seems that it has grave doubts about its success in the future.

I just wish to record that rebuttal of the projection submitted that the ALP cannot hope to gain any sort of control of this House unless the whole system changes. The ALP wants a one-House system. I reject such a system as do the people of Western Australia. I support the Bill.

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South West—Leader of the House) [7.35 p.m.]: I am grateful for the members' interest in this measure. We were also very interested in learning something of the basic philosophy of the Labor Party and its beliefs on various matters.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: From which side—this side or your side?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I thought Mr Dans was particularly thorough. The only thing he missed was that he did not clarify the correct pronunciation of "ideology".

Because Mr Dans told us so, I accept that really the Bill underlines not only the Liberal Party philosophy, but also the ALP philosophy. I must confess that when he commenced talking I was not quite of that opinion, but when his statement was reinforced by the statements of the Hon. R. Hetherington I had no recourse but to accept that the amendments would serve to underline what the ALP wishes to do as much as they will underline what the Liberal Party wishes to do.

I must admit I was a little bemused by the contradictory points in both members' speeches. Whereas the Hon. D. Dans went to some lengths to explain the tremendous advantages of a system in which reaction to public opinion was quick—and he quoted the American system—the Hon. R. Hetherington did not seem to be of the same opinion.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I only used that as an example.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: At the time the statements concerning the ALP conference appeared in the paper they did read as though the ALP were anxious to ensure that at the appropriate time we should do without a Governor. Once one had read the newspaper one realised that that was not what was intended.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: We could not, even if we wanted to.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I am aware of that; but that was the immediate reaction. It may well be, because the Hon. R. Hetherington pointed it out, that the stocks of the ALP in Western Australia are at an all-time low.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Did he say that?

The Hon. R. Hetherington: In fact I said that some newspapers had said it. I was very careful.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: You agreed, surely?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: He said it. I might have lifted it out of context. All right, he stated that someone else said it. In doing that, he said it. It might have been for that reason, but the immediate reaction of Western Australia was one of antagonism. The Premier, reacting to public opinion, as Mr Dans wants members of Parliament to do, said that we would legislate for this aspect.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: I say that the Premier reacted—full stop. He thinks that what he does is in accordance with public opinion; that is one of the troubles.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: The only aspect about which we should be grateful is that we have had another lecture on fairly recent and modern political history, without the necessity of our taking a matriculation course. I think we all ought to be, and probably are, quite grateful for that.

The Hon. R. Hetherington: I'm glad of that, because you will get plenty more.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: One learns all the time, and one is particularly grateful to learn from people who speak with such obvious authority. As a matter of fact, I wish that I could get that sort of total self-assurance; it must be a tremendous attribute.

However, be that as it may, we are all totally convinced that the sort of amendments which are submitted, whilst they are to my knowledge directly in line with the point of view of the public, are not—according to the Hon. Des Dans and the Hon. R. Hetherington—totally in conflict with the views of the ALP or the people they represent. Therefore I see no reason whatsoever why I cannot ask the House to support the second reading of the Bill.

Question put.

The PRESIDENT: To be carried this Bill requires the concurrence of an absolute majority. So in accordance with Standing Order No. 308 a division must be taken.

Bells rung and House divided.

Division taken with the following result—

Ayes 16

Hon. G. W. Berry	Hon. W. M. Piesse
Hon. H. W. Gayfer	Hon. R. G. Pike
Hon. T. Knight	Hon. I. G. Pratt
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. J. C. Tozer
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. R. J. L. Williams
Hon. M. McAleer	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. N. F. Moore	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. O. N. B. Oliver	Hon. V. J. Ferry

(Teller)

Noes 9

Hon. D. W. Cooley	Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs
Hon. D. K. Dans	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. Lyla Elliott	Hon. Grace Vaughan
Hon. R. Hetherington	Hon. R. F. Claughton
Hon. F. E. McKenzie	

(Teller)

The PRESIDENT: The Bill having failed to receive the concurrence of an absolute majority, the question is resolved in the negative. The Bill will not be read a second time.

Question thus negatived.

Bill defeated.

**APPROPRIATION BILL
(CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND)
(No. 2)**

Consideration of Tabled Paper

Debate resumed, from the 18th October, on the following motion by the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (Leader of the House)—

That, pursuant to Standing Order No. 151, the Council take note of tabled paper No. 245 (Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure and related papers), laid upon the Table of the House on 21st September, 1977.

THE HON. LYLA ELLIOTT (North-East Metropolitan) [7.45 p.m.]: Unlike another member of this Chamber who spoke last night, I intend to speak on the Budget. I have studied the Budget papers. I do not intend to indulge in senseless and vindictive character assassination. I have read the Budget papers carefully because I believe the contents mean a great deal to the people of Western Australia.

First of all, I would like to deal with a statement made by the Treasurer in the financial statement presented to the Legislative Assembly on the 20th September, wherein he said, on page 17—

...the overall budget strategy is to provide maximum stimulation to employment throughout the State. There are several features of the budget which are designed to achieve this aim.

Then on page 4 he said—

I believe that at the present time an expansion of public sector works programmes by increased borrowing would be consistent with anti-inflationary policies, provide increased business and a stimulus to confidence in the private sector and create jobs for the unemployed.

I find those two statements very interesting, firstly because the latter statement repeats some of the things the Australian Labor Party has been saying for the last three years; that is, that to stimulate employment, not only in the public sector but also flowing on into the private sector, there should be an increase in spending on capital works. We have been told that is nonsense, inflationary, and so on; but now the Treasurer is agreeing with us.

Let us come back to his statement that he will provide maximum stimulation to employment throughout the State. If we examine the General Loan Fund Estimates we find this is just a confidence trick. If we look at the increase in the amount estimated for 1977-78 and take away the amount that was actually spent last year, we find the increase is only 6 per cent. This means there is actually a fall in expenditure on capital works, because if we allow for the inflation rate, which could be in the vicinity of 10 or 12 per cent—we do not know at this stage, but it certainly will not be down to 6 per cent—instead of there being a great increase in spending on capital works in the next financial year there will actually be a decrease. So I would like to know where the maximum employment stimulation throughout the State is coming from.

If we look at just one or two departments, we can say spending is up, particularly in the Public Works Department; but in most of the other departments we find spending on capital works is down. The Department of Agriculture is down, the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife is down, the Forests Department is up slightly, the Department of Industrial Development is down, the Mines Department is down, Public Works Engineering and Buildings are both up, the Treasury is down, Business Undertakings are down, the Housing Authorities are up but not in real terms because the increase does not keep pace with inflation; Port Authorities are down, and other authorities are down. So, as I said, it is really a confidence trick. The total represents an increase of only 6 per cent overall.

We also see in this Budget the real effects of the new federalism policy on this State. The

Treasurer himself says on page 3 of his financial statement—

Where I am at variance with the Commonwealth is in their attitude to expenditure on capital works.

On page 2 of the financial statement he says—

... we have had to contend with actual reductions in Commonwealth funds for sewerage, hospital buildings and recreational facilities. In many other cases the increase provided has been less than we had hoped, often less than required merely to keep pace with inflation of costs during the past year.

So, as I said, we are now seeing the effects of this new federalism policy and what it means in real terms to the development and welfare of the people of this State. If we look at the financial year 1976-77 and the current financial year we find here the increase is only 4.7 per cent, which is again a drastic cut because it does not anywhere nearly keep pace with projected inflation.

Let us have a look at some of the areas of these cuts and see what they will mean to the people of Western Australia. I am talking about the Commonwealth cuts. I am sure the country members will be interested in the heading "Country Towns Sewerage". That is the first one I come to. That has been cut back. Whereas last year \$25 000 was provided for country sewerage projects, this year there is to be nothing. I wonder which country town will miss out this year under our new federalism policy. That is the first drop, from \$250 000 right down to nothing.

The next important area—and it represents an enormous cut in funds—is the hospital development programme, which has been slashed from \$12 million last year to \$4.68 million this year—a drop of over \$7 million. Just consider the implications of this and what it means in terms of hospitals, wards, beds, and new and up-to-date equipment in the public health area.

Another area of health that has been affected is the community health programme which has been cut in half. There has been a drop of over \$1 million. That also has serious implications and I believe it is very short-sighted because preventive health measures are what the community health programme is all about and are the best investment in the long run; they are certainly the cheapest.

Under mental health services we see another drop from \$82 000 last year to \$12 000 this year, a drop of \$70 000. It does not seem very much when we consider the size of the Budget, but what does it mean to people? I will tell members what

it means. It means the Mental Health Services cannot acquire property to provide such things as day activities for the poor people who live in mental health hostels. The Mental Health Services uses funding on establishments such as that at Guildford where it can place many of these people during the day and provide activities and occupational therapy for them instead of their having to sit around looking at each other all day, which is a very cruel and soul-destroying thing. That is what it means to cut out funding for community health under mental health.

There has been a drop in Commonwealth grants to the Metropolitan Transport Trust, but we see the biggest drop of all under the heading "Metropolitan Water Supply". From a budget of \$8.75 million last year, we receive nothing this year—not a cent for metropolitan sewerage. Not only does this deny a very important improvement in health measures—and surely no-one can dispute the fact that sewerage disposal is very important in this area—but it also denies employment to many people.

Another area where there is a drop is railways.

The Hon. J. C. Tozer: Did you look at the Consolidated Revenue Fund Budget?

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I have looked at the Consolidated Revenue Fund Estimates but at the moment I am talking about direct grants from the Commonwealth under the General Loan Fund. However, the Treasurer himself points out that this is an area where the States will have to take a cut of up to 40 per cent when the tax system is adjusted.

Another area which is very important is housing. There has been a drop in real terms for welfare housing. Although there was an increase of 4 per cent, it amounts to a drop because, here again, it does not keep up with inflation. In the allocation for dwellings for aged pensioners there has been a drop in real money terms of \$500 000. The State asked for a 20 per cent increase in funds for welfare housing but received an increase of 4 per cent for houses and had its allocation for dwellings for aged pensioners cut back by \$500 000.

There has been a severe drop of over \$1 million in the allocation for the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority. Whereas last year \$682 000 was spent in capital funding for the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority under the heading of community health, this year nothing is to be spent. Under many headings where there was an allocation last year, there is nothing this year; and, of course, there has been a cut of nearly

\$250 000 in funds for housing for Aboriginal people.

Therefore—to conclude the points I am making in this respect—the victims of the Fraser Government's cuts appear to be the mentally and physically ill, the aged, the homeless, the disadvantaged people, such as Aborigines, and the poor relations, public transport and technical education. In addition to a reduction in very greatly needed facilities and improvements in the fields of public health and social welfare, less money is to be spent on employment opportunities.

Many matters are causing me concern but I do not have sufficient time to deal with all of them tonight, so I will deal with the three which are causing me the most concern, and the first one is housing.

This is an area that is vital to the welfare of families, not only in regard to their general physical and mental good health, but also to marital harmony and the welfare of the children. Any member who doubts what I am saying should have a talk to Mrs Jean Harmory, the head of the Child Life Protection Unit of the Department for Community Welfare; she will tell him that an important factor in baby-battering cases is overcrowded accommodation which creates frustrations in marriage and so forth. So this is a very important area and for this reason I want to protest most strongly about the cutback in welfare housing in this Budget.

Under the heading, "State Housing Commission—Construction of Houses" there has been a decrease of \$861 000; nearly \$1 million. Instead of increasing this allocation to keep pace with inflation and extra demands for this type of housing, there has been a decrease of almost \$1 million in the provision of funds. There has been a very slight increase in the allocation for rental properties, but this represents a drop in real terms when we consider inflation. The item "Advances to Home Builders Account" has been decreased from \$12 million to \$11 million in round terms, so that is another decrease of \$1 million. So, that is one aspect of the housing problem—the need for decent housing for families.

I would like to deal with another aspect of accommodation. I am sure all members of this Chamber were just as shocked as I was to read the horrific stories in the Press about the very unfortunate people in Queensland who were described as slaves. These people were exploited and kept in subhuman living conditions. Most people do not think such a thing could happen here, but it can happen anywhere if there is a lack

of adequate social welfare provisions and welfare housing.

