

**REGISTRATION OF DEEDS
ORDINANCE AMENDMENT
BILL**

Third Reading

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West—Minister for Justice) [5.02 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

I would like to point out that no queries or questions were raised by members during the second reading debate.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Assembly.

House adjourned at 5.03 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, the 27th August, 1974

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

QUESTIONS (24): ON NOTICE

1. POLICE

Patrol Officers: Overtime

Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Police:

- (1) What was the total amount of overtime worked by police patrol personnel during the month of July?
- (2) How many men were involved, and what was the total wages cost?
- (3) Will he give consideration to the payment for overtime at shorter intervals than at present so that the rate of income tax deductions may be reduced and made more appropriate to the annual income of the man concerned?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) 8 777 hours.
- (2) 985 men; \$31 578.
- (3) Yes, subject to the provisions of the Income Tax (Assessment) Act, which prescribes that deductions must be made at the appropriate rate at the time of payment.

2. TRAFFIC

Highway Patrol Legislation

Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Traffic:

Will he advise when it is anticipated that the highway patrol Bill will be introduced into the Parliament?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

A firm date has not been decided but it is expected the Bill will be introduced during the current session.

**3. DEMOGRAPHIC AND
ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES
COMMITTEE**

Preliminary Report

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

With reference to question 37 of 20th August relating to the demographic and environmental resources committee, will he table the preliminary report named in that answer?

Mr STEPHENS replied:

Yes.

The report was tabled (see paper No. 188).

4. TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

Kwinana and Fremantle

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

- (1) What courses is it intended to introduce in the opening years at the proposed Kwinana technical school?
- (2) How many students at present attending the Fremantle technical school in Lefroy Road have a home address in—
 - (a) the Shire of Kwinana; and
 - (b) the Shire of Rockingham?
- (3) How many of these students is it anticipated would be accommodated in such a technical school as is planned for Kwinana if that educational institution were at present receiving students?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Trades, where the number of apprentices warrants such classes; commercial, business and general studies; and adult education.
- (2) (a) 263.
(b) 193.
- (3) Estimates of this sort are difficult to make but it is anticipated that a high proportion would attend.

5. HOUSING

Collie: Advertising of Contracts

Mr T. H. JONES, to the Minister for Electricity:

Further to his answer of 21st August, 1974 wherein he advised that the SEC considered that by

advertising in *The West Australian* and the *South Western Times* the facet of the building industry concerned would be aware of the contracts for the construction of six SEC homes at Collie, and in view of the fact that the homes in question are to be constructed at Collie, would not it have been proper and in the interests of Collie builders to have a similar notice inserted in the *Collie Mail* newspaper?

Mr O'Neil (for Mr MENSAROS) replied:

It would not have been improper to advertise in the *Collie Mail*. The State Electricity Commission advises me, however, that such action would not have broadened the awareness of the relevant industry to the commission's needs.

6. PERTH MEDICAL CENTRE

Steam Main

Mr JAMIESON, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) What were the circumstances of a high temperature temporary steam main being installed to the nurses' quarters of the Perth Medical Centre?
- (2) Was this job done to standard and specification of the design department of PWD?
- (3) Is the steam main of acceptable standard to PWD requirements?
- (4) Under what reasoning was the \$7 800 cost of this main charged to contractor S. W. Hart & Co.?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Progress on the contract to provide a permanent high temperature hot-water service to the nurses' quarters was unsatisfactory and requests were made at various site meetings, and confirmed in writing on 12th July, to complete the permanent service by 19th July to allow the nurses' quarters to be made operational by 14th August. However, no apparent improvement in the progress was achieved and the contractor was unable to indicate a date for completion of this phase of the contract. Therefore, urgent action was necessary to provide an alternative source of heat energy to the nurses' quarters. The contractor was advised, in writing, of this intention and he was further advised that it was considered the work would be carried out at his cost.
- (2) and (3) Yes.
- (4) Answered by (1).

7.

POLICE

Drunken Driving Charges

Mr FLETCHER, to the Minister for Police:

Relevant to the report on page 1, *The West Australian*, 22nd August, 1974 of the difficulty associated with traffic charges relating to "driving under the influence of alcohol, or drugs, or alcohol and drugs"—

- (a) could not a more successful charge be laid by police against a person breaking the Traffic Act, if alcohol were declared to be a drug in respect of the Traffic Act;
- (b) if so, would legislation be considered to effect this purpose?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (a) Sections of the Traffic Act relating to driving under the influence of alcohol are at present being examined and the suggestion of the Member, for which I thank him, will be considered.
- (b) It is possible that a re-wording of the charge would be appropriate, but if necessary, legislation will be introduced.

8.

KINLOCK SCHOOL

Windows

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

- (1) Is he aware that since 1968 complaints have been made to his department concerning "day view" windows at the Kinlock primary school?
- (2) Is he further aware that money has been voted for the replacement of these windows?
- (3) If (1) and (2) are "Yes" why have the windows not been replaced?
- (4) If (1) and (2) are "No" will he ascertain the facts and cause action to be taken?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) and (2) Yes.
- (3) and (4) Tenders have been called and the results are now being considered.

9.

HOUSING

Building Societies: Disputation with Borrowers

Mr BATEMAN, to the Minister for Housing:

Under the present circumstances of disputation between home loan borrowers and building societies,

in relation to the registered permanent building societies—

- (1) Is the Registrar of Building Societies authorised to act as arbitrator in all or any disputes between borrowers and all societies?
- (2) If not, who is entitled to act as arbitrator?
- (3) Are such arbitrated decisions subject to appeal, and if so, to what authority?
- (4) If a building society is found to have breached regulations or sections of the Building Societies Act, 1920-1970, is there any provision for specific performance of the original contract to be enforced with or without further penalty?
- (5) Who is required to meet the cost of arbitration—
 - (a) if successful; and
 - (b) if not successful?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) and (2) Section 9 (g) of the Building Societies Act requires that the rules of every building society must set out the manner in which disputes between the society and any of its members shall be settled. Section 28 of the Act provides that disputes between any member and the society (or an officer thereof) shall be decided in the manner directed by the rules. There is no general procedure for settling disputes laid down in the rules of building societies in Western Australia, but there are two fairly common procedures. A number of societies have a rule providing for settling of disputes by reference to arbitration under the Arbitration Act, 1895. Another group provides for settlement of disputes by reference to the Registrar of Building Societies.
- (3) Section 28 of the Building Societies Act provides "the decision so made shall be binding and conclusive on all parties, and shall be final to all intents and purposes."
- (4) Other than the implication that the rules are to be observed, the Building Societies Act contains no provision requiring specific performances as between society and member, nor has it any prescription by way of penalty for non-performance. Ordinarily that would be a matter for civil action by the member against the society.

- (5) The cost of arbitration would be met in accordance with the rules of the society relating to settlement of disputes. Where the rule does not contain any such provision, presumably the matter would be in the arbitrator's discretion in accordance with customary usage in arbitration cases.

CONSERVATION

Land Clearing at Craigie

Mr TAYLOR, to the Minister for Conservation and Environment:

With respect to the present activities of a large developer who is bulldozing an extensive area of trees and vegetation in the Craigie area—including, it is alleged, at least three large tuart trees said to be at least 100 years old—

- (a) is his department aware of this activity;
- (b) will he direct his department to investigate such activities and use such powers as he has in an endeavour to have this clearing continue in a manner most calculated to preserve as much of the natural flora as possible?

Mr STEPHENS replied:

- (a) and (b) On receipt of notice of Member's question, I instructed my department to investigate the matter.
- (1) The area in question is a housing development scheme in the Padbury area and is currently being cleared by the developer for access roadways.
- (2) The developers, in discussions with the investigating officer of my department, advised him that they are aware of the desirability of preserving natural vegetation wherever possible, and that they instruct their land clearing machinery operators accordingly. The developers appreciate the advantages of preserving the vegetation both for beautification and soil stabilisation, the latter being of economic advantage to them. They are also aware that lots with existing trees could command a premium price if the natural trees are commensurate with total aesthetic landscaping of developments plus the existing environment.

11. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Land Clearing at Craigie: Complaints

Mr TAYLOR, to the Minister for Local Government:

As there are complaints from local residents in respect of exhaust fumes, noise and excessive vibrations emanating from vehicles involved in clearing operations in the Craigie area by a large developer, will he institute an immediate inquiry for the purpose of, if proven, having the local authority immediately stop such nuisance?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

If the Member would provide me with details of the complaints I will certainly have them examined.

12. LUPINS

Statutory Marketing

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

- (1) Does he recall stating in reply to a question on Wednesday, 7th August, 1974, that white lupin growers of Western Australia are overwhelmingly in favour of grower controlled statutory marketing for lupins operative from the 1974-75 season?
- (2) If so, in what manner was the opinion of growers sought and ascertained?
- (3) (a) have growers in the south-west accepted the concept of statutory marketing of lupins;
(b) if so, to what degree are they favourably disposed or opposed to the concept?

Mr McPHARLIN replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Advice was received from the Farmers' Union of WA, the Grain Pool of WA and the Ungrowers group in the Geraldton area that they supported statutory marketing.

A meeting at Watheroo supported statutory marketing on the basis indicated in the reply of 7th August.

- (3) A recent meeting, at which lupin growers from Boyup Brook were represented, agreed to the placing of lupins under statutory control.

The Boyup Brook representative voted against this inclusion under the Marketing of Seeds Act. It is understood that this objection related to concern that there would be control of farmer-to-farmer sales and lack of representation of lupin growers on the Seed Marketing Board.

13. POLICE

Questioning of Public

Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Police:

What is the maximum amount of information which a member of the public is required to give a member of the Police Force if approached for any reason whatsoever when no arrest has been made?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

This would depend on the circumstances and the nature of the offence, if one has been committed. Section 50 of the Police Act provides that a police officer may demand from any person with whom he is unacquainted his name and address. Some Statutes provide penalties if specific information is not supplied. For instance, section 34 of the Traffic Act requires the owner to identify the driver of the vehicle where an offence is alleged to have been committed.

Police officers have a duty at common law to investigate and ask questions where it appears that an offence has been committed.

14. EAST VICTORIA PARK SCHOOL

Future Use

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

- (1) Have any firm decisions been arrived at regarding the future of the East Victoria Park primary school?
- (2) If so what is intended?

Mr O'NEIL replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Answered by (1).

15. ROAD MAINTENANCE TAX

Roe Electorate: Collection and Expenditure

Mr GREWAR, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) What amount of road maintenance tax was collected in the Shires of Esperance, Lake Grace, Ravensthorpe, Gnowangerup and Kent in 1970-71, 1971-72, 1972-73 and 1973-74?
- (2) How much of the road maintenance tax was expended in each of the shires in the years mentioned?

Mr O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) This information is unobtainable.

(2) —

	1970-71	1971-72	1972-73	1973-74
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Esperance Shire Council	60 101	75 491	50 902	41 486
Lake Grace Shire Council	74 677	50 704	40 292	57 933
Ravensthorpe Shire Council	37 694	49 892	25 029	24 737
Gnowangerup Shire Council	53 459	63 708	38 478	44 058
Kent Shire Council	21 540	15 460	5 068	....

16. TOWN PLANNING

Perth City: Advertising of Plan

Mr DAVIES, to the Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning:

When is it expected the Perth City Council's town plan will be available for advertising?

Mr RUSHTON replied:

I am awaiting the Town Planning Board Report. My preliminary discussions indicate that the scheme proposals are very complex and that some time will elapse before I am able to determine any necessary modifications and give preliminary approval. This may involve further consultation with council.

17. CANCER COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Representation and Grants

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

- (1) How many members constitute the Cancer Council of Western Australia?
- (2) Who are they?
- (3) What bodies do they represent?
- (4) Have any members of the Cancer Council of Western Australia received grants from the council?
- (5) If (4) is "Yes" how much, and for what purpose?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) 18 members.
- (2) and (3) —

Name—Nominated by

Prof. B. A. Kakulas, Dr A. Nelson—Board of Management, Royal Perth Hospital.

Dr Mary Petersen—Board of Management, Fremantle Hospital.

Dr H. B. Hilton—Board of Management, Princess Margaret Hospital.

Dr E. C. Pixley—Board of Management, King Edward Memorial Hospital.

Dr D. O. Watson, Dr N. G. Beck—Australian Medical Association.

Prof. R. A. Barter, Prof. A. B. Vivian, Dr E. N. Maslen—University of Western Australia.

Dr K. J. M. Carruthers, Mr J. M. Harry, Mr F. A. Johnston, Dr W. S. Davidson—Minister for Health.

Dr J. Holt, Mr J. Devereux, Mr D. W. Larsson, Sir Basil Embry—Cancer Council.

(4) Yes. One.

(5) \$800 per annum for research in the field of cancer detection.

18. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Kwinana Area: Work Force and Retrenchments

Mr TAYLOR, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

What are the numbers of the present construction workforce and what are likely numbers and retrenchment dates as the following projects near completion—

- (a) the Kwinana power station;
- (b) the CBH project at Kwinana;
- (c) the Transfield oil rig at Woodman Point;
- (d) naval facilities on Garden Island?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

The actual workforce figures and information relating to the completion dates of each project is not available. However, the following information is submitted. The total construction workforce for the four projects is estimated to be 1 265 workers.

It is anticipated that this workforce will reduce as follows—

December 1974—1 238

January 1975—668

July 1975—598

February 1976—488

March 1976—438

July-December 1976—Nil

It is expected that all projects will be finalised by December, 1976.

19. WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Pneumoconiosis Claims

Mr T. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

- (1) Is it a fact that the State Government Insurance Office has, in at least one case reported to me, obtained from the Pneumoconiosis Medical Board, subsequent to that board having reported upon a claimant pursuant to section 8 (the appropriate provisions thereof) of the Workers' Compensation Act, further advice or information relating to the progression or otherwise of the claimant's condition?

- (2) If "Yes" did the SGIO request the information?

- (3) Does the said insurance office intend to follow this practice in the future?
- (4) By what legal authority was such information sought or obtained?
- (5) Is there authority in the Workers' Compensation Act for such information, subsequent to the issue of a report by the Pneumoconiosis Medical Board, to be sought or obtained by the SGIO, or to be given by the said medical board?
- (6) If (5) is "No" will the Minister intervene so as to call a halt to the obtaining of such information under such circumstances?
- (7) If not, why not?

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

- (1) to (6) Because the information supplied by the Pneumoconiosis Medical Board on their medical certificate was not sufficient to allow the office to assess many claims without further investigation involving delays, the office had discussions with the Workers' Compensation Board, Pneumoconiosis Medical Board and union representatives on the matter. As a result of these discussions the Pneumoconiosis Medical Board is supplying additional information which has allowed the office to make early assessment of claims resulting in early payments to claimants. The arrangement has been in operation for some months now with satisfaction to all concerned.
- (7) It is considered a sensible arrangement.

20. CONSERVATION

Wetlands: Sanitary Landfill

Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Conservation and Environment:

Further to his answer to my question 12 of 20th August, 1974, would he please table the report on sanitary landfill which was prepared under the direction of the Public Health Department?

Mr STEPHENS replied:

This matter has been discussed with the Minister for Health, who will be happy to table a copy of this report in both Houses of Parliament.

21. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Cockburn Sound: Ecological Balance

Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Conservation and Environment:

- (1) Further to his reply to my question 13 on 20th August, 1974 wherein he stated that detailed hydrological studies were carried

out prior to construction of the Garden Island causeway, would he please advise what studies have been undertaken since the construction?

- (2) If a report is available, will he please table it?

Mr STEPHENS replied:

- (1) Studies have been undertaken since the construction of the causeway jointly by the Commonwealth Department of Housing and Construction and the Fremantle Port Authority into the presence of trace elements.
- (2) Yes, please refer to page 15 Section 4.3.1 of the Cockburn Sound Ecosystem Report, Spring 1973 (published in May 1974), the extract of which is tabled.

The paper was tabled (see paper No. 190).

22. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Rockingham Beach: Rubbish

Mr BARNETT, to the Minister for Conservation and Environment:

- (1) Is he aware of the large amount of plastic and rubbish which was recently washed ashore at Rockingham beach?
- (2) Has an investigation taken place?
- (3) If so, will he table the report?

Mr STEPHENS replied:

- (1) Yes, it was reported to the Fremantle Port Authority on 10th and 11th August, 1974.
- (2) Yes, Fremantle Port Authority investigated the matter and informed the police, port inspectors and pilots. Fremantle Port Authority reports that this material could have gone in from a boat or it may have been dumped into the sea by a truck.
- (3) There is no formal report.

23. KINDERGARTEN AT MULLEWA

Aboriginal Children

Sir DAVID BRAND, to the Minister representing the Minister for Community Welfare:

- (1) What arrangements are made to transport Aboriginal children from the Aboriginal reserve and private homes to the kindergarten at Mullewa?
- (2) If a bus is used is it available to all children?

Mr RIDGE replied:

- (1) E. D. & L. Whitehurst Agency, Mullewa have contract to transport Aboriginal children from the reserve and private homes to Yunda kindergarten.

(2) No. This was a follow-up by the Community Welfare Department from the Native Welfare Department pre-school programme when the Commonwealth Government granted funds for pre-school and kindergarten purposes for Aboriginal children, provision of transport being the means of encouragement to the Aboriginal parents.

24. ABATTOIRS

Lamb: Grading

Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

In the case of the 20 country abattoirs in Western Australia which operate without the services of a health inspector how are lamb carcasses graded and indicated as such to the purchaser?

Mr RIDGE replied:

In the absence of inspectors and weighing facilities, the grading of lamb carcasses cannot be effected at these abattoirs.

The Western Australian Lamb Marketing Board is currently investigating the problem of non-inspection areas.

QUESTIONS (3): WITHOUT NOTICE

1. HEALTH

Obnoxious Odour: Brentwood Area

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

- (1) Is he aware of the inconvenience and possible health hazard being experienced by residents in the Brentwood, Booragoon and Mt. Pleasant areas due to a strong smell currently permeating the air?
- (2) As investigations into this matter have been going on for approximately 12 months, can he indicate when a solution can be expected?
- (3) Due to the possible health danger which can eventuate from the present situation, will he give an assurance that the matter will receive urgent attention?

Mr RIDGE replied:

On behalf of the Minister for Health, who thanks the member for giving prior notice of the question, the reply is as follows—

- (1) Yes. It is very unlikely that there is a health hazard associated with the odour as it is believed to be due to natural phenomena.
- (2) It has been established that the odour originates in the mud of lakes near these areas. Further complex investigations will be necessary.

(3) The matter is receiving urgent attention, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture.

2.

DIELDRIN

Use as Pesticide

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

- (1) Was the chief of W.A. Biological Services (G. R. Meadly) correctly reported in *The Sunday Times* of the 25th August as saying, "dieldrin was not recommended by the department for agriculture use"?
- (2) If the answer to (1) is in the affirmative—
 - (a) is the Minister aware that officers of the department recommend the use of dieldrin in controlling black beetle in potato crops;
 - (b) how is this "failure to recommend" consistent with the continued existence of dieldrin on the list of registered pesticides?
- (3) If the answer to (2) (a) is in the negative, will he make investigations to clarify the position?
- (4) If the answer to (1) is in the negative, will the Minister arrange with *The Sunday Times* to print an account of the true situation?

Mr McPHARLIN replied:

- (1) to (4) Because the honourable member had given me notice of his question and had specifically named one of the officers of the department, upon making inquiries I found he was unavailable this morning and therefore he was unable to comment on the question. For that reason I cannot give an answer in the terms sought by the honourable member and I ask that he put his question on the notice paper so that I may, in due course, obtain the answer for him.

3. WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Pneumoconiosis Claims

Mr T. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Labour and Industry:

Referring to question 19 on today's notice paper asked by me of the Minister, I notice in his answer that the Minister grouped parts (1) to (6) and answered them in composite form.

I now ask: Would he be prepared to supply specific answers to parts (4) and (5) of question 19, which were—

- (4) By what legal authority was such information sought or obtained?

- (5) Is there authority in the Workers' Compensation Act for such information, subsequent to the issue of a report by the Pneumoconiosis Medical Board, to be sought or obtained by the SGIO, or to be given by the said medical board?

I do not expect the Minister to give me an answer now, but I would be obliged if he could give me specific answers to parts (4) and (5) at a later date.

Mr GRAYDEN replied:

I shall certainly endeavour to obtain the information for the honourable member.

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION BILL

Introduction and First Reading

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

WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT SCHEME ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR RIDGE (Kimberley—Minister for Lands) [4.54 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The accounts of war service land schemes lessees still indebted under the scheme are administered by the Rural and Industries Bank of Western Australia.

In accordance with the requirements of the Act and regulations under the Act, it is necessary for the Minister to consent to dealings relevant to perpetual leases under the administration of the bank.

These include—

- (i) Any mortgage to be registered over a perpetual lease including mortgages in favour of the Minister himself.
- (ii) Contracts of sale.
- (iii) Sublease agreements.
- (iv) Requests to offer a perpetual lease for sale by tender or auction.
- (v) Transfer following sale.
- (vi) Transfers in terms of wills.

Briefly, the procedure to obtain consent to these dealings necessitates a commissioner of the bank making written request to the Minister in each individual case. The time necessary to consider and give formal approval is dictated by the volume of other work requiring the Minister's attention and it is understandable therefore that on occasions some delay is unavoidable.

In an endeavour to streamline the procedure which has proved time consuming in the offices of the Minister, the bank,

and the Department of Lands and Surveys, representatives from the latter department and the bank met late in 1973. The outcome of the discussions was a submission to the then Minister suggesting he may be prepared to delegate to the commissioners of the bank or their nominee authority to consent to the above-mentioned dealings. The Minister of the time in December, 1973, gave his approval to the proposed delegation of authority.

Amendments to the Act in 1960 covering further encumbrances against a perpetual lease, and another amendment in 1962 relevant to sale of a perpetual lease, negate an amendment to the regulations under the Act which will achieve the desired result. The Crown Law Department has therefore indicated the need to amend the Act as well as the appropriate regulations under the Act; hence the Bill which is now before the House.

The amendment is most desirable so that routine documents may be processed quickly without the need for multiple handling and endorsement of the Minister and I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr H. D. Evans.

STAMP ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Treasurer) [4.57 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this legislation is—

- to give effect to uniform changes to the stamp duty imposed on credit and rental transactions;
- to vary the rates of duty imposed on bills of exchange and promissory notes; and
- to make a number of desirable administrative changes.

I shall detail each of these proposals.

In the last financial year, interest rates commenced to rise and by the end of that year they had risen to unprecedented levels, particularly in the short-term money market.

Under the credit and rental business part of our Stamp Act, duty is imposed on the principal of a loan or discounting transaction, where the interest charged on that loan or transaction exceeds a specified rate per annum.

This rate may be varied by a declaration in the *Government Gazette* and it recently has been raised to 14 per cent in this State and throughout Australia.

Prior to the end of the last financial year, representations were received both in this and other States for relief from the

imposition of stamp duty, particularly on short-term transactions which were not previously subject to this tax.

As a result of conferences held between representatives of the New South Wales and Victorian Governments and major financial organisations in those States, both States undertook to provide exemption for short-term money market transactions.

This, in fact, has been put into effect by administrative action not only in those two States but also in other States which have similar legislation.

The reason for granting exemption rather than endeavouring continuously to vary the interest rate is because a change in the overall interest rate structure makes the use of a declared rate variation inappropriate to resolve the problem.

As members will have noted from the Press, this State has administratively granted exemption from the 1st June, 1974.

This action is in line with that taken in other States and was done in this way because the rapid upward movement in interest rates required immediate action.

The granting of these exemptions will not affect the budgeted stamp duty collections in 1974-75 as these transactions did not previously attract duty and clearly if no exemption was granted in this State, the dealings would not take place here but obviously would be transacted in other States where the exemption is available.

This, of course, would have a serious inhibiting effect on the development of the local short-term money market.