Last year in this Chamber I spoke about the conditions in some privately-run hostels which care for former mental health patients. I am sure everyone remembers the controversy that ensued as a result of that. I drew the attention of the House to the very bad conditions in some of the hostels and the way some elderly people were being exploited, underfed, and poorly clothed, to mention just some of the problems. This happened in an area where there was supposed to be supervision by a Government department, and yet the Government did not know what was going on right under its nose. It is quite possible for evil things to happen unless there is adequate supervision and proper alternatives are provided for the people. I asked a question just recently in respect of housing for single people in certain categories, and from the reply I received it appeared that the Government is doing nothing about this problem. I asked question 166 as follows—

How many units have been built by the State Housing Commission during the last five years for the purposes specified in Section 69 of the State Housing Commission Act?

The reply I received was as follows—

The Housing Commission has never built any houses for the purposes specified under Section 69 of the State Housing Act.

Now section 69 reads as follows—

69. For the purposes of this Act the Commission may—

- (a) erect, acquire or lease, and furnish and equip hostels for the purpose of housing persons, including students and aged and infirm persons, whose housing requirements are not, in the opinion of the Commission otherwise adequately provided for under the provisions of this Act;

The section then proceeds to deal with other matters. The point is that the answer I received to my question was that the State Housing Commission had not constructed anything under the provisions of that section.

I am concerned that many people in this community do not qualify for the conventional type of SHC accommodation. This applies particularly to elderly people and young single people who may have come here from another State and do not have a family to live with. If these young people find themselves out of work,

they cannot afford to pay rent on a private flat. It sometimes happens that elderly people who have been renting accommodation suddenly find themselves in poor circumstances perhaps because of the death of their partner and the subsequent drop in their income.

I am aware that the Housing Commission provides flats for elderly people whose total assets are no more than \$1 000, but of course such accommodation is not available immediately upon application and of necessity there is a waiting period. Also, there are people who have a little more than \$1 000 but who do not have sufficient money to pay a deposit on a church flat. These people then find themselves caught between the two areas and they do not qualify for either type of accommodation. What happens then? If they cannot afford a private flat, if they are not accepted by the State Housing Commission, and if they have insufficient funds to pay a deposit on a church flat, they must accept substandard accommodation. Also there are those who can no longer care for a house.

It is people in this category for whom the Government should be providing hostel accommodation. I have no doubt that many elderly people live in the inner-city area in very dingy substandard rooms purely because of the inactivity of the SHC in this area. I would like to see the Department for Community Welfare conduct a survey in the inner-city area—say in West Perth and East Perth—in an endeavour to ascertain the extent of the poverty there and the number of people who live in substandard accommodation. If such a survey were conducted, I am sure the Government would be convinced of the need to build units under this section 69.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: I think it is recognised, Miss Elliott, that the requirements for emergency housing right throughout the State are beyond the capacity of the Government to pay. In other words, it would cost too much; the need is greater than the ability to pay.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: We are supposed to live in a civilised affluent society. It may appear to be beyond the capacity of the Government to pay for this accommodation purely because the Government will not devote any resources to that area. Surely if people in our community cannot afford the usual accommodation offering in our society the State should provide a roof over their heads. I will not accept that we cannot find funds for a cause of this type.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: Just in one town in my province, Karratha, heaven's above, the

demand is so great that there is no way we can afford it.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: It is about time the Government started to tackle the problem. Surely the most basic necessity for human dignity is a roof over one's head.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: I agree—I do not have one myself, but I agree.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I wish to move on to another matter that is very urgent, and that is the necessity for work to proceed on the Canning Vale Prison complex. Before I deal with this question, I would like to take the opportunity to place on record the esteem in which I held the late Colin Campbell, the Director of the Department of Corrections. I believe the State has lost one of its most highly regarded officers. Mr Campbell commanded universal respect for the very humane and compassionate attitude he displayed towards the human beings for whom he was responsible. He did his utmost to introduce enlightened reform into the prison system, but his job was made extremely difficult because the State's only maximum security prison, the Fremantle Gaol, was an archiac, inadequate, 19th century institution. I am very sorry that he did not live to see the completion of the new complex at Canning Vale because I feel sure he would have supported its concept.

I am shocked to see that only \$5 000 is allocated in the Budget for the Canning Vale Prison. I just cannot understand what is wrong with the Government's thinking in this area. This prison complex is obviously a very necessary and desirable social reform. The Government's procrastination will cost the State many millions of dollars. We must have a new prison, and by putting it off the costs of that prison are escalating all the time.

Western Australia can claim the distinction of having the oldest metropolitan maximum security prison in Australia. The Fremantle Prison was first established in 1855 as an imperial convict depot—that is how old it is. Mr Driscoll, the assistant-director, dealt with the question of the age of Western Australian prisons in the annual report of the department for the year ended June, 1976. He said—

A number of institutions under the control of the Branch range from 21 years of age to 90 years of age and maintaining the buildings in a habitable condition is a constant source of worry and frustration not only to the Department of Corrections but also no doubt to the Public Works Department and the Treasury which has to

provide the funds for this purpose. The need to replace Fremantle Prison still remains as the first priority on the Department's Loan Expenditure programme.

That was last year, and this year, as I said, we see that a miserly \$5 000 is to be provided for work on this very necessary prison over this financial year.

At this stage I would like to pay a tribute to another person, a member of this Chamber, the Hon. Claude Stubbs. In 1971, as Chief Secretary, he saw the need for a new prison in Western Australia, a more humane institution, and a more modern building. He made it his business to research the prison situation in other countries and in other States so that he would be informed on the most up-to-date prisons in existence at that time. He was able to convince the Tonkin Government in 1971 that there was a need for a new prison, and so that Government set aside 320 acres of land at Canning Vale for this purpose.

The intention was to provide a modern institution, comprising four separate units—one a maximum security unit, one a medium security unit, one a remand and assessment centre, and one a hospital for psychiatric and medical patients. Each unit was to cater for 200 to 250 inmates which was considered—and apparently still is considered—to be a manageable number. The new prison was to be built in stages, and it was intended the first stage would be opened in 1976.

The decision of the Tonkin Government was acclaimed by everyone in the department, from the late Colin Campbell down. Even *The West Australian* editorial at the time said such things as, "The Government deserves credit for a pressing social reform. A replacement for the old inadequate and dangerously overcrowded gaol is urgently needed." It also said, "The Fremantle Gaol should have been replaced years ago."

Three years' intensive planning and investigation followed that decision. Mr Stubbs personally investigated prisons in New Zealand and Canada, and early in March, 1974, he unveiled a plaque which was to mark the first part of the building; namely, the building of the gatehouse. It was the intention of the Tonkin Government to allocate a certain amount of money each year to ensure the progressive building of the new institution.

But what happened? Unfortunately, in March, 1974, we saw a change of Government and since then the project has been allowed to run down. In fact, it now seems to have been stopped by the Court Government. I have already referred to the

miserable allocation of \$5 000 in this year's Budget. Members will recall that recently I asked a question about the Government's intentions in regard to the new Canning Vale Prison. The first part of my question was—

In what year was the proposal announced?

The answer I received was—

1971.

Part (2) of my question asked—

What was the estimated cost of the project at that time?

The answer was—

Costs were not estimated when this project was first announced.

Mr President, I find that answer a little hard to accept because Press reports I have obtained since the question was answered indicate it was estimated the whole project would cost in the vicinity of \$10 million. I then asked—

How much progress has been made in respect of construction to date?

The answer I received was—

Earthworks and construction of the gatehouse.

That is a wonderful achievement since 1974! The fourth part of my question was—

Is work in progress on the site at the moment and if so, what is the work?

The answer was—

Earthworks are in progress.

How long does it take to do earthworks? Part (5) of my question was—

When is it estimated the project will be completed?

The answer is really interesting; it states—

Until tenders are called it is not possible to give an estimated completion date.

What I would like to know is: When is the Government going to call tenders? Of course it cannot give an estimated completion date of the prison until tenders are called, but it also is not calling tenders so that someone can get on with the job of building it. Part (6) of my question was—

What is now the estimated cost of the project?

The answer to this question is frightening. It states—

The estimate of costs given earlier this year was \$20 million to build the long-term maximum security unit for 250 prisoners.

The answer continued—

For this reason, a committee was appointed...

The procrastination of this Government in regard to the building of the new prison is costing the taxpayers of this State millions of dollars. From an estimated cost in 1971 of some \$10 million for the entire project, we now are faced with a cost of \$20 million to build only one of the four units.

Every day that the matter is deferred, adjourned or forgotten is costing more money. The Government is just putting off the evil day, because it is quite obvious a new prison must be built. I believe it is very irresponsible of this Government to delay construction in this manner. As I said earlier, to allocate this project only \$5 000 in the Budget for the next financial year is absolutely incredible.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: How much was allocated to recreation? Did that amount increase?

The HON. LYLA ELLIOTT: That is only one area; the Government cannot just forget about the other areas. I agree with the honourable member that recreation and preventive health measures are extremely important.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: I think you raised the matter in this House previously.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: Yes, they are important measures. However, it does not mean the Government can forget about all other areas. Preventive health measures are very important, but the Government cannot stop building hospitals. As I have said, the Government's procrastination is short-sighted and very costly.

The Hon. O. N. B. Oliver: The Government is being very responsible with the taxpayers' money.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: Here we go again!

I was very interested in a statement made in the same report by the Assistant-Director of the Department of Corrections (Mr Driscoll). He was discussing Barton's Mill, and made the following statement—

Barton's Mill Prison was placed on a caretaker basis as from the 31st October because of falling prison musters and even though numbers are now escalating the prisoners are of a type which require to be confined in a maximum security setting because of the type of crime and or length of sentence. Should numbers continue to rise it may become necessary to re-open Barton's Mill to house prisoners not entirely suitable for that type of institution.

I telephoned Mr Driscoll the other day about this matter. The report to which I am referring covers

the period from the 1st July, 1975, to the 30th June, 1976, and I have been unable to obtain this year's report in order to ascertain the up-to-date position. Mr Driscoll confirmed that the department was still considering reopening Barton's Mill because of a marked increase in the numbers of prisoners.

This brings me to the final matter with which I wish to deal tonight. The reason I was interested in Barton's Mill was due to my concern at the alcohol problem in our Aboriginal community. I had heard that Barton's Mill was closing, and would no longer be used by the Department of Corrections, and I thought we might be able to use it as a treatment centre for Aboriginal people with serious alcohol problems.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: We made application for it.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: In 1973 the House of Representatives appointed a Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs; members of the committee visited Western Australia and looked into a number of questions concerning the Aboriginal people. The second report of the committee, dated 1975 and published in 1976, deals with the question of alcoholism. It is titled, "Aboriginal Health in the South-West of Western Australia". It deals specifically with alcoholism in the Aboriginal community and the serious effects this problem is having on the health of the people in that community and on the destruction of the community; and it refers to the very urgent need for an improvement in facilities to handle the problem.

In its chapter headed "Alcoholism" the committee reported on a statement made by the Australian Department of Health. The Department of Health made the following comment—

... we see alcoholism as such as a major health problem in this country as a whole. This is particularly marked in groups which are frustrated, underprivileged and suffering from a sense of loss of identity, and this is a similar experience to that seen in other countries of the world.

The committee report stated as follows—

Witnesses representing Aboriginal communities highlighted the abuse of alcohol as a primary cause of continuing ill-health, both physical and mental, and susceptibility to disease. The Committee received considerable evidence on the problems of alcohol for Aboriginals and its attendant negative social effects on individuals and the community.

The Community Health Department expressed the following view—

Almost without exception everyone of our field staff says that alcohol is the biggest obstacle to improving health. We do believe that it is a social manifestation of the social problems of Aborigines.

These are the people who should know about this problem—the people from the Community Health Department and the community health sisters, who do a wonderful job working amongst these people, trying to deal with the terrible illnesses, injuries, accidents and problems from which these people suffer as a result of alcoholism. I am sure we can all accept what these people say in the report as being absolutely right. However, I wish to present additional evidence to this Chamber.

Members will recall I asked two other questions in this Chamber recently, both of which concerned the question of alcohol and the Aboriginal people. In the first part of my question, I asked the Minister to inform me of the percentage of prisoners in Western Australian prisons who were of Aboriginal descent. I was informed that 32.74 per cent, or almost one-third of all prisoners in Western Australian prisons, were of Aboriginal descent.

I then asked whether the prisoners of Aboriginal descent were over-represented on a population basis. The answer I received was that in fact, they were over-represented because Aborigines comprised only 2.1255 per cent, or roughly one-fiftieth of our population, yet they represented one-third of all people in Western Australian prisons.

I asked whether the rehabilitation facilities employed in these institutions catered for the unique cultural, social and emotional situation of Aboriginal people, and whether the department had any plans to improve existing rehabilitation facilities; and if so, what were those plans. I was told that figures were not available, but was referred to the House of Representatives Standing Committee report, to which I have already referred, and to the Department of Corrections research report No. 27 dealing with alcohol and Aboriginal imprisonment rates.

I was told also that the Department of Corrections had wherever possible complied with the United Nations standard minimum rules which provide that there should be no discrimination on the grounds of race, etc. That was an easy way of getting out of saying that there were no special facilities for the rehabilitation of Aboriginal prisoners.

I am sure the intention of that United Nations

Convention was not that there should never be improved facilities for people of a different race, but that the facilities should not be of a lesser standard than for the rest of the population. I feel it is a nice way of saying, "No; we are not doing anything." They do say, however, that they intend to explore further the development of co-operative enterprises. I do not know what that means.

However, I took their advice and obtained report No. 27 which was prepared by the psychological and research section of the Department of Corrections. Unfortunately, statistics have not been kept on drunkenness *per se* of Aborigines in prisons, since 1971. However, in 1971 the report shows that there is a tremendously high percentage of Aboriginal people in prisons for the offence of drunkenness alone. In 1971 the number of Aborigines committed to gaol for drunkenness alone as a percentage of the total number of people committed to prison for drunkenness was 52 per cent of all males; 96 per cent of all females; and 62 per cent of persons.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: Sixty-two per cent of what?

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: Sixty-two per cent of all persons imprisoned in 1971 for the offence of drunkenness alone were Aboriginal people.

As I said, it is unfortunate that since 1971 statistics have not been kept; but according to this research report an 18-day study of proceedings in the East Perth Court in 1976 showed that Aborigines represented 41 per cent of all individuals appearing before that court on drunkenness charges.

A census taken of all prisons and police gaols—not including lockups—on the night of the 30th June, 1976, showed that Aboriginal males represented 32 per cent of all prisoners; Aboriginal females represented 60 per cent; and 33.6 per cent of all persons imprisoned were Aborigines. In other words, in 1976 Aborigines represented a third of all the people imprisoned at that time, and today the figure remains the same.

According to the answer I received recently the figure is still one-third, therefore there has been no improvement in the situation. The research report also shows that studies indicate a large proportion of the prison population has problems with alcohol and a large number of crimes are committed under the influence of alcohol. Therefore, it is probable that some, if not most of the offences committed by Aborigines are related to the drinking of alcoholic beverages.

We know there is a high degree of alcohol

abuse in the Aboriginal community and we must ask ourselves why this is the case. We know there are many causes, social, cultural and psychological, which culminate in a feeling of hopelessness, alienation, and poor self-image. Under the heading of "Social" we find such things as poverty, inadequate housing, and the lack of social skills. Under the heading of "Cultural" is the loss of identity and the clash of cultures.

I cannot help thinking of the case of Warri and Yabungka the last of the desert people who came to live in a town recently. How sad it is that these people have been forced to leave their familiar tribal environment, the environment they love so much, to come into our community where they will be subjected to all these influences of alcohol and poverty which result in squalor, ill-health, disease, etc.

I wonder what will become of these people. Will they also be caught up in this terrible problem of drinking? What are we doing about this very serious problem which is destroying so many lives?

I know some very good steps are being taken in the areas of housing, community health, education, and a number of others; but I do not believe enough is being done. Nothing is being done in the prison system to rehabilitate these people. They are returning to prison time after time and very little is being done by the Alcohol and Drug Authority. I know Mr Williams will tell me two field officers have been appointed. Two field officers for the whole of Western Australia!

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: And how many nurses of Aboriginal descent were trained? You were at a meeting which was held recently on the subject.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: The meeting was chaired by Mr Conway who is a field officer with the Alcohol and Drug Authority. I think he would agree with me that the services offered by the authority are just not succeeding among the Aboriginal people.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: What about the other 50 000 people? What do you want me to do with them?

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I would like to refer to another question which I asked recently. It was—

In view of Aboriginal Medical Service findings that alcohol abuse has caused considerable damage to the physical, emotional and social functioning of one-third of Perth's adult Aborigines—

(1) What treatment and rehabilitation services are being provided by the W.A. Alcohol and Drug Authority for Aborigines, having regard for their special cultural background?

The answer to the question was—

The Authority has 85 beds available for various stages of treatment and rehabilitation, all of which are available to all patients including Aborigines. Out patient counselling and services are also available to cater for special problems of Aborigines. The Authority has on its staff two Aboriginal Welfare Officers.

Mr President, I am sure Mr Williams will not deny it is a fact that Aboriginal people are not at this stage using the facilities which are available through the ADA.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: A very small number.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: A very small number of Aborigines are using those facilities. There is a cultural reason for this. It is the same reason that they will not enter a normal hospital; they feel uncomfortable; they feel out of place in a predominantly white situation; they are afraid, particularly if it is a multi-story building to which they are not accustomed. It is no good saying "We have 85 beds available; let them come and use them."

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: Do you know what facilities have been provided for them?

Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I am not disputing that; but the point is 85 beds are not adequate at the moment and they are being used by only a very small percentage of Aboriginal patients. It is commendable that the authority has employed two Aboriginal field officers and I am sure they are doing a good job; but taking into account the size of Western Australia how can they cope with the number of people that are involved?

I recently asked the following question—

What measure of success in rehabilitation is claimed by the authority with Aboriginal patients?

The answer was—

The success in rehabilitation is difficult to measure and evaluate in respect of all patients.

Later on I wish to deal with the situation in other States, particularly in New South Wales and South Australia, which I believe indicates we can measure success in dealing with Aboriginal alcoholics. I asked a further question which was—

Are there any plans for new facilities to be administered by the A.D.A. directed towards Aboriginal patients?

The answer was as follows—

The Authority has plans to increase its available bed capacity to cater for the escalating problems. These facilities whilst not specifically for Aboriginal patients, will be available to all persons.

Again it is not recognising the special cultural and psychological problems of the Aborigines.

I repeat: I do not believe the A.D.A. is coping effectively with the problem or is making any inroads whatsoever into the Aboriginal drinking problem. The authority itself recognises this.

The authority and, in particular, Mr Williams recognise the special problems of dealing with this question of alcoholism in the Aboriginal community. It is a different problem from that experienced by white people. At page 9 of his 1976 annual report Mr Williams said, and he is referring to the Aboriginal Affairs Co-ordinating Committee and the Drug and Alcohol Subcommittee—

This Committee, as its title implies, deals with the serious and growing problem of aboriginal drinking and drug dependence. The resulting problems differ in certain respects to those encountered in a white society, and as such require different handling. The Authority is working closely with this Committee in an effort to provide the specialised treatment for the aboriginal patient.

Although that is a very fine statement, I do not know that it is achieving a great deal at this stage. The point is, it has been recognised that the problem requires different handling and it is just not good enough to say, "Here are our facilities; here are our beds; come and use them."

Having said that, I think there is overwhelming evidence that a change in the situation will come about only through the Aboriginal people themselves; by the Aboriginal people acting as catalysts within their own community.

The House of Representatives Standing Committee Report very strongly supports this view. One of its recommendations was that the Australian State Governments and local government authorities should most earnestly consider any positive measures suggested by the Aboriginal community for the control of alcohol. It also recommended that half-way houses should be established by Aboriginal community groups, supported by the Department of Aboriginal

Affairs, the Community Health Service, and the Western Australian Alcohol and Drug Authority. It also said that the Aboriginal medical service pointed out that Aboriginal alcoholics had a pattern completely different from that of other alcoholics and, therefore, were not amenable to the therapeutic community approach designed largely for middle-class, non-Aboriginal patients.

How can a black person who has been kicked around all his life, who has been dragged up on a reserve and is probably left with all kinds of physical disabilities as a result of a multitude of illnesses as a child—illnesses of the chest, bronchial problems, and gastro intestinal problems—be expected to benefit from a programme designed for middle-class, non-Aboriginal people?

One has only to read the reports of the surveys which have been carried out among Aboriginal people by medical authorities to observe that Aboriginal children have suffered from all sorts of terrible illnesses and diseases. If a white child suffered even one of those illnesses or diseases it would be the cause of great concern. However, these Aboriginal children usually contract a multitude of them. No wonder they are left with physical disabilities.

Another factor is that an Aboriginal person in those circumstances would have known nothing except poverty and squalor since his birth. He probably cannot read or write, and has probably been living under a bridge or at the East Perth Cemetery. He would feel completely alienated from the white society which would probably look down on him. How would it be possible for that type of person to feel comfortable, and be motivated in a predominantly white environment which would be foreign to him?

I am talking about ADA hospitals and similar institutions. They do not motivate the Aboriginal people. Until the Aboriginal people are assisted so that they can start their own programmes, in their own communities, we will not achieve any success.

I want to tell the Government how I believe it can change the situation. On Thursday night last I attended a meeting at the New Era Aboriginal Fellowship offices. The meeting was addressed by a gentleman named Cyril Coaby, who is a field officer for the WOMA committee in South Australia. I will provide some information about WOMA for the benefit of members in a moment.

The purpose of the meeting was to get together people in Perth, who were interested in the problem of alcoholism in the Aboriginal community. It was quite obvious from the report given by Mr Coaby to the meeting that what I

have been saying is absolutely correct; motivation for change has to come from the Aboriginal people themselves.

Mr Coaby told the meeting of the work done by the WOMA committee in South Australia. I obtained from him the telephone number of the executive officer of WOMA, and I rang her on the following day. She was good enough to send to me the last report which was brought down, and which was submitted to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs.

A person from New South Wales named Val Bryant, from the Bennelong Haven in that State, is visiting this State in an attempt to set up a similar home for alcoholic Aborigines. Unfortunately, she was not present at the meeting which I attended and I have not yet had the pleasure of meeting her.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: If Miss Elliott would care to be at 25 Richardson Street, West Perth, at 10.30 a.m. tomorrow, I have an appointment with her, and Miss Elliott is welcome to come along.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I hope the ADA will have some funds available to help. According to the reply I received to a question, it does have funds available to help voluntary organisations, and I hope that from those funds it will be able to assist in the establishment of a new haven.

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: There is no question about it; if the funds are available they can be used for that purpose.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: Is the member opposite saying that she will get the funds?

The Hon. R. J. L. Williams: I said that if the funds are available.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: That is the very point I am making. That is why I am urging the Government to make these funds available. It is all very well to say that she can have them if they are available, but I want the Government to make those funds available. I notice that under the heading of "Contingencies" in the Consolidated Revenue Estimates the Government has made available a sum of \$2 million for community health. I hope that out of that \$2 million the Government will see its way clear to fund some of the programmes I am suggesting.

Referring again to the WOMA committee, I am very impressed with it. I believe it should be introduced into this State and it should be funded by our State Government. In South Australia it is not funded by the State Government but it receives Commonwealth funding. However, it

seems we will not get any more money from Malcolm Fraser so we will have to fund any work which is done from our own State Budget. WOMA is an Aboriginal word meaning fire. I am not sure how they arrived at that name, unless they were thinking of alcohol as being fire water. However, that is the name of the committee.

I would like to provide some details of the history and the functions of the WOMA committee. I will have to refer extensively to my notes because the report is quite long, and I was not able to remember all the details. I would be happy to provide a copy of the report to any member who is interested enough to read it.