Because short-term transactions were not intended to be subject to duty; because interest rates on these transactions have reached record levels; and because their nation-wide nature requires a uniform State approach and failure to grant the exemption will prejudice the Western Australian market, provision is made in this Bill to confirm the exemption which is now operating on an administrative basis.

The proposed amendment will exempt all loan and discount transactions provided the terms of the transactions do not exceed 180 days and in each case the amount involved is not less than \$50 000.

In the case of discount transactions, only bills or notes of the specified term and amounts, negotiated by banks, official or unofficial dealers will qualify for exemption.

In the case of loans, subject to the transactions being within the specified limits of terms and amounts, only those made to banks, to or by official or unofficial short-term market dealers or by one corporation to another by way of temporary investment, will qualify.

Provision is made for the Treasurer to declare and publish in the *Government Gazette* the names of the official and unofficial dealers who qualify for the exemption.

The Bill contains provisions to permit the Treasurer of the State by instrument in writing published in the *Government Gazette*, to declare that the exemption applies in relation to the transactions I have detailed and gives him power to make the declaration from a specified date. This date may be a date earlier than the date on which the instrument is made.

It is proposed, subject to this Bill being passed, that a declaration as from the 1st June, 1974, be made to confirm the action already taken administratively to exempt these transactions.

The law also contains a provision which permits the Treasurer to revoke the exemption should circumstances justify this action.

I now turn to the variation in the rates of stamp duty imposed on term bills of exchange and promissory notes.

Under the current law a rate of 10c per \$100 of the face value of a bill or note is imposed. The rate is charged irrespective of the length of the term of the bill.

This system of duty markedly disadvantages short-term bills and notes because a short-term bill of one month is subject to the same duty as is a bill for the same amount for a three-year term.

Another inhibiting factor in the growth of the relatively recently established commercial bill market, is the fact that where duty is paid in one State on the issue of a bill, additional stamp duty of the same amount is also payable to another State should that bill subsequently be negotiated in that State.

Thus in its short life, if a bill is negotiated in three States, then three times the duty is paid as opposed to once if the bill is negotiated on the same number of occasions in the State of origin.

Obviously both these factors are seriously impeding the development of the market, particularly in this State, and, during recent times, financial houses throughout Australia have been making representations for a change in the system.

This problem was examined by all State taxation authorities and uniform changes have been or are being made by all State Governments.

In both New South Wales and Victoria legislation to effect these changes has been introduced. In fact, the legislation has been passed in Victoria, but has not yet been proclaimed to come into operation as it is desired to introduce the change on the same date throughout Australia.

The proposal is to change the rates imposed on term bills and notes to a duty of 1c per \$100 of the face value for each 10 days or part thereof of the term of the bill or note until the stamp duty rate reaches 12c per \$100.

Where a bill or note has been duly stamped in a State in Australia and is subsequently negotiated in another State, the duty applying to a cheque drawn in one State and negotiated in another will apply. Currently in Western Australia a flat rate of 6c per cheque is imposed. Therefore, the additional duty on a term bill or promissory note will be 6c only in cases where it has been drawn in another State and subsequently negotiated in Western Australia.

In addition, where an overseas bill or note enters Australia, the State of entry will collect the *ad valorem* duty imposed.

Should the bill or note subsequently be negotiated in another State or States, then only the flat rate applying to cheques will be imposed.

The effect of the proposed amendment is illustrated by the following example. A bill drawn for \$10 000 for 30 days now attracts \$10 stamp duty. Under the proposal it will attract \$3.

If the duty is expressed as an interest percentage on the bill, the effective rate will fall from 1.2 per cent to .37 per cent.

Where a bill is for a term of more than 110 days, the current rate now imposed of 10c per \$100 will rise to 12c per \$100.

Because the duty on bills and notes is paid mainly by the use of adhesive stamps, it is difficult to make precise estimates of any possible effect on revenue.

However, after a study of the limited data available, all States have concluded there will be no marked change in current yield.

The encouragement to the market leading to the use of more commercial bills, together with the rate increase on the longer-term bills are expected to offset fully the lower yields to be obtained from short-term bills.

The Bill now before the House contains provisions to give effect to the new rates and in addition contains provisions to ensure the correct duty is paid on bills which appear on the face to be short term, but are endorsed or subject to agreements in such a way as to turn them effectively into long-term bills.

The target date for the introduction of this uniform change in rates is the 1st January, 1975, and for that purpose this section of the proposed law is to be brought into operation on a date to be proclaimed.

The achievement of the target date will depend upon the legislative programmes and progress of the necessary legislation through State Parliaments.

Finally, I will now detail the proposed changes in administrative procedures which are all aimed at improving the service provided to taxpayers. There are three of these.

Provision is made to permit the continued use of a uniform stamp duty emblem on cheques, but without requiring the amount of the stamp duty paid on each cheque to be shown in the emblem.

If members will consult their cheque books, they will find that there is a small square which currently contains the words, "Stamp duty 6 cents paid".

This emblem has been used on a uniform basis throughout Australia from the 1st July, 1973.

It came into being because the banks approached each State with a request for a uniform emblem to facilitate the introduction of personalised encoded cheques which involve the use of a computer process. However, shortly after the uniform emblem had been introduced, Victoria raised its rate of duty to 7c per cheque.

This destroyed the uniformity and presented the banks with a printing problem. As a result the banks then requested the amount be dropped from the uniform emblem.

The matter was examined at the last conference of State taxation authorities and all State representatives agreed to recommend to their respective Governments the change which had been requested.

All States, except Western Australia, are able to achieve the change by amendments to regulations. In our case the Act needs to be changed because it requires the amount of duty payable to be printed on the cheque.

I understand that to date all States have effected the necessary changes to their regulations.

In view of the fact that from time to time the rate of stamp duty may be changed and all States have agreed to the uniform print, the Bill now before members contains a provision to remove the words requiring the duty payable to be printed on each cheque and substituting the requirement that the words, "Stamp duty paid" be printed on the cheque.

As it is desired to bring the use of the standard emblem in on a uniform date, provision is made to bring this proposal into operation on a date to be proclaimed.

The next administrative change contained in the legislation is to remove the 10c charge for what is described as an adjudication.

Under the existing law, wherever there is a doubt about the correct stamp duty to be imposed on a document, the Commissioner of State Taxation is required to express his opinion and the document must then be stamped in accordance with that opinion.

For example, a transfer of land being made by way of gift between related parties requires the commissioner to express his opinion on the amount of duty payable on the document.

These commissioner's opinions are described as adjudications, for which the current provisions in the Act prescribe that a fee of 10c is to be paid for each one. This fee is shown on the document by a special machine imprint.

Quite a number of adjudications are carried out and in some cases the fee is not forwarded with the duty. This applies particularly to documents sent in from the country, as members will no doubt know from experience.

The cost of collection of these small outstanding sums is far in excess of the yield, quite apart from which it is, understandably, a source of annoyance to both taxpayer and administration.

Over the last four years the annual yield from adjudications has produced, on average, a little over \$1 200 and this year it is estimated that a little less than \$1 300 will be received. The fee has not been changed since 1921.

Quite clearly, the time used in attempting to recover outstanding adjudication fees can be put to far better productive use, and on the score of public relations with the taxpayers alone, this petty impost should be removed.

For the foregoing reasons the Bill contains provision to delete the requirement to pay the 10c wherever this appears in the Act.

The final administrative proposal is to permit the use of an alternative method of stamping documents, and this is an important improvement for country centres.

For administering the provisions of the Stamp Act, local clerks of courts and mining registrars are persons authorised to cancel adhesive stamps. This permits the assessment and stamping of simple documents in country areas, and is an important service to country taxpayers and agents.

During the last decade the volume of country transactions has risen considerably, particularly in the major centres. However, none has reached the level where the opening and staffing of a branch office of the State Taxation Department could be economically justified.

I might mention that the commissioner maintains a continuous check on the level of documents processed in various country centres so that when the stage is reached that it is an economic proposition to open a branch office, action to this end will be recommended.

Nevertheless, the current volume has given rise to a number of complaints that from time to time the country outstations run out of certain denominations of stamps, which is frustrating to taxpayers or their agents and the officials assessing the duty.