In 1972 the South Australian Department for Community Welfare undertook a survey of treatment services offered to Aboriginal people with drink and related problems. The survey revealed that South Australia had a variety of well-regarded treatment services for alcoholics. That is the position in this State also. However, in South Australia only a few Aborigines sought treatment. Those who did seek treatment stayed for a short while only, because no treatment agency attempted to meet the specific needs of the Aborigines.

In 1973 the Central Methodist Mission campaigned amongst the Aboriginal people, and had regular discussions with people who were in prisons, and with people in the general community. The mission informed those people of the treatment facilities which were offered to Aboriginal people who wanted to shape their own programmes. That approach attracted many Aboriginal people to the programme. The mission employed Aboriginal counsellors who were themselves recovered alcoholics. Group meetings were held in Adelaide as a service to alcoholics who rejected residential care. The group became known as the Aboriginal sobriety group, and it has steadily grown as more and more people regained sobriety. I think that is an indication that the programme has worked; more people have regained sobriety.

Although emphasis was placed on treatment, the programme also dealt with prevention and after-care. An education campaign was undertaken in Aboriginal communities to create an awareness of the problems associated with alcohol.

In 1974 an evaluation of the programme revealed that it was achieving results. Not only were individual Aborigines rehabilitated, but in 10 Aboriginal communities throughout South Australia there was a greater awareness of drink-

related problems, and there were requests to develop local programmes.

Due to the lack of co-ordination between Government agencies, the mission, and Aborigines, and due to the lack of staff and funds, the programme developed some problems and was in danger of breaking down. However, in 1975, a residential conference of 50 representatives of Aboriginal communities and alcohol treatment organisations recommended the establishment of a community-based body to co-ordinate and support programmes in local communities. The body was to have representatives from all Aboriginal communities who, if possible, should themselves be recovered alcoholics, and the body would also have representatives from appropriate Government departments as resource people.

As a result of that conference, the WOMA committee was formed. In February, 1976, the committee met for the first time. Since then it has held meetings every two months, over a period of two days at a time. The venue is varied which enables the committee to better understand the local programmes, and to stimulate local action. The members of the committee learn about specific problems in the areas where the meetings are held, and the local people are stimulated into action as a result of meeting the visitors. The committee now consists of the representatives of 13 Aboriginal communities throughout South Australia, and the NAC.

The committee includes nonvoting representatives from various Government departments, such as the Public Health Department, the Department for Community Welfare, the Alcohol and Drug Addicts Treatment Board, the Police, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the Department of Corrections, and the Central Methodist Mission. Those people are present at committee meetings in an advisory capacity and as resource people. The actual policies are made by the 13 representatives from the Aboriginal communities.

When the committee was originally established, the Central Methodist Mission was appointed as an agent to provide administrative support and management of finance. The management of finance will be extended over the financial year 1977-78.

The committee has now appointed its own secretariat of three persons. The executive officer of the WOMA secretariat, Beverley Kurtzer, who sent me a copy of the WOMA report, and also wrote me a letter which reads as follows—

Thankyou for your interest in the WOMA Committee. The report enclosed should

provide you with most information on Woma. However, since the report was compiled the Secretariat has been appointed. The appointees being Beth Good—Administrative Officer, myself Bev Kurtzer—Executive Officer and Pam Foggo—Secretary.

As indicated in the report the Woma Committee is the co-ordinating Committee for the South Australian Aboriginal alcoholic and drug-related problems. The general outline of the work of the Secretariat is:—

- (1) To provide resource services and information.
- (2) To develop training programmes for Aboriginal field workers in alcohol and employment conditions.
- (3) To develop education facilities for Aboriginal people with regards to alcohol and drugs and.
- (4) To act as directed by the Woma Committee to enable the various aboriginal communities to develop their own particular alcohol programmes.

Should you require any further information I would be happy to assist.

Yours faithfully,
Beverley D. Kurtzer.
Executive Officer
WOMA SECRETARIAT

The Hon. J. C. Tozer: Are the members of the secretariat Aborigines?

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: No, not necessarily; I do not know. I spoke to Beverley Kurtzer on the phone and I do not believe she is an Aboriginal.

I would like to inform members how the WOMA committee works. Firstly, it provides treatment organisations with the means to keep up to date with needs of Aboriginal people who have drink and drug related problems.

Although it has the right to hold property and develop its own programmes, it has chosen to act only as a co-ordinating policy-making and funding body. Programmes are being developed and assets are held by local communities, not by some central body but out in the community. It recognises also the importance of making maximum use of existing treatment facilities.

To give an example of how this is being done in the local communities, I will refer briefly to the Port Augusta WOMA Society. There are about 10 of these societies, but I will mention this one to show how it is coping with the problems.

The objectives of the society are to develop a

programme in three stages. Firstly, a day-care assessment centre, then a residential treatment centre, and then half-way hostels and community hostels. The society received funds in October, 1976, and it commenced the first stage of its programme. It now has a day-care centre, which provides counselling and referral services, meals, washing facilities, clothing, occupational therapy, and recreation. On this last point I might say that it provides an alternative to the local hotel. The centre is open from Monday to Friday from 8.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m., and field workers spend a great deal of their time in parks and around hotels picking up people, speaking with them, and encouraging them to come to the centre to sober up.

According to the report the society is setting up literacy and craft classes in the centre and at the local gaol. This is, of course, at Port Augusta. The average attendance at the centre is 20, but many more people are contacted in parks and hotels.

Many Aborigines have benefited from the services offered at the centre itself. In addition, others have been referred to Kuitpo Colony for residential treatment. However, many will not go to Kuitpo Colony. The Hon. John Williams and I know this colony quite well because we visited it when we were members of the Honorary Royal Commission. Apparently many Aborigines will not go to the colony for a number of reasons, including such things as distance from their families and from familiar country. Also, the majority of its inmates are Europeans, and the climate is too cold. Quite a few of the Aborigines come from the north of the State and they find it very cold at Kuitpo Colony.

I am reminded of our north-west people who come to Perth for treatment. When the Hon. John Williams and I went to see the Byford Rehabilitation Centre, we noticed how cold it was and it is little wonder that the full-blood Aborigines from the north are unable to tolerate the cold there. These are some of the reasons that the Aborigines will not use Kuitpo Colony treatment centre.

The next stage in the society's programme is to plan a rehabilitation farm near Port Augusta to cater for the Aborigines from all over the State who need residential treatment. The society feels that although the farm may be very expensive to establish, it will become self-sufficient within three years.

Stage 3 is a half-way house for single people who have been through the programme. This will provide accommodation until the Aborigines are ready to go back into the community. It is not

much good putting these people through the treatment programme and then throwing them straight back into the community.

Elsewhere throughout the State day centres and various forms of activities are provided. The committee is a long way from its target because it has not received the funding it has requested.

The present Budget allocation for the WOMA Committee is \$300 000 for the whole State but it needs about double that amount if it is to achieve the sort of programme that appears in the report.

I could go on for a long time speaking about the virtues of the WOMA Committee and the way in which it is successfully motivating Aboriginal people in the community. It started when Aborigines who had been alcoholics went out into the community to raise the interest of the people, and then the various communities sent representatives to the WOMA policy-making committee. The whole concept is working out extremely well. This is the sort of development I would like to see in this State so that instead of the middle-class white community saying to the Aborigines, "Here are our health facilities, come and use them," the Aborigines would have the type of facilities they need. We have to realise that our present facilities are not being used by the Aborigines and we are making no headway in regard to the terrible problem of alcoholism in the Aboriginal community. In fact, I believe the problem is increasing and we will have to do something very quickly.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: May I ask what is the permanent solution? Do you have a solution?

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I have been speaking for an hour about what should be done.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: I have been listening for the last 20 minutes, and in all sincerity I have not heard a solution to the practical problem. I have heard a whole lot of comments around the point, and I am quite sincere when I say that.

The PRESIDENT: The Chair has been listening to what you have been saying, so please continue, Miss Elliott.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: And please do not repeat it. You know your promise—do not go over it all again now.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I realise another member is waiting to follow me and I will not hold up the House any longer. However, I am staggered to think that after speaking for so long and after providing evidence of the problem—

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: When you get a corrected copy of your speech, cut the bits out and

send it over to us. Just do not go through it all again.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I will not be rude and I do not intend to emulate the insults which Mr Pike hands out to members on this side of the Chamber, but I would have thought anyone would have understood my comments. The way to handle the Aboriginal drinking problem is not just to offer the conventional medical facilities that we offer to the white population. What I have said is that the motivation must come from within the Aboriginal community itself. Their own people will act as catalysts with such a scheme. It was the recovered alcoholics who set up the scheme in South Australia. These people were very anxious to go out and to help their own people. We have been able to employ young responsible, dedicated Aboriginal people in the public health and community health field and also in the ADA.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: When the Miruwung community tried to do this, the Government said no to some of the tribal solutions offered.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: I am sorry to hear that and I am sorry if Mr Pike did not understand what I was trying to say.

The Hon. R. G. Pike: I apologise to the honourable member; I was not here when she made that point and I should not have interjected without knowing what she had said.

The Hon. LYLA ELLIOTT: My purpose in presenting this information is to convince the Government of the need to provide funds so that the Aboriginal people may commence their own programmes in regard to the serious problem of alcoholism. We are all aware of the terrible social consequences of alcoholism in the Aboriginal community, and the disease and accidents which follow in its wake.

I earnestly request the Government to consider favourably any request coming from the Aboriginal community. The House of Representatives Standing Committee has urged this same policy. The Government should listen to what the Aborigines want, and it should provide them with the funds so that they can carry out their programmes adequately. I support the motion.

THE HON. N. F. MOORE (Lower North) [9.10 p.m.]: May I thank the previous speaker for her consideration in giving me some time this evening to speak on this particular debate, and I do not say that sarcastically.

During the Address-in-Reply debate I spent a considerable amount of time speaking of the potential of the Murchison area. Members are aware that the area of which I am speaking is

suffering economic decline at the present time, but I believe it has the potential to become a major mineral area once again. In the speech I made I outlined the potential mineral deposits which may become viable if certain conditions are met, and tonight I wish to speak about some of the ways in which development can be encouraged.

The Murchison area can again be described as a rich marginal area. It is rich because several mineral deposits have been discovered, and in most cases they have been proven. Unfortunately, it is marginal because the deposits are not huge when we consider them in terms of the Pilbara standards. Firstly, they are in areas where it is not possible for mining to be developed without the companies providing the infrastructure. Secondly, world prices at the present time are such that development is too risky.

During the 1960s mineral development took place throughout Western Australia, particularly in the Pilbara and in nickel areas. Several factors were involved in this. First of all, rich deposits were found and the world demand and prices were such at the time that companies could afford the tremendous infrastructure costs associated with development. It is significant to note that Hamersley Iron would find it very difficult to develop its Tom Price—Paraburdo—Dampier—Karratha complex in today's economic climate because of the difficulties associated with raising the finance to get such a business off the ground.

I would like to quote from the CRA submission to the Industries Assistance Commission in 1975. This submission was prepared by W. O. Scott & Co. Pty. Ltd. I refer to pages 5-3 and 5-4 of this submission where it is outlined what it would cost in 1975 to establish the Hamersley Iron project once again, assuming that it had not been built at all, and working on prices as at 1975. It reads—

.....in order to gain some feel for the economic viability of building an iron ore mining and pelletising business today we have:

- (1) Calculated the replacement value of all assets used in the Hamersley operations.
- (2) Segregated the assets between those which would be required if:
 - (a) Hamersley was operating the Mt. Tom Price mine only with a capacity of 23 m.t.y.
 - (b) A 3 m.t.y. oxide pellet plant was added as a marginal operation.
 - (c) The Paraburdoo mine was added as a marginal operation, with a capacity of 16 m.t.y.

From this we have calculated that given present infrastructure contributions and current tax legislation, an operation at Hamersley would not now be viable. The results are:

	Rate of Return* on Total Funds
Tom Price only	5.8%
Pellet plant addition	—
Paraburdoo addition	5.8%
Total operation	4.3%

*Internal rate of return (DCF real terms)

The various cases have been recalculated on the assumption that total deductibility of capital expenditure on an emerging profit basis as proposed herein applied for tax purposes.

	Rate of Return* on Total Funds
Tom Price only	8.2%
Pellet plant addition	—
Paraburdoo addition	8.0%
Total operation	6.4%

*Internal rate of return (DCF real terms)

It will be noted that although there are distinct improvements in the results, all remain sub-economic.

The impact of infrastructure on economic viability was next examined. (It should be noted that significant burdens of infrastructure are finding the finance and justifying to both equity investors and lenders the risks associated with such a high level of capital.) Assuming all infrastructure is provided by the public sector and the total deductibility of capital expenditure as proposed herein applies, the results are:

	Rate of Return* on Total Funds
Tom Price only	15.9%
Pellet plant addition	—
Paraburdoo addition	13.4%
Total operation	9.3%

*Internal rate of return (DCF real terms)

Thus given these major changes, the higher grade mine at Tom Price returns 16% which, considering current interest rates and the degree of risk, would be reasonable if maintained in real terms. Paraburdoo, as an additional mine, is very marginal and the total complex is still sub-economic.

That indicates the situation in 1975 in respect of Hamersley Iron, and I do not think it has changed for the better since.

Thus we have a situation now which is very different from that which existed in the late 1960s and early 1970s in terms of mineral development. Projects that may have been viable in the late 1960s and early 1970s are not viable today if infrastructure costs have to be provided by the companies. What we must consider now is whether we want development; and, if we do, how we can overcome the problems of economic viability.

As I indicated in my previous speech to the House on this matter, I believe that mineral development is essential to my province, and particularly the Murchison part of it. It is essential because the area needs an economic boost. The Hon. Des Dans toured the area recently, and I think he would agree with me that it needs a boost. It is essential for development to occur if people are to continue to live in isolated areas. It is also essential that this development occur so that people at present living in isolated areas may enjoy the benefits of modern society.

If we consider the Pilbara prior to the mineral developments and compare it with what is there now, we see just how much difference can occur in remote areas when mineral developments take place. A tremendous difference has occurred in the Pilbara.

In the Murchison we have many potentially exploitable mineral deposits, which I mentioned in my earlier speech. The first is the Yeelirrie uranium deposit; then we have the huge nickel reserves at Mt. Keith and Yakabindi, south of Wiluna. We have copper at Golden Grove, which is south of Yalgoo. There is also a copper-zinc deposit at Teutonic Bore near Leonora. Then we have the ferrovandium deposits at Barrambie, and we have a major iron ore deposit at Weld Range, west of Meekatharra.

All these deposits, if developed, would have a considerable impact on the economy of the Murchison. If this development were to occur it would not only provide goods and services to the people of the area, but it would also increase the population—a problem which exists, as I have said before—and assist with the decentralisation of industry. Finally, it would provide employment at a time when unemployment is a major problem.

The types of mineral which have been discovered to date present us with a "good news-bad news" situation. The good news is that these are deposits of mineral which can be developed

economically only if the processing stage is located at the mine site. For example in the case of nickel, the ore is anything up to 14 per cent metal, and it is more economical to process that ore into nickel concentrates onsite and then transport the concentrates than it is to transport the nickel ore.

The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs: What percentage of nickel did you say?

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: It is up to 14 per cent. There are sections of ore in the Windarra mine which go to 14 per cent; but they are the very good ones. The same situation applies in respect of copper deposits, which have a very low metal content in the ore. The situation with uranium is similar. This is good news from the point of view of the Murchison because it means some secondary processing would be required in the area and, therefore, people would be attracted to the area not only to do the mining, but also to carry out the processing operation.

The bad news, particularly from the point of view of railway protagonists is that transport for the product need not be very extensive. For example, Yeelirrie would transport only 2 000 to 3 000 tonnes per annum, and the Golden Grove copper deposits would produce only about 10 000 tonnes per annum, and these are relatively small amounts.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: Of concentrates?

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: Yes. It seems to me that the development of the Murchison can go ahead without a railway line. In fact, I would go so far as to say that the railway could be an inhibiting factor in the development of some of these mineral deposits, which may sound rather strange. However, it could be inhibiting in the sense that the companies would be expected or required to use it to transport their products.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: They will not develop without a railway.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: That is contrary to what they tell me, because it has been suggested by several companies that it is far more economical for them to develop by using road transport than it is by using rail transport. What I am saying is that the railway line in some cases is inhibiting.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: Which companies have said that?

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: The company running the Golden Grove deposit, and similarly the companies concerned with the Windarra nickel deposit and the Agnew nickel deposit.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: Windarra is taking nickel into Malcolm.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: I know that, but the company tells me it would be better off without a railway line because it could cart its product from Windarra to Kalgoorlie cheaper by road.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: Then why is it doing it?

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: Because it has to use the railway.

Anyway, as I was saying, in the past there have been some situations—and I mentioned Windarra and also Agnew—where the companies have been required to contribute significant amounts of money towards the upgrading of railway lines and this, of course, has meant an added burden on their infrastructure costs initially.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: Windarra didn't have to do that.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: We must bear in mind that the economics at the moment are an inhibiting factor to mineral development, and we should make the situation such that costs are kept to a minimum. If a company indicates that it is cheaper to transport ore by road than it is to transport it by rail and to contribute to the upkeep of the railway line, then it should be able to use road transport.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: I would like to hear that from them.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: Then I suggest the honourable member ask the companies. The honourable member has suggested that the railways are being phased out in areas where they are not being used to carry large tonnages. To me that makes sense, because even in high school geography courses one is taught that in terms of economics railways are suited only for this purpose; and the greater the tonnage the better. Railways are suited for the cartage of huge tonnages, and are not economical for the cartage of relatively small amounts.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: Do you support the closure of the Mullewa-Meekatharra railway line?

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: Let me finish what I am saying. If we consider that particular railway line, we find that rail is the cheapest form of transport into the Murchison for tonnages in excess of 550 000 per annum. Below that figure it is cheaper to use road transport or a combination of road and rail.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: How many tonnes does that line carry now?

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: I will come to that.

Let us consider the present situation regarding the Murchison railway and its possible future in terms of the tonnages that are being carted at present and those which may possibly be carted in the future. At present the line averages about 90 000 tonnes per annum. It has been suggested by groups—and I accept it—that this figure could be higher if Westrail had the capacity to meet the demand that exists in the area.

An example is that extra talc could be carted from Westside Mines; yet the total annual production of that mine is about 40 000 tonnes of talc. Let us assume half of the production is carried by road, and half by rail. Thus we could add 20 000 tonnes to the railway line and say that it could carry 110 000 tonnes per annum.

It has also been suggested that more cattle would be transported by rail if the journey were reduced in time, because at the moment it takes quite a long time to get from Meekatharra to Perth by rail. It is much quicker to travel by road. At present 3 000 tonnes of cattle are being transported on the Mullewa-Meekatharra line. Let us assume that amount would be doubled if the line were rebuilt, so that 6 000 tonnes would be carried. That would give us a total of 113 000 tonnes.

Further, to be totally fair, let us assume that another 10 000 tonnes per annum is transported by some other means, apart from Westrail. I point out that I am being generous when I allow that amount. This would give us a total annual tonnage of 123 000.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: It is getting better all the time.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: Yes, it is getting better all the time, but unfortunately it does not go much further. I say, "unfortunately" because I represent the area. This is the existing situation, and as I have pointed out a new line could carry 123 000 tonnes per annum under existing economic conditions.

Let us now look at the developments which could occur. Let us begin with the Mt. Keith nickel deposit, which is located south of Wiluna and just north of Agnew. It is relatively close to the existing Agnew mine. It would seem to me from the existing situation that Mt. Keith, if developed, would send its concentrates south by road, to either Malcolm or Kalgoorlie, bearing in mind there is a nickel smelter at Kalgoorlie. It would possibly use the road to Leonora in the same way that Agnew does, and then put the ore on rail to Kalgoorlie; or it could be sent by road direct to Kalgoorlie. In that case the Mullewa-

Meekatharra line would not be involved, even if that deposit were exploited.

I point out that this is one of the richest nickel deposits in Western Australia, but unfortunately the economic situation at the moment is such that it cannot be developed.

I emphasise that ore from Mt. Keith would probably go to Kalgoorlie, because Mt. Keith is in close proximity to Agnew which is sending ore to Kalgoorlie, and it would be logical for Mt. Keith to do the same.

As I have said, the Yeelirrie uranium deposit would produce only between 2 000 and 3 000 tonnes per annum. It is conceivable that this could be carted by rail, but first it would have to be carted 200 miles from Yeelirrie to the railway at Mt. Magnet, and then double handled onto rail, from where it would go on to Fremantle. Double handling and small tonnages probably would make this uneconomical.

The Barrambie ferrovanadium deposit, if developed, is expected to transport ore by pipeline in the form of slurry, as this would be the most economical means of transporting it. Therefore, it would not require the railway. The Golden Grove copper project could utilise the Meekatharra-Mullewa railway line to transport 10 000 tonnes of ore per annum. However, the company indicated to me that it would be more economical to use road transport direct to Geraldton rather than road transport to Yalgoo and then put it on rail, involving double handling.

The Hon F. E. McKenzie: That need not be an expensive exercise. What about the Wundowie steel works?

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: It normally is expensive, and if the honourable member looks at the ultimate situation he would realise that we should reduce double handling as much as possible.

The Weld Range iron ore deposit would produce sufficient tonnages to keep the line economical, but it is considered that a direct line from Weld Range to Geraldton is a far better prospect than using the existing line.

If we ignore Weld Range for a moment, we find that increased tonnages from all the other deposits would fall far short of the necessary 550 000 tonnes. With the ore and general community goods, we could add approximately 43 000 tonnes to our figure of 123 000 tonnes, giving us a total of 166 000 tonnes.

Returning to the Weld Range deposit, we must keep in mind that most existing iron ore railways are used only to cart iron ore, and not many

general goods are carted on them. Further, a figure of \$40 million has been determined as the cost of building a line suitable for the needs of the Weld Range deposit—that is, from Weld Range to Geraldton. So the \$23 million quoted to rehabilitate the Mullewa-Meekatharra railway line would not provide a line of sufficient strength and durability to carry the tonnages envisaged by Northern Mining at Weld Range. Therefore, if Northern Mining were to develop Weld Range and use the Mullewa-Meekatharra railway, it would mean an expenditure significantly higher than \$23 million would be necessary to rehabilitate the line.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: That would be for the provision of a new line, and not the rehabilitation of it.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: Westrail says that by rehabilitating that line it is providing a new line. That is their terminology, not mine; it is really an argument about words.

However, it is unfortunate—and I emphasise the word “unfortunate” in this regard because I think it would be very good for my electorate if Weld Range could get going—that this is the least likely to be developed of all the deposits I have mentioned. This is due to the competition from the existing iron ore mines in the Pilbara for existing world markets. If Goldsworthy's area “C” and Marandoo get off the ground it is highly unlikely that any further iron ore mines would be developed in the foreseeable future. In fact we all know the difficulties that Goldsworthy and Hanwright are having with the area “C” and Marandoo deposits respectively. Therefore, I can only conclude the possibility of Weld Range getting off the ground and using the Mullewa-Meekatharra line is not sufficient argument at this time to justify an outlay of \$23 million.

Whilst many people consider that the closure of the Meekatharra-Mullewa line would have a disastrous effect on the Murchison, I do not believe this to be the case because I believe that with sensible policies we can create an economic environment in the Murchison whereby the development of the projects I have mentioned will take place. In fact I reiterate that I believe in some circumstances the presence of a railway line would have an inhibiting effect on these development projects.

Mr McKenzie has been asking me to make a statement on this matter and I am as unhappy as anybody about the situation that exists and the condition which the line is now in. Much of the blame for the present situation arising can be apportioned. However, looking at the situation

from a reasoned and logical economic point of view—I reiterate the word “economic”—I cannot see how the Government can make a high priority of the spending of \$23 million to build a new line which at best would carry between 160 000 and 170 000 tonnes per annum.