Although steps have been taken to readily increase stamp advances and encourage frequent recoups, because of the variable nature of the operations, from time to time the problem recurs.

The difficulties of country stamping have been raised with the commissioner when he has been addressing groups of legal and accounting practitioners in some of the major country centres and recently, as the member for Narragin will know, by him and a legal firm which made representations to him from that town.

To overcome this problem a system involving the use of adhesive coupons and cash register machines has been designed by the State Taxation Department, in co-operation with the Crown Law and Audit Departments.

In brief, it involves the use of assessment forms and a specially designed coupon which may be put through a cash register and then affixed to the document. In order to provide an improved service to country taxpayers, provision has been made in the Bill now before the House to authorise the use of adhesive coupons to denote the payment of stamp duty.

As members will note, these amendments are fairly extensive because quite a number of changes have to be made to a large number of sections in the current law.

It will take a little time to obtain the necessary stationery and instruct the various officers in the outstations in the new procedure.

Therefore, it is proposed that the scheme should be brought into operation on the 1st January, 1975, and for this reason the Bill contains a provision to bring these amendments into operation on a date to be proclaimed.

In summary, this legislation will provide confirmation of the exemption which has been granted to short-term transactions on an Australia-wide basis, will introduce new, equitable, and uniform rates of duty for term bills of exchange and promissory notes, and provide an improved service to taxpayers at very little expense to the revenue, and I commend it to members.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr J. T. Tonkin (Leader of the Opposition).

BILLS (2): RECEIPT AND FIRST READING

1. Evidence Act Amendment Bill.
2. Registration of Deeds Ordinance Amendment Bill.

Bills received from the Council; and, on motions by Mr O'Neill (Minister for Works), read a first time.

NICKEL REFINERY (WESTERN MINING CORPORATION LIMITED) AGREEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR O'NEIL (East Melville—Minister for Works) [5.18 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Bill before the House is to seek ratification of an agreement executed by Western Mining Corporation Limited and the State on the 29th March, 1974, to amend both the Nickel Refinery (Western Mining Corporation Limited) Agreement of 1968, and the supplemental agreement of 1970.

Before I proceed with an explanation of the terms of the new amendment agreement, perhaps I should clarify any confusion that may exist in respect of the principal agreement of 1968, and the supplemental agreement of 1970, and the bearing each has on the other.

The position is that the 1970 agreement, in part, amends the 1968 agreement, and for the remainder stands as a separate agreement. The first of these agreements was, of course, written primarily to deal with the establishment of a nickel refinery at Kwinana and, subsequently, the second provided for the establishment of a smelter near Kalgoorlie.

It is appreciated that the difficulties of this format are now being compounded by the issue of yet another agreement varying the terms of each, but because of extreme limitations of time and the size and complexity of the task of amalgamating all into a single more easily understood document, it was considered by the Government of the day that the task should be left to a more opportune time. After reviewing the position, I concur with this view.

The matters covered by the amendment agreement before the House were initially prompted by requests put to the State by Western Mining Corporation Limited in respect of the corporation's rights pertaining to a number of mineral tenements, and to the operation of water and sewerage services. Contemporaneously the State found it desirable to make amendments in respect of freeholding townsite lots in Kambalda, and it wished also to write into the agreements minor amendments in respect of the tailings lease; *force majeure* clauses; new clauses dealing with environmental protection; and the format to be followed when varying the agreement in the future.

I propose to deal with these matters in turn in a general way and to point out subsequently the relevant clause or clauses in the schedule to the Bill in which the matter is given effect.

Firstly, the most significant item deals with the company's rights in respect of its mineral areas. Doubt has arisen re-

garding the interpretation of the principal and supplementary agreements as to whether conditions relating to favourable renewal rights, labour and expenditure requirements, and concessional rating entitlements apply to certain of the corporation's mineral leases. The application of the above conditions may be applicable to varying degrees according to when the leases were applied for or granted in relation to the commencement date under the principal agreement. Of the greatest concern was the fact that the corporation believed that its security of tenure was in jeopardy in respect of these leases.

It was agreed that the status of the leases in question should be placed beyond doubt by granting the company the same favourable rights of renewal, exemption from labour conditions, and concessional rating entitlement as apply to all other mineral leases held by it under the agreements. It would seem that this was the original intention of the parties and that the company was justified in its request.

The amendment agreement gives effect to the matter under clause 3, subclauses (1) and (3), and clause 5, subclauses (1), (4), and (5).

The company also sought at that time a further concession in respect of its obligations under clause 5(1) of the 1968 agreement. Under that clause the company must surrender 132 square miles per year of the area over which it holds occupancy rights, and it sought the right to include as part of such surrendered land any area over which it had applied for a mineral lease in the preceding 12 months. The request conformed with the normal practice of the Mines Department and it was agreed that the agreements should be amended accordingly. Clauses 3(2) and 5(3) of the amendment agreement give effect to this provision.

I turn now to the matter of the company's rights in respect of townsite development and the discharge of its obligations in regard to water and sewerage services. The company has, since it first began developing its township, controlled townsite land use and provided water and sewerage services for all consumers within Kambalda East and West. It found it desirable to broaden the scope of its rights beyond those provided in the 1968 and 1970 agreements, and it sought the status of a supply authority under which it will continue these operations.

The Public Works Department is not currently in a position to take over supply and/or reticulation responsibilities from the company, and it has agreed that the rights sought by the company should be granted provided, firstly, that charges for water and sewerage services be subject to approval by the Minister for Works and

Water Supplies and, secondly, that if the Minister considers it desirable in the interests of water conservation or water management, or to maintain equity between consumers throughout the State, then the Minister may, on giving six months' prior notice to the company of his intention, take over the water supply and the sewerage schemes within the townsite, without payment of compensation. In this event, consumers within the townsite would become subject to rates and charges as prescribed under the Country Areas Water Supply Act and the Country Towns Sewerage Act.

The opportunity was also taken to clarify the company's obligation towards contributing to the capital cost of any expansion of the water supply system made necessary as a result of the company's operations. Clause 3, subclauses (5) and (6), and clause 5, subclause (1) of the amendment agreement give effect to these rights and obligations.

At about the same time as the company approached the State on these townsite matters, it was brought to the department's attention that action should be taken to regularise a practice that had been established regarding freeholding of townsite lots.

The 1968 principal agreement provides for the company taking a lease of townsite lots and improving them under certain conditions, thus becoming eligible for freehold title. In practice, and by arrangement with the State, once the company has arranged an approved subdivision it has bypassed the requirement for a lease and has proceeded directly to erecting the necessary improvements, subsequently being granted freehold title by the Lands Department. This arrangement is a practical one which avoids a large amount of tedious and routine administration involved in lease documentation and surrenders that would otherwise be necessary.

In addition, the company has been developing some sites—particularly commercial sites—on behalf of third parties to whom it has undertaken to sell the land. In effect, the company is thus selling the site before it has title, and as such a sale is in conflict with the Sale of Land Act. The State has agreed that this procedure should be regularised by an appropriate amendment. Clause 3(4) of the amendment agreement gives effect to these provisions.

So far as the remaining matters the subject of the amendment agreement are concerned, the State has found the necessity for the agreement has provided a practical opportunity to include in the principal and supplementary agreements certain other policy and minor administration matters.

Members will note that the first of these policy matters is the introduction of a variation clause which is not consistent

with the present Government's policy. However, the Government recognises that the clause is part of a contract executed by the previous Government and we are prepared to honour that contract and allow clauses 3(7) and 5(1) of the amendment agreement to be ratified in the present form. We also accept the terms of the environmental protection clause, the second policy matter, introduced by clauses 3(9) and 5(1) of the amendment agreement.

Finally, the amendment agreement provides for the minor matters of, firstly, notice being given by one party to the other in the event of a claim of *force majeure*, and, secondly, corrects some anomalies in respect of issue of a tailings lease or leases. They are both administrative changes considered to be desirable and are covered by clauses 3(8) and 5(2) respectively in the amendment agreement.

In conclusion, I make the point that this Bill seeks to ratify an agreement prepared and executed when the Opposition was in Government and it has no effect until ratified.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned for one week, on motion by Mr May.

TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 22nd August.

MR T. H. JONES (Collie) [5.29 p.m.]: When I arrived at Parliament House today, I was rather surprised to see the position in which this Bill had been placed on the notice paper. This procedure often occurs late in a session but I was not anticipating the Bill would be so high up on the notice paper today because it will be recalled it was the last Bill on which a Minister's second reading speech was given on Thursday.

I realise that the Minister for Fuel and Energy had to go to the Eastern States, but members on this side of the House are placed in a difficult position in relation to this Bill, particularly in view of the fact that it was the last Bill to be presented on Thursday evening. I had a discussion with the Minister for Traffic Safety but it was too late to make other arrangements. When Bills are brought on so urgently, members on this side do not have much opportunity to look into them and do research on them. I hope this will be the last occasion—particularly at the beginning of the session—that this will happen.

The Bill before us seeks to amend the Traffic Act. It contains five major amendments; the first of which proposes to increase license fees by an average of 65 per cent, although after some research I notice some of the fees will rise by more than 100 per cent. The second amendment seeks to increase the fee for a driver's license

from \$3 to \$5. As a result of the third amendment a new vehicle license transfer fee will now be \$4—an increase of \$1. In the fourth amendment, the legislation introduces a new system for the recording of vehicles, and the fee will be increased to \$4; and the fifth amendment provides that a driver may renew his license for three years if he so desires.

It is interesting to note that it took the Minister in charge of the Bill—the Minister for Traffic Safety—exactly 13 minutes to explain the measure to the House. He commenced his second reading speech at 6.02 p.m. and finished it at 6.15.

Mr O'Neill: Give or take a minute.

Mr T. H. JONES: In that short time the Minister explained that the people of this State will have to pay out an additional \$8.1 million for this year, and an additional \$10.9 million for a full year.

Mr O'Connor: I think you must admit that I was trying to help members generally.

Mr T. H. JONES: This was a very short time to spend on a Bill which will have such far-reaching effects on the taxpayers of Western Australia.

Mr Nanovich: Do you suggest the Minister should be fined for speeding?

Mr T. H. JONES: I am afraid I could not quite hear the interjection. However, my time is unlimited, and I am willing to reply to queries.

This measure will place a heavy financial burden on the taxpayers of Western Australia—it amounts to \$10.9 million in a full year, and an estimated \$8.1 million this year.

We, on this side of the House, are very disturbed at the taxing measures which are being introduced by the Government. It is my intention, with your permission, Mr Speaker, to touch briefly on the measures already introduced by the Government and the burdens they have placed not only on the low wage earners but more particularly on the pensioners of Western Australia. I wish to refer to the plight of the pensioners because only last week the Minister indicated when he replied to a question that consideration was being given to the pensioners by a committee appointed by Cabinet. However, after studying the Bill I see that no provision is made for any relief to be given to pensioners in connection with license fees, other than the concession which applied previously. I will come to these matters in a moment.

It is true to say that since the Court Government came to power a number of taxing measures have been introduced. I ask the question: Where is it going to end? It is quite obvious to us that if the Government wishes to implement the programme which it put to the people earlier this year we will see many more such measures. I am waiting anxiously for the

introduction of the Budget to see what is ahead for the taxpayers in Western Australia. The Government plans a radical change in our education system, and it is my belief that it will cost some millions of dollars. We look forward with interest also to the setting up of the proposed highway patrol, and we must ask ourselves what extra burden will this place on the taxpayers of Western Australian.

The Opposition is very concerned about the taxing measures which have been introduced so far by the Court Government. We are quite confident that if the Government wishes to implement its policy speech, many similar measures will be brought to the Parliament during its tenure of office.

It is not my intention to discuss all the amendments contained in the measure as the Minister has explained these to us. However, I feel it my duty to discuss the reasons he gave for the introduction of this legislation.

In his second reading speech the Minister told us that these impositions were necessary to help maintain the State's road programme and to sustain the employment of road workers generally throughout Western Australia.

We believe the provision to permit a driver to renew his license for three years is quite a good move; the system operates already in many of the Eastern States. The legislation will give the driver the option to renew his license for the longer period. We do not argue with this proposition.

The Minister told us of the problems associated with the road works programme, and that finance is available on the level of the previous years' expenditure. He also said that because of increases in prices and costs generally the Government sees the need to increase drivers' and other license fees so that additional income will be available for road works.

The fee of \$2 for a pensioner's license will remain, but as I said a moment ago, this does not go far enough. Because of rising costs the pensioners of Western Australia are in a parlous position. Members are aware that prices are increasing all the time; and although this is not entirely the fault of the Western Australian Government, the pensioner is caught up in a cost spiral without having a tribunal to which to appeal. We are aware that pensioners were recently granted a \$5 per week increase, but they are still in a very difficult position. The low income earners will be able to absorb some of the increases, but pensioners are in a totally different situation.

In most cases the pensioner uses his vehicle for short trips only. As he gets on in years he will perhaps use his car once a week for shopping, and once a week to visit his bowling club or join in

church activities. It is my belief that the pensioner will find it very difficult to meet these increased costs, and Opposition members are very concerned about this fact.

The Bill proposes to retain the 50 per cent concession for a farmer's first truck and for trucks paying road maintenance tax. The Minister referred to a 65 per cent average increase on vehicle licenses, but some license fees will increase by well over 100 per cent.

Mr O'Connor: I did say that.

Mr T. H. JONES: In fairness to the Minister, he did say that the license fee for a Fairlane would be increased 113 per cent—but that does not worry us on this side of the House because we are all too poor to own a Fairlane. I do not think it will worry many of the workers of Western Australia because not too many workers own Fairlanes.

In the time available to me I wish to show the position in regard to license fees in Western Australia as compared with those of the other States of the Commonwealth.

I do not intend to refer to the increases for different types of cars as mentioned by the Minister. We see that the license fees for many of the popular types of vehicles have been increased—and I refer to Holden Kingswood, Datsun, trucks, and other commercial vehicles. It is not my intention tonight to weary the House with repetition. However, we all know that vehicle registration fees will be increased by an average of 65 per cent, and the result is that every motorist in Western Australia will be forced to pay more to register his vehicle under the provisions of this legislation.

It is interesting to note that the basic system of licensing vehicles in Western Australia will be changed; that is, the tare weight and power weight principle. The Minister explained to us that he took this opportunity to bring Western Australia into line with the other States, and it is for this reason that the method of licensing vehicles in Western Australia has been altered. However, I am worried at the reason for the increase to \$4 for the recording fee. The Minister explained that this is a new concept as far as licensing generally is concerned.

The question of whether a person can afford to license his motor vehicle on an annual basis with these increased charges is of great concern. If a person has the necessary finance at his disposal he has no problem with the annual licensing of his vehicle. However, we see that the lower wage earner and the pensioner often find themselves in financial difficulty when it comes to finding the money necessary to license their vehicles on an annual basis. This is where I am not happy with the provisions contained in this measure. It is clear now that whereas under the existing legislation if a person wishes to re-license

his vehicle twice a year he is required to pay an additional registration fee of \$1; under the new recording fee principle he is to be required to pay an additional \$4 on each occasion he renews the registration of his vehicle for six months. That is an increase of \$3 on each occasion, and I think it is rather harsh.

It is true, as the Minister said, additional book work is involved, because the same amount of work is involved whether a person renews his vehicle registration for six months or for 12 months. However, I make a plea to the Minister because I feel although workers on a moderate income may not find difficulty in licensing their vehicles on an annual basis, certainly pensioners and others on low incomes will be unable to find the money to do so.

If we consider the increase in license fees—which is 65 per cent—and the recent increase in motor vehicle insurance fees—which was 25 per cent—we see that within a couple of months in those two areas alone a 90 per cent increase has been applied to motorists. That is a drastic increase, to say the least; and when we consider a person on lower wages we wonder how he can overcome this situation. He has been accustomed to licensing his vehicle on a six-monthly basis, and now, with an overall increase of 90 per cent for license and insurance, he will find himself in dire straits, and he will be penalised because he will be required to pay an additional \$4 if he continues to license his vehicle on a six-monthly basis.