I emphasise that this is purely an economic argument and I know the social problems which will arise if the line is closed.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: That should be your concern.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: It is my concern, but it is also my concern that the Government should spend its money wisely; and if members listen to a statistic which I shall quote in a moment they will realise just how realistic we have to be. If we spend \$23 million it will represent \$5 000 per person in the Murchison. How many people are in Mr McKenzie's electorate? I estimate the figure to be 200 000. If we multiply that figure by \$5 000 we put the matter into some perspective.

Another matter is that there are 60 people employed by Westrail who, it is suggested, will become redundant if the line is closed. To save their jobs would mean an expenditure of \$383 000 per person. To do that, I believe, is not sensible.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: You are talking only about railway people. What about all the other people who will be withdrawn?

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: We have yet to find out what the alternative system will be, and I do not believe it will mean the total removal of many people with no replacement. But the Minister will tell us about that when he makes his decision. Unfortunately the Minister is not in the Chamber at present and although I have told him this on several occasions, I should like to impress on him—

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: He is telephoning some people whom he has to contact urgently.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: I realise the Minister is busy but I hoped he would be here. I should like to impress upon the Minister the need to upgrade the Wubin-Meekatharra road if the railway is closed. The huge trucks which transport nitrate from Meekatharra to Newman would very rapidly wear out that road particularly as it is only a single-lane highway. So it is very important that the Government give consideration to building a double-lane highway from Wubin to Meekatharra.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I think you will find the nitrate will go by ship.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: That is not the situation which is envisaged at present.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Have you gone into the cost of providing that road?

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: A suggested figure given to me was about \$6 million. I am pleased that extra money has been allocated by the Minister for the Pinda-Yalgoo road this financial year. However, I suggest that the Minister think about giving a higher priority to extending the black top all the way through to Mt. Magnet if the railway line should be closed.

I should also like to impress upon the Minister the fact that he should consider basing rail freights on a "through rail" system as applies in several other areas where the line has been closed; for example, Sandstone. This would ensure that freight rates are not any higher than they are at present.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: But Westrail is not even going to run the road service.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: I do not know that and I am sure the honourable member does not know.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: I do know.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: I wish he would tell me how he knows.

The F. E. McKenzie: The Minister has never denied it.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: I have been fairly close to the Minister with regard to this matter and to my knowledge he has not made a decision as to what will take the place of the line if it is closed. It has been suggested that if a road-rail system or a road system takes over some goods such as wool will be cheaper but other goods such as cattle will be dearer. Because of the economic problems which exist in the Murchison, particularly for the pastoralists, I hope this problem will be taken into account when an alternative transport system is determined and that no sectors of the population will be disadvantaged.

I should now like to consider some of the possible incentives which could be offered to encourage development in the Murchison. The cost of infrastructure at present is such that it is having a debilitating effect on development. It is significant to note that an industry which develops in the metropolitan area does not have to provide infrastructure such as roads, housing, medical facilities, schools, and so on.

In remote areas in the past companies have been required to provide all these facilities. So it is understandable that companies prefer to invest their money in built-up areas because they do not have these capital costs initially. We have been

fortunate in the past that the prospect of returns in the nickel industry and in the Pilbara has been such that companies have been able to afford the infrastructure, and, therefore, these developments have taken place.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: The Government can assist by leaving that railway line there.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: I presume the honourable member has had a look at the railway line.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: Of course.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: It is worn out. It can be left there but it cannot be used.

The Hon. F. E. McKenzie: It is worn out because of the lack of maintenance by Governments.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: I said that previously. It is time now that Governments made a contribution towards the cost of providing an infrastructure in remote areas and thus assisting mining companies with the huge initial capital outlays required. The Premier has suggested the possibility of State Governments borrowing outside the Loan Council to provide this type of assistance.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That got knocked well on the head.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: I trust the Federal Government will see the wisdom of this particular proposal because Governments can borrow on far more favourable conditions than can companies. It has been further suggested that the Government would finance these loans by the royalties which are collected from the mining companies. That is one way in which Governments can assist with the provision of infrastructure which is taken for granted by companies which operate in metropolitan areas.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You would never get that permission from any Federal Government.

The Hon. N. F. MOORE: I hope we can one of these days because the Murchison needs this. There has been talk in Federal circles of a super-tax on mining ventures and I believe this talk must cease if development is to get going; in fact this talk is having a debilitating effect.

The mining industry is one in which considerable risks are involved, particularly at present. These risks are many and varied, and are not only of a financial nature. I should like to go through some of the risks that the mining industry faces. Firstly, there is the geological risk. We all know of the mining companies which have undertaken exploration activities and found

nothing. Geology is a risky proposition at best and money can be spent for no return whatever.

Secondly, ore bodies are never predictable. With modern technology one can work out fairly accurately where an ore body is located but once the open cut or decline shaft, or whatever, is commenced one can find that adverse formations occur. This has happened with the Agnew nickel mine where they have had a great deal of difficulty with the decline shaft because of the fragile nature of the ore.

Thirdly, there are economic risks involved. In an inflationary economy conditions tend to be worse for the mining industry because essentially mining companies are located in remote areas where the effect of inflation tends to be greater.

Fourthly, political reasons are involved. We have a situation now where the ALP has decided it will renege on any contracts for the sale of uranium. That is a risk which a company must take if it thinks of investing its money in uranium.

Fifthly, there are also market factors to be considered particularly in times of high inflation at home when world prices are not moving up at the same rate and returns are not high enough to justify the costs at the time.

Sixthly, there are financial risks as lenders try to ensure that the ultimate risks are borne by the investor who seeks, but usually fails, to receive higher returns on his investment.

Many of these risks are shared by other industries but I believe the degree of uncertainty is greater for the mining industry. If we want mineral development it is imperative for politicians to stop talking nonsense about supertaxes and to realise that mining companies face greater risks than other types of industry. They must also be given the opportunity of a reasonable return on their risk investment. As I mentioned, the return to Hamersley Iron is about 8 per cent which is a very poor return for an investment of, say, \$700 million.

I wish to conclude by reiterating two points. Firstly, it is essential for the future prosperity of the Murchison area and the State as a whole for a new phase of mineral exploitation to commence; and I hope this commences as soon as possible. Secondly, for this to happen Governments must realise that conditions have changed since the 1960s. It is imperative that new cost-sharing arrangements between Governments and companies be initiated. Should this occur and if there is some relief from the incredible cost rises of the past decade, there is no reason to believe that the mining industry cannot look forward to

an era of development and prosperity. I support the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. R. J. L. Williams.

BILLS (2): ASSEMBLY'S MESSAGES

Messages from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendments made by the Council to the following Bills—

1. Mine Workers' Relief Act Amendment Bill.
2. Clothes and Fabrics (Labelling) Act Amendment Bill.

RURAL RECONSTRUCTION SCHEME ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 18th October.

THE HON. R. H. C. STUBBS (South-East) [9.44 p.m.]: I wish to say that we on this side of the House support the amendments contained in this Bill. In his second reading speech the Minister said—

The Rural Reconstruction Scheme was implemented in 1971 as a result of recognition by the Commonwealth and the States of the particular financial requirements of persons engaged in rural industries.

It was followed by a supplementary agreement extending the term of the scheme to the 30th June, 1976, and now of course more support is to be given to it. He said—

The main purpose of the Bill is to give effect to the requirements of the rural adjustment scheme of 1971 and provide the necessary amendments to the Rural Reconstruction Act 1971-1973.

The reason we support the Bill is that the economics of the rural industry are immense in Western Australia and Australia, and therefore we deplore the fact that it is necessary for this type of legislation to be introduced.

This is the second year of drought in Western Australia, and unfortunately we are expecting a very dry summer; in fact, we are fearing it because it will certainly affect the farming and pastoral industries.

Drought is a terrible affliction on country people and it has an adverse effect on the rural economy. As I have said, two dry winters have been experienced in my area, and now a long dry summer is expected. This is the situation in many parts of Western Australia. Thousands of sheep

and cattle are dying because of a lack of water and feed, and this affects the economy of the farmer, the income of the State, and the income of the Commonwealth. It results in a personal loss to the farmers themselves and to country businessmen, as well as to all those who depend on the farming community for their livelihood.

Another bad feature of drought is that people leave country districts and hardly ever return because they are disenchanted with the life after the bad spin they have experienced.

I was doing some research the other day and ascertained that the financial value of the total number of sheep and cattle lost in Australia through various droughts over the years was sufficient to provide all the water reservoirs required in Australia to dam all rivers. So it can be seen what an enormous effect the drought has had on farmers, and the frustration it inflicts when people suffer such losses over the years, and then have to face the long job of rebuilding.

I have here a letter typical of those I have received. It is from the Salmon Gums Branch of the Farmers' Union and it reads—

At a meeting of farmers in this area it was decided to ask you for government help to feed a percentage of breeding ewes that each drought affected farmer intends to keep.

The reason for this, is that some farmers are facing a second year of drought and are in no financial position to meet the extra cost of maintaining even their breeding stock through another bad summer.

It is important that these farmers are helped to retain some breeding ewes for several reasons.

- (1) These sheep are the means of rebuilding the farmers own flock, a flock which that farmer has built to his standards and which if retained will give a tremendous psychological boost to that farmer when seasonal conditions return to normal.
- (2) These farmers need financial help.
- (3) Any help given will be a good financial investment as a depleted State sheep flock will affect many people, particularly abattoir employees, transport workers and stock firms.

The particular assistance asked for is financial assistance of 50% of the cost of maintaining a nucleus flock of breeding ewes either on the farm or on any reasonable agistment.

It is signed by the secretary of the branch.

In yesterday's edition of the *Kalgoorlie-Miner* the following appeared—

The Eastern Goldfields pastoral industry is facing its hardest time in its 80-year history. Drought and rising costs have almost brought the industry to its knees.

On Saturday the Eastern Goldfields branch of the Pastoralists and Graziers Association called for the Boulder and Coolgardie shires to be declared drought-affected.

There is a lot more to the article, but I am sure all members are aware of the bad effect the drought is having in country districts.

The following appeared in *The Australian* on the 21st September—

Government to make grants, loans.

The Federal Government is preparing a multi-million-dollar programme of welfare aid for the ailing rural industry.

Under the scheme thousands of farmers who cannot get credit or pay their debts without selling their properties will be entitled to draw the equivalent of unemployment benefits.

A plan put to Cabinet suggests that farmers who qualify for welfare could draw benefits for up to two years. This would mean that a farmer with three children could draw up to \$101 a week.

There is a lot more to the article, but I will not read it. It is gratifying to know that some help is on the way for farmers. As a member representing a rural community, I can be pretty satisfied that relief is coming. Of course, in a lot of cases it is too late. Some of the poor devils have had to leave their properties and put themselves on the employment market in order to make ends meet.

The other day I read that Australia uses only 0.7 per cent of its national income for water research and development, while America uses 3.5 per cent of its income, and America has some wonderful natural water resources as well.

I do not intend to labour the Bill because, as I said when I rose, we on this side support it, and I have much pleasure in indicating this.

THE HON. D. K. DANS (South Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [9.52 p.m.]: Like Mr Stubbs, I support the Bill. I do not think it really goes far enough, but it is a step in the right direction.

Mr Stubbs has outlined the problems besetting the rural industry. I personally think they are only

a taste of things to come, for a number of reasons on which I will not elaborate.

The Bill seeks to adjust and restructure the administration of the Rural Industries Act. The Minister's notes set out the three primary objectives of the rural adjustment scheme as being—

- (1) To help to restore to economic viability those farms and farmers with the capacity to maintain viability once achieved.

That is a pretty tall order. Before I went into the rural areas last year, I was of the opinion that farmers only had to ask for some kind of aid and they received it. Of course, I learnt very quickly that it was pretty nearly impossible in many areas to get any of the money and assistance which was floating around; and certainly some of my views were changed. The second point he mentioned was—

- (2) To regularly review the progress of assisted farmers with the objective of encouraging them to transfer to commercial credit as soon as circumstances permit.

Again that is a pretty tall order. The third one was—

- (3) To assist in the rehabilitation of farmers obliged to leave farming and to alleviate situations of personal hardship where no other assistance is available from normal sources of credit.

While those three points are very commendable, one of these days I would like someone to come along with a Bill of this nature and indicate what is intended and which people will be helped. It is all very well to have a Bill like this, but when we forget the written word and try to determine how its provisions will be put into effect, we find that there is not very much money available.

However, we are supporting the Bill which seeks to adjust and restructure the administration of the Act. It is the second amendment since the Act was introduced, the first one being in 1975.

The purpose of the amendment is to put under the one administrative authority all the avenues of reconstruction and of rural finance which are available under the different schemes of the Commonwealth and State Parliaments. I might say here it is also a validating Bill because it validates some of the actions taken earlier. We have had a fair bit to say about validating Bills in the last couple of days, but we support this one.

The schemes include not only rural reconstruction assistance, but also the tree-pull

scheme as it applies to apple orchards, the dairy improvement scheme, the beef industry scheme, and, I understand, a portion of the drought relief scheme, which interested me last year. It seemed to me a person would have to be one of the characters in Steinbeck's books to be able to get some small handout in drought relief, and the Bill is a good case for bringing all the five schemes under the one authority thus avoiding duplication and saving costs of administration. Very importantly it would benefit the people who were down on their luck and who had made application for some kind of assistance.

Surely one authority would be able to streamline the procedures by which aid could be given very quickly. In the opinion of the Opposition it is time now to ascertain whether a permanent rural reconstruction commission should be established. I do not think that should be the job of Parliament. It may be found that it is not possible. I know that some of the other States have permanent rural reconstruction commissions, and the Victorian commission comes readily to mind.

I think everyone in the House, and particularly members representing rural areas, would agree that rural reconstruction will be an ongoing thing. It certainly will be in our rural areas. If experience in other States, in particular Victoria, can be taken as a guide, it could well be that a permanent commission might not be possible. We might not be able to afford one, and if one were established, it might run into many difficulties. However I suggest that the Government look at this aspect to ascertain what the rural communities themselves think of the idea.

I do not know whether members saw the recent television programme dealing with farming. I cannot recall its name but it featured two people. One was heavily in debt but wanted to stay on the farm because it was the way of life he desired and he appeared to be saying that they were doing all kinds of things to supplement the farm income. The other person interviewed indicated he had gone onto the land some years before with a of business background and he had approached the venture as a business. If it were paying, he would remain on the farm, but if it were not paying its way he would get off the land.

The Hon. R. F. Cloughton: He was not expecting any handouts; that was the point.

The Hon. D. K. DANCs: That is true, and of course it is a good point. If we look at the situation in cold hard business terms we realise that a lot of human beings are involved. While members in the Chamber from time to time tend

to talk about decentralisation—as I have said many times—for various reasons, some historical and some geographical, we have not been a country which has had the opportunity to decentralise because unlike North America or Europe we did not grow up from small farming communities where towns developed as the people settled. We settled on the seaboard and when gold was discovered we all rushed to search for it, and some started farming to feed the miners.

The greatest enemy of decentralisation is, in fact, Governments themselves which not only rip up railways for many reasons—all Governments do it—but also close down railway workshops and all kinds of things and centralise all sorts of operations at places such as Forrestfield. The concept of decentralisation will recede further and further unless we take a long hard look at our rural industries, bearing in mind what I said about the television programme, which pointed out a reality of life. I want members to realise the problems which beset cities if the rural drift continues and accelerates.

On an adjournment motion debate I referred to some statistics dealing with the money necessary to keep people in country districts. It is a very difficult problem. No-one denies that. Farming is becoming a business rather than a way of life. I think this Bill is a very worthy one.

As a first step I would suggest the Government ascertain whether it would be possible—indeed whether the primary producers themselves want it—to set up in an ongoing manner, a permanent commission to deal not only with the problems we are discussing tonight, but to deal also with all the other associated problems. Even if we found such a commission could not be set up, because it would be too expensive or because it was not wanted, at least we would be demonstrating to the many thousands of people in country districts that we are doing something. People in country districts do not only live on farms. There are a great many people who live in country towns and they consider themselves to be country people. They do not want to move away from the country. However, if the farms close down or if they become big economic units, the way of life that these people have chosen no longer exists.

If it was deemed to be necessary and if the people in the industry desired it, these matters could be tackled as a spin-off of a commission. In that way I believe we would certainly be moving in the right direction. Mr President, we support the Bill.

THE HON. T. KNIGHT (South) [10.02 p.m.]: Mr President, I support the Bill. In fact, I would

support any Bill which financially assists farmers, particularly in my constituency.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: What about in the other constituencies also?

The Hon T. KNIGHT: I would support a Bill which would financially assist farmers in any constituency throughout the State.

I believe the Rural Reconstruction Scheme has been administered in the past in such a way that no-one really understood who was eligible for assistance and who was not. I appeared before the Rural Reconstruction Board on behalf of some of my constituents on a couple of occasions, and could not determine from the statements of the members of the board who was eligible for this assistance.

In the Minister's second reading speech he said that although other forms of assistance were provided to the dairy farmers and beef producers under separate legislation, it was felt that it was somewhat restricted. I believe that is correct. In fact it was impossible. The farmers had to go to a great deal of trouble preparing balance sheets, forward programmes and details of what they had done over the last few years in order to obtain aid from the Rural Reconstruction Authority. Often they were told they were too efficient and, therefore, they were not eligible; or they would be told that their position was not viable and there was no chance of receiving any financial support.

I looked at some of the situations and I believe they were people who, with a small amount of financial assistance, could have carried on; but the Government saw fit not to provide them with that assistance.

I would like to mention at this stage the \$800 000 we allocated to beef producers a few years ago. I understand even at this stage only \$200 000 of that allocation has been used. It has been so restrictive that it has been almost impossible for farmers to obtain financial assistance from the Government.

If we intend to allocate this money, guidelines such as are proposed here must be adhered to and it has to be supervised in an efficient manner in order that farmers may obtain this money and put themselves back on their feet.

I support the Bill in the manner in which it has been explained to us and I hope it will be less restrictive than the previous system. If we allocate a couple of hundred thousand dollars, or I hope a couple of million dollars, to the farmers of this State I do not think we will lose by doing so.

I hope the Minister when administering the Bill will ensure the position is more acceptable to the

farmers than was the case in the past, and make it easier for them to obtain finance for their particular needs.

THE HON. H. W. GAYFER (Central) [10.04 p.m.]: I did not intend entering into this debate on the Rural Reconstruction Scheme Amendment Bill, but I would like to support some of the comments made by the Hon. Claude Stubbs, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Hon. T. Knight. I concur with their comments.

In fact, each of those members has dealt, to a degree, with some of the problems which have been associated with the Rural Reconstruction Scheme in the past, and certainly some of the problems, by the re-enactment of this Rural Reconstruction Scheme Amendment Bill, will be avoided.

Anybody who had anything to do with the Rural Reconstruction Scheme in 1971, when not only the drought year was with us but we were suffering also from the downturn in the value of our produce overseas and wheat quotas, would be well aware that the difficulties of obtaining finance to enable our farmers to carry on was so great that members of Parliament were, to use a colloquialism, going round the bend trying to prove to the authority that the assistance was needed.

This simply could not be done by means of a slide rule adjustment to show whether the farmers were financially capable of carrying on. Some of those who seemed to me to put up a good story that they were in a financially sound enough position to be able to obtain sufficient collateral to receive assistance from the Rural Reconstruction Scheme to carry on, were in fact the very ones who folded up. The ones with guts and determination who had a good pair of hands and a good head on their shoulders and were willing to work, were the very ones who could not seem to obtain the money. But those who did not make the grade and did not fit the category are some of our best farmers today and will possibly ride the tide which could be confronting the industry at the present time.

My main concern, as the Hon. Claude Stubbs mentioned, is the period we are entering into at the present time. We are facing a two-year drought and a downturn in world prices for grain. As a result there will once more be a necessity for rural reconstruction assistance. There is nothing surer. One only has to travel through the wheatbelt and witness the heartbreaks which are apparent there, to see the problems which we are facing.

One must have a marvellous amount of courage

to carry on after two years of adversity; but when one has nothing left and when one sees one's farm going down the drain, one has to be able to turn somewhere. Nothing is more definite than that the Rural Reconstruction Scheme will be used much more in the next 12 months than it has been used in the past 12 months which was the first period of drought. Unfortunately, if we have another drought next year as some of the long-range weather forecasts predict, we will suffer even more disastrous effects.

With the amalgamation of the dairy industry and others under one title the committee which has the job of allocating the money will have to adopt a much broader approach to the job than was previously adopted. I think it will be extremely difficult. There will be divisions within the Rural Reconstruction Scheme as a result of incorporating all these functions under the one scheme. I hope it will not be too difficult and the psychology of the farmers will be taken into consideration in the future. I hope the decisions will not result entirely from the figures which appear on paper; and the make-up of the farmers and their drive and incentive will be considered a little more closely than it was in the past.

I see no reason to do otherwise than support the Bill in a manner similar to that of members in the Chamber. I was very pleased to hear the Hon. Claude Stubbs and the Hon. D. K. Dans speak in such a manner in respect of this Bill. It was particularly pleasing to hear Mr Dans speak in this manner after he had taken a trip to the northern areas and had returned in a more enlightened frame of mind.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I was just up and down a couple of weeks ago.

The Hon. H. W. GAYFER: The National Country Party supports the Bill. We hope that a number of people will receive the full benefits of the Rural Reconstruction Scheme in an even more satisfactory manner than occurred last time.

THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH (South—Minister for Transport) [10.09 p.m.]: I thank members for their contributions. I will not endeavour to speak to every point made. I think all contributions illustrated the need for this legislation.

The Hon. Claude Stubbs has obviously carried out a great deal of research in his area. Undoubtedly we must do something to endeavour to keep our breeding stock together during a time of drought. Many people will have read the latest forecasts. There was an article in *The Bulletin*; it has appeared in the newspapers in the Eastern States and I hope it was printed in the newspapers

here also. It illustrated that it appears as if we are entering into two bad years of drought. Australia has periodically been plagued by these droughts, approximately every 20 years. Of course, that is the time when we really test the finances of farmers and it accelerates the movement off the land.

One of the objectives of the rural reconstruction scheme, as we know it, or "adjustment" scheme as it is intended to be called, is to build up farms. I think they have been doing a very good job in this direction. Money is being made available at present for the building up of farms and the condition is that the interest rate is to be not less than 6¼ per cent; currently it is averaging about 7.5 per cent for loans for building up farms.

Those farmers who are receiving the benefit of these funds are undoubtedly being given considerable help. There is also provision, where a farmer has taken over another farm, to write off some of the improvements—an extra shearing shed or whatever it may be.

I think the philosophy behind the Bill is excellent. It is just a matter of whether we can cover the large amount of ground which it is necessary to cover. Our farm debt in Australia has gone from \$5 billion to something like \$8 billion. The figure of funds approved in Western Australia under the old scheme since 1971 is \$32 900 817. That is near enough to \$33 million.

That is rather a small amount when considered in the light of the total farm debt. From the 1st July, 1977, there is a sum of \$6 550 000 available for this State, of which \$851 732 has already been allocated. It is a small sum when one looks at the big problem we will have to face as a result of a drought.

As stock numbers are being reduced farmers have a little capital coming in from the sale of the stock. The problem arises when they have to carry on with only a few stock on the property and endeavour to build the numbers up again.

I agree with the Hon. Claude Stubbs' comments about the Murchison. I have visited many station owners in that area and I realise their very precarious position. Of course, they have no equity in their property so it is so much harder for them to borrow money from anyone. We have seen already one of the major stock firms withdraw from the pastoral area. This has placed a great strain on those who are still able and willing to lend money in that area. Needless to say, they are being asked to lend more than the income which will be derived over the next 12 months, so they do have a problem.

We have a need to develop a water-search

programme. I think one of the great differences between America's need to search for water and our needs is the Americans place such an emphasis on water for irrigation. We recently had a Bill on this matter and I was tempted to mention that I did have a look at some of the irrigation techniques in Texas. It was rather interesting that the legislation there forces the person who takes water from underground to return an equivalent amount during the winter months. He collects the surplus water during the winter, reverses his electric pump and pumps an amount of water back underground equivalent to the amount of water he has removed previously. I think that is something we may have to consider here.