So we are not happy with this proposed alteration. We think the Minister should have another look at the matter with a view to offering some relief to the people who will be most severely affected by it.

I have received approaches from shires in Western Australia requesting me to ask the Minister, whilst the Bill is under consideration, whether the procedure involved with the registration of vehicles could not be simplified. Complaints have come from shires regarding the number of entries which must be made when a person renews the registration of his vehicle. I refer to the third party insurance premium, stamp duty, the insurance sundry, and the insurance surcharge. It has been put to me—and I have been asked to place it before the Minister—that perhaps an average could be applied rather than have the present system of all these book entries and the necessary dissecting which must be done in relation to each vehicle. This work is time consuming for the local authorities of Western Australia.

I ask the Minister whether he will give consideration to applying a percentage principle within the overall license fee so that these individual entries will not have to be collated. The shires are put to a great deal of costly administrative work in this regard, and they feel the procedure could be streamlined and simplified so that an overall charge is levied.

Mr O'Connor: This is in regard to the license fee, third party premium, and so on?

Mr T. H. JONES: Yes. As the Minister would know, at the moment the local authorities must break up the different charges, and this involves them in additional administrative work. The proposition I put to the Minister is this: Would it not be possible to collate these charges under the one heading and to collect the revenue by levying a percentage charge?

Generally, the points I have outlined are some of the complaints we have with the Bill. The main point I raise on behalf of the taxpayers of Western Australia is: where are the increases leading to, and when will they end? With your permission, Mr Speaker, I will list some of the increases in taxes and charges since the present Government has been in office, and these directly affect the ordinary man in the street.

Mr O'Connor: I did that when your Government came to power.

Mr Jamieson: There were a great deal less then.

Mr O'Connor: No, there weren't.

Mr Jamieson: We had five in the first year, and there have been 15 already with you.

Mr T. H. JONES: If the Minister cares to listen to me I think he will find that his argument then cannot be related to my present argument, because mine has much greater strength. I refer firstly to fares and freight charges, which were increased by 30 per cent. Cartage rates have been increased by 34.9 per cent; water rates are up by 11.1 per cent; and sewerage rates have been increased by 25.8 per cent. Interstate rail fares have been increased by 13.5 per cent; gun licenses have gone from \$2 to \$3, which is a 50 per cent increase; State Housing Commission rents have been increased, although not in every instance, from \$1 to \$3.45 a week; electricity charges have risen by 14.2 per cent; gas charges by 10 per cent; manufactured gas prices have increased by 17 per cent; and payroll tax has been increased from 4.5 to 5 per cent, and I understand this will provide additional revenue this year of \$4.5 million.

So it will be appreciated these increases are, to say the least, very large. When one considers the increase in electricity charges of 14.2 per cent and the increase in motor vehicle insurance premiums of 25 per cent, one finds those are not slight increases in anyone's language. All these increases have been applied by the Court Government since it came to office.

Mr Jamieson: They have not yet struck a rate for country water supply areas, so we don't know what that will be.

Mr Nanovich: We may yet suggest putting meters on private bores as you suggested when you were Minister for Water Supplies.

Mr Jamieson: Here is the bull from the bush again.

Mr T. H. JONES: The list of increases to which I have just referred, coupled with this average increase of 65 per cent in vehicle license fees and the 25 per cent increase in vehicle insurance premiums—and those two alone amount to an increase of 90 per cent to the motorists of Western Australia—indicate that the increased charges the people of Western Australia must bear are hefty indeed. Of course, as far as the motorist is concerned it does not end there, because we have seen increases in the price of petrol, tyres, and accessories, and also in labour costs; although I am not saying that these are the fault of the Government. The point I am making is that the increases do not stop at the 90 per cent to which I have referred.

The Minister mentioned some of the increases which were applied in other States. It is true that he supplied information regarding the rates in South Australia, Victoria, Queensland, and Tasmania. In fairness to the Minister, the information indicates that Victoria is considering increased charges in this field, and so is South Australia. In South Australia a Bill is currently before the Parliament but, unlike the situation in Western Australia, the increase in South Australia is only 25 per cent. That information was given to me from South Australia today, and the increase there is a great deal less than that proposed in Western Australia. The South Australian Parliament will discuss tonight a Bill to increase license fees by an average of 25 per cent; and in this State we are considering increases of 65 per cent, or increases which are 40 per cent higher than those being considered in South Australia.

I should like to give the House some examples of license fees operating in the various States. A Falcon 500 costs \$31 to license in Western Australia and, under the new provisions, this charge will be increased by 70 per cent to \$52.97. In New South Wales, the charge is \$41; in Victoria it is \$35.30; in South Australia it is \$37.40 and will rise to \$46.75, which is still much cheaper than the figure applying here.

Mr O'Connor: What vehicle are you referring to?

Mr T. H. JONES: I am quoting figures applying to the Falcon 500. In Queensland, the license fee is \$41 and in Tasmania it is \$35.78.

The Cortina 1600 TC costs \$20 to license in Western Australia and this charge will rise by 60 per cent to \$32.22. In New South Wales the charge is \$31.85; in Victoria it

is \$20.30; in South Australia it is \$19.90 and will rise to \$24.88; in Queensland it is \$24.10; and, in Tasmania, it is \$22.78. I ask members to note the charge applying in South Australia.

Mr O'Connor: Do the figures applying to South Australia include a registration fee?

Mr T. H. JONES: A registration fee is not specifically mentioned; these are the only figures I have relating to South Australia.

Mr O'Connor: The Western Australian figures you mentioned include registration fees.

Mr T. H. JONES: Yes, that is right. These are the figures which have been forwarded to me and I understand that they contain the registration fee. However, I stand corrected if that is not the situation. To continue, a Holden 173 HQ costs \$30 to license in Western Australia and this charge under the new provision will increase by 66 per cent to \$49.65. In New South Wales the charge is \$39.50; in Victoria it is \$32.90; in South Australia it is \$33.90 and soon to be \$42.38, which is still much cheaper than Western Australia; in Queensland, the charge is \$37.75; and, in Tasmania, it is \$32.18.

At the moment, a Holden 202 HQ costs \$30 to license in Western Australia and, under the new provision, this charge will rise to \$51.31, an increase of 73 per cent. In New South Wales, a similar vehicle costs \$39.50 to license; in Victoria, the charge is \$34.10; in South Australia, it is \$39.40, rising to \$49.25, still some \$2 cheaper than Western Australia; in Queensland, the charge is \$39.05; and, in Tasmania, it is \$34.22.

The new fee for a Holden Premier V8 is to be \$62.10 which represents an increase of some 93 per cent over the present figure of \$32. In New South Wales, the charge is \$41.50; in Victoria, it is \$41.90; in South Australia, it is \$44.40, rising under their new provisions to \$55.50; in Queensland, the charge is \$47.50; and, in Tasmania, it is \$40.98. I understand that, at the moment, the Western Australian license fee applying to a four-cylinder Torana is \$24 and will rise by 29 per cent to \$30.56. The figure applying in New South Wales is \$30.80; in Victoria, it is \$18.60; in South Australia it is \$19.90 and will rise to \$24.88; in Queensland, the charge is \$22.80; and in Tasmania it is \$21.22.

The Vallant Charger 29.6 hp motor car costs \$49.65 to license in Western Australia; \$40 in New South Wales; \$33.50 in Victoria; \$37.40 in South Australia; \$38.40 in Queensland; and, \$34.22 in Tasmania. At present, a Datsun 1200 costs \$15 to license in Western Australia and, under the new provisions, this charge will rise by 80 per cent to \$26.41. In New South Wales, a similar vehicle costs \$26.25 to

license; in Victoria the charge is \$16.10; in South Australia it is \$16.40, rising to \$20.50; in Queensland it is \$19.55; and, in Tasmania, it is \$18.62. The Datsun 180B costs \$22 to license in Western Australia and under the new provisions an increase of 59 per cent will raise this charge to \$34.71. In New South Wales, the charge is \$38.85; in Victoria it is \$22.10; in South Australia it is \$23.40, rising to \$29.25 under the new provisions; in Queensland it is \$26.70; and, in Tasmania, it is \$24.86.

I will not weary the House with further examples; I have made my point that in most categories, even with the increases proposed in South Australia, license fees applying in that State are much less than those charged in Western Australia. We on this side of the House are concerned not only at these proposed increases in license fees but also at the increases which have applied generally since the Court Government came to office.

I am greatly worried about this situation as it affects the pensioners and I believe the Minister should examine the matter in fairness to the some 10 000 pensioners in Western Australia who own motor cars. Members will recall that I was concerned about this matter well before any publicity was given to it in the Press. I wrote to the Minister for Police on the 8th July this year requesting certain concessions for pensioners. The Minister's reply to me on the 22nd July pointed out that concessions were already available to certain classes of pensioners under the benefits provided by the Department of Social Security. In the last paragraph of his letter, the Minister had this to say—

While I sympathise with the plight of many pensioners, Western Australia is generally more liberal than other States in the granting of concessions and I regret that I cannot extend these concessions to aged pensioners.

The Minister later went before the Pensioners League and its members must have been kind to him, because he gave them greater cause for hope than his reply to me would have given them. In an article in *The West Australian* of the 31st July this year, under the heading, "Plan to cut pensioners fees", it states—

The Minister for Transport, Mr O'Connor, is investigating possibilities of pensioner exemption from proposed increases in vehicle licensing fees.

Mr O'Connor said he had been approached by the WA division of the Australian Pensioners League and several members of Parliament for pensioner relief from increased charges.

There were some difficulties in giving pensioners special exemptions. They involved road costs and proposed expenditure under the present budget.

Mr T. J. Kannis of the Pensioners' League, said that about 10,000 pensioners in WA owned and drove cars.

Few would use their vehicles for more than shopping or visiting purposes.

The burden of increased registration or licensing fees would deprive many of these people of their cars.

Most pensioners had a struggle to keep their vehicles on the road and increased costs would make it impossible for many to own a car.

Mr Kannis, the Commonwealth liaison officer for all pensioners organisations in Australia, will visit other States next week to make similar submissions to governments.

I am certain that the Minister gave the pensioners some heart. However, I would have assumed that an announcement to this effect would be made. In the light of that article, on the 31st July in this House I directed the following question to the Minister—

- (1) Was the Minister correctly reported in *The West Australian* of today's date, where he was quoted as saying he is investigating possibilities of pensioner exemption from proposed increases in motor vehicle license fees?
- (2) If the answer is "Yes", will he please explain why he informed me by letter dated the 22nd July, 1974, following a submission I made on behalf of pensioners in connection with the matter, that he cannot extend concessions to aged pensioners?

The Minister's reply was—

- (1) Yes.

His reply to part (2) of my question—the most important part—was—

Subsequent to the letter referred to, Cabinet has set up a committee to investigate whether some special action can be taken to assist pensioners with the payment of vehicle license fees.

The Minister will appreciate that when he spoke to the pensioners' group it was known that car license fees were to increase by approximately 25 per cent and, with the average license fee being \$65, it was further known exactly what the increases would amount to. The situation today is that the pensioner in Western Australia must meet increases in registration and insurance charges amounting to almost 90 per cent.

How will he provide this assistance? It will be very difficult for him to do this not only for the pensioner, but also for the worker in the low income bracket. As Cabinet set up this committee on the 31st July, I assumed that some consideration would be given to this matter and

the Minister might have informed the House or the Pensioners League about the situation. I was wondering: Is the Minister in a position to indicate to the House the findings of the subcommittee? I think he has a duty to the House and to the pensioners of Western Australia to do that, because it is obvious—and I thought he would know this from his experience—that if a person in authority assures a workers' group or a pensioners' group that assistance will be rendered to them, they expect something to be done.

I thought also that as the investigations commenced some two months ago this Bill would indicate some relief would be granted to pensioners in Western Australia to assist them for the reasons I have outlined. I do not think anyone would deny that when a person reaches 70 or 75 years of age he does not use his car for joyriding. In the particular area of the State that I represent I find pensioners use their cars only once or twice a week. One pensioner who approached me on the question would not average 40 miles a week in his car. He uses it only to travel to his bowling club and to take his wife shopping, so that is the extent of his weekly mileage.

Of course, now, with this imposition of increases in motor vehicle registration fees, pensioners will be placed in a difficult position, and I am wondering how many of them will be able to retain their vehicles, in view of recent increases in rentals, increases in the cost of living, and other general increases being applied in Western Australia. I can visualise many pensioners having to sell their vehicles, because they will be unable to afford the increases in motor vehicle registration fees.

We have made our position clear on this question. We are not at all happy with the increases that are being applied and we are certainly not happy with the Court Government since it came to office, because it has increased charges generally to the people of Western Australia to the extent I have already outlined. However, I hope the Government will give consideration to workers in the low income bracket—particularly pensioners—and grant them some relief. I will leave the matter at that.

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [6.03 p.m.]: As members of the Country Party are about to accept the large increases proposed in this legislation, their performance is most remarkable. Several years before, and again last year, when the Labor Government introduced a similar Bill to repeal the road maintenance tax and make some increases in motor vehicle registration fees, we heard member after member screaming about those increases despite the fact that they were not as excessive as the increases proposed in this measure.

Mr Bertram: This is a general party measure.

Mr JAMIESON: That is so, and that makes it a little different, because it leaves no doubt that these amounts shall be applied. However, I wonder where all these great stalwarts and supporters of the farmers are now, especially as last year our legislation did not come anywhere near the proposals contained in this Bill. Let me cite as an example a 72 hundredweight tare Bedford truck which I imagine would be the average type of vehicle many farmers would use. During the debate last year many members claimed they had a second vehicle, and I can recall the then member for Avon making a complaint about the increases in fees. Therefore it will be interesting to hear what he has to say from his lofty perch in another place when this Bill is debated there, because last year he was crying tears of blood about all the money he would have to pay to register his second vehicle, especially when it was used for only a few months of the year.

The increase in registration fee for this particular vehicle will be 58.48 per cent, but according to the Press release that was made at the time Cabinet decided to increase these fees, the existing fee for this type of vehicle—which would come within the range of vehicles used by many farmers today—is some \$132 per annum. This will be increased to \$209.20 per annum.

So it can readily be seen that members opposite are accepting this increase without raising any complaint and without raising any objection to the Government in putting forward these proposals. Therefore one can only say that they must be happy because they are behind the Government rather than opposed to it. This shows greater hypocrisy than they would have displayed had they voiced their opinions against these increases.

I oppose the increases for other reasons; one is a question of principle. My colleague, the member for Collie, has dealt with the matter in general terms by referring to the way the increases will affect individual vehicle holders, but I put forward the proposition that the tax placed on people to maintain roads should be applied proportionately in accordance with the use made of roads by various vehicle owners. I understand that some time ago the Minister indicated that he would seek some increase in the fuel tax to offset the requirement of increasing motor vehicle registration fees. That is a very noble idea.

When I had a similar problem in my term of office as a Minister I put forward a suggestion to the then Premier that he take the matter to a Premiers' Conference for consideration. He did so, but he could not even get his proposition seconded; and that was the amount of support the then Premier got from the other States. I

imagine that on the present occasion the Minister will receive the same sort of support from the other States.

The only correct way to overcome this problem, and to ensure that road users pay in proportion to their use of the roads, is to impose a special tax on fuel or tyres, and to apply the revenue so derived to the maintenance of roads. In my view an increase across the board will react unfairly on owners of vehicles who do not use their vehicles to any great extent. I have in mind the owner of a Holden utility, who might use it for private purposes, such as shopping or carting rubbish from his garden. On the other hand another person might own a Holden utility which he uses as a commercial vehicle. Under the proposition before us both owners would pay the same fee. I think that is very wrong in principle, and would cause untold hardship to the one who does not use the vehicle commercially. He should not be expected to pay the additional fee.

Probably the origin of this problem goes back to past Federal Governments. When the petrol tax was imposed originally, it was imposed in the same way as the United States of America imposed its tax; that was for the purpose of funding the construction of roads in the various States and in the Commonwealth territories.

In the United States the use of this revenue