Returning to reconstruction I think those responsible for allocating these funds have done a very good job. It is a very difficult task. There is only a small amount of money to be allocated. Very stringent guidelines must be set according to the amount of money and the number of applicants. There are good applicants who do not fall within those guidelines. Until we have a rural bank and more money available, we will have a number of people who are not catered for.

Mr Knight referred to the lack of applicants for assistance under the beef scheme. I am afraid this is a little like the people who apply for unemployment benefits; the farmers feel after a while that it is not worth applying for assistance. Every time a farmer applies he must submit a budget from that month onwards, and if he applies again in another two months, he must submit another budget. Surely we could agree on some uniform application and budget date when these unfortunate people have to apply for assistance.

Also, I believe the assistance is insufficient under this beef scheme. A man who is in the beef industry can employ three or four men and his annual wage bill alone is probably \$30 000. So what good is \$2 000 or \$3 000 to him? This is really of assistance only to farmers who are in a very small way.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: As you said, there is only so much money.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: Yes, and I am afraid we cannot stretch it.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: You are remembering the days when you were a back-bencher.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Do not remind him of that.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I do not suppose that talking will provide us with more money. I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by the Hon. D. J. Wordsworth (Minister for Transport), and passed.

House adjourned at 10.18 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

NOTHOFAGUS BEECH TREES

Resistance to Dutch Elm Disease

185. The Hon. V. J. FERRY, to the Attorney-General, representing the Minister for Lands and Forests:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that it has been reported in the press that a fast growing-specie of tree named "Nothofagus", a native of South America, is being introduced into Britain, and is said to be a specie of beech, is resistant to Dutch Elm disease, and thrives on almost any kind of soil?
- (2) What are the characteristics of "Nothofagus" trees, and are they suitable for commercial production in Western Australia?
- (3) What is the nature of Dutch Elm disease, and how does it affect certain species of vegetation?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Yes. The correct name is "Nothofagus" and not "Northofagus".
- (2) The genus Nothofagus comprises the false beeches of the southern hemisphere and contains important timber species in the temperate zones of South America and New Zealand. There are also some localised occurrences in the moister parts of Eastern Australia. The timber is similar to the beech of the northern hemisphere and is used for furniture, veneer and general turnery.

The genus is native to cool rainforest conditions which would only apply to limited areas of the Karri forest. It is unlikely to be suitable for commercial timber production in Western Australia.

- (3) Dutch Elm disease is caused by a virus, transmitted by an insect vector giving rise to vascular failure in plants of the Elm family. The disease is specific within the Elm family and is wiping out trees of this family in the northern hemisphere. There is no known control procedure.

TRANSPORT COMMISSION ACT

Offences

186. The Hon. F. E. MCKENZIE, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) For each of the financial years 1974-75, 1975-76, and 1976-77, how many offenders have been apprehended by Transport Commission investigators and known to have contravened the Transport Commission Act, and were—
 - (a) charged and convicted;
 - (b) charged and not convicted;
 - (c) not charged?
- (2) (a) What is the minimum fine, average fine, and maximum fine paid during the past 12 months by such offenders;
 - (b) how many were required to pay an insignificant amount—say, less than \$30?
- (3) (a) Has the Government any intention of prescribing a minimum fine?
 - (b) If not, why not?
- (4) How many offenders have been apprehended more than once and not charged?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

to supply an answer to the question would mean going through the records of every person who has an account or a truck with the Transport Commission. I should like the question struck from the notice paper, and I will supply the information I am able to obtain in a few days' time.

RAILWAY STATION

Salmon Gums

187. The Hon. R. H. C. STUBBS, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Is it the intention of Westrail to close the Salmon Gums station as a station manned by a stationmaster and any staff?

(2) If so—

- (a) when is this to come about;
- (b) why is it necessary; and
- (c) what will happen to the housing recently provided?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.

HIGH SCHOOLS

Career Plans Questionnaire

188. The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON, to the Minister for Transport, representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that this week at one suburban high school, students were issued with a 16-page questionnaire entitled "Career Plans Beyond High School Project: Secondary Schools' Questionnaire", which contained a number of highly personal questions which would give a profile of the family concerned?
- (2) Were these questionnaires issued to all high schools in the State?
- (3) Who is in charge of the project?
- (4) Why was this information not on the questionnaire?
- (5) Why were parents not informed of the questionnaire?
- (6) Is it assumed that the Education Department may ask students any information it sees fit without consulting parents?
- (7) What guarantee is there of anonymity in view of the fact that in one class at one school the questionnaires were completed and handed up in schools bearing the students' names and addresses?
- (8) What is the precise nature of the project?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) to (4) The Minister is aware that approval has been given to the Academic Task Force of the Western Australian Institute of Technology to approach fourteen government high schools to conduct a survey of Year 12 students regarding their career intentions. A number of non-government schools is also involved.

This information was contained in a covering letter to schools.

(5) and (6) The Education Department often requires researchers to obtain the permission of parents before the administration of tests and questionnaires to children for research purposes. The decision to require parental approval depends upon the nature of the questions, the age and maturity of students, and the procedures for ensuring confidentiality. Taking into account all these factors, the present study did not appear to warrant prior parental approval.

- (7) Schools are continually in a position where they have access to information about students and their families. Such information must always be treated with the utmost discretion and in accordance with professional ethics.
- (8) The project is intended to investigate the process by which Year 12 students make choices regarding their future careers and further education. All the questions are relevant to this purpose. The information is expected to be useful to those engaged in guidance programmes in schools and for the long term planning of post-secondary education. Career education and planning of post-secondary education are areas of great importance at this time.

RAILWAYS

Country Lines

189. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What has been the cost of maintaining the following sections of line over the past three years—
 - (a) Mullewa-Meekatharra;
 - (b) Yilliminning-Merredin;
 - (c) Lake Grace-Newdegate;
 - (d) Lake Grace-Karlgarin;
 - (e) Tambellup-Gnowangerup;
 - (f) Wonnerup-Nannup;
 - (g) Boyup Brook-Katanning;
 - (h) Quairading-Bruce Rock;
 - (i) Katanning-Nyabing;
 - (j) Pinjarra-Kwinana; and
 - (k) Claisebrook-Bunbury?
- (2) What is the length, the tonnage carried, and the tonne-kilometres figures for each section mentioned in (1) above over the past three years?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

Once again, the information is not readily available from statistics kept by Westrail. I will endeavour to obtain some information on each of the many questions asked by the honourable member.

MINING

Coal Deposits: Norseman

190. The Hon. R. H. C. STUBBS, to the Attorney-General, representing the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Has a coal deposit been discovered in the Norseman area?
- (2) If so—
 - (a) where is it situated;
 - (b) what is known of the thickness of the deposit;
 - (c) what is the quality of the deposit; and
 - (d) is it the intention to further explore the deposit to obtain more information?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) No, but a carbonaceous material which could be classified as low grade peat has been discovered.
- (2) (a) Two deposits reported to date—

The northern one near the 90-mile peg on the Coolgardie-Esperance road and the southern one near Kumarl Siding;

 - (b) the thickness of carbonaceous material is erratic, ranging from two metres to about 26 metres;
 - (c) poor quality peat with a specific energy less than firewood in the two samples analysed;
 - (d) the persons holding the mining tenements are continuing to explore the area.

ROAD TRANSPORT

Permits

191. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) On what commodities did the Transport Commission grant automatic road permits on application in 1970?
- (2) What new commodities have been added since then?

- (3) When, and for what reason, were these commodities added?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

The information will take some time to collate but I will supply it to the Honourable Member in a few days.

MULLEWA-MEEKATHARRA RAILWAY

Grades, Loads and Speed Restrictions

192. The Hon. R. H. C. STUBBS, to the Minister for Transport:

With reference to the Mullewa-Meekatharra railway line—

- (a) what is the average grades of the line;
- (b) what is the maximum grade;
- (c) what is the maximum load a train is allowed to haul;
- (d) how many speed restriction places are there; and
- (e) what are the speed restrictions?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (a) Average grades are not kept as they are not significant to railway operations but the ruling gradients are—

Mullewa/Meekatharra—1 in 75
Meekatharra/Mullewa—1 in 65

- (b) 1 in 60
- (c) For a single X-class diesel locomotive:—

Mullewa to Meekatharra—505 tonne

Meekatharra to Mullewa—440 tonne

For a double X-class consist:—Both directions—1 010 tonne

- (d) and (e) Permanent speed restrictions are:—

Mullewa/Pindar—40 kilometres per hour

Pindar/Meekatharra—30 kilometres per hour.

PRE-SCHOOL CENTRES

Teachers

193. The Hon. R. HETHERINGTON, to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Education:

- (1) What proposals did the Minister for Education last week put to the Pre-School Teachers' Union concerning the position of teachers in community based pre-school centres?
- (2) Is the Minister prepared to say what the Union's reactions have been to those proposals?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) and (2) Service conditions for members of the Pre-School Teachers' Union are covered by the Kindergarten Teachers' Award. Union members are asking for a variation of these conditions for teachers in community based centres in 1978.

Discussions with officers of the Pre-School Teachers' Union about their proposals are continuing.

ROAD FUNDS

Sources and Expenditure

194. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) For the financial year 1976-77 what were the sources of funds for construction and maintenance of roads in this State, and how much is received from each source?
- (2) How much of this money was spent on—
 - (a) construction of roads;
 - (b) maintenance of roads?
- (3) In what areas was the remainder, if any, spent?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

(1) COMMONWEALTH SOURCE \$	
National Roads Act 1974	13 199 296
Road Grants Act 1974	44 000 000
Transport Planning and Research Act 1974	558 313
Urban Public Transport Improvement Programme	230 290
STATE SOURCE (Excluding Local Authorities) \$	
Road Maintenance Trust Fund	4 621 937
Motor Vehicle Licence Fees	31 388 085
Drivers Licences	1 597 817
Overload Permits	290 577
Oversize Permits	9 459
Loan Funds	1 000 000

- (2) (a) \$78 582 000
- (b) \$19 387 380

It should be noted that this expenditure was from unspent funds carried forward from the previous year as well as from current revenue.

- (3) In areas unacceptable by the Commonwealth as road expenditure such as, Road Loan repayments, overload policing costs, electric power for traffic lights and street lighting, payments to the National Safety Council and the provision and maintenance of departmental housing and offices.

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Visit to Mining Areas

195. The Hon. R. H. C. STUBBS, to the Leader of the House:

Is it the intention of the Government in the near future to organise a tour of the mining fields in Western Australia, as it has done previously, to allow Members of Parliament—particularly new Members—the opportunity to see—

- (a) mining being carried out at the various stages of development;
- (b) the established mining complexes currently in operation?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

There are no organised tours of all Parliamentary Members to resource development areas currently planned. The advent of travel arrangements for individual Members permits them to see areas of their choice at a time of their own choosing.

However, there may be developments of a special nature in the future which warrant the extra expense of an organised tour for all Members. In such cases decisions will be made at the appropriate time.

RAILWAYS

Construction Costs

196. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister for Transport:

What is the estimated cost per kilometre of constructing a railway over level cleared ground, without provision for

bridges and culverts, in 60 lb rail with blue metal ballast?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

\$100 000 per kilometre.

Because of the technical considerations involved, I suggest that the Hon. Member contacts the Secretary, Main Roads Department, if he requires further details.

ROADS

Construction Costs

197. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Attorney-General representing the Minister for Works:

What is the difference in cost of constructing a road suitable for—

- (a) motor cars; and
- (b) heavy trucks up to 50 tonnes gross vehicle weight?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (a) and (b) There is no simple answer to this question because of the many factors which affect the cost of building roads. Some of these factors are axle loads of vehicles, amount of traffic, terrain, drainage conditions, soil type, availability and type of base course materials.

MOTOR VEHICLE LICENCE FEES

Amount Received

198. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Police and Traffic:

What funds, by way of licence fees, were received from vehicles of over 8 tonnes gross vehicle weight for the 1976-77 financial year?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

Statistics of this nature are not maintained. However, an estimate of licence fees allocated in respect of the vehicles specified for 1976/77 was \$3 710 388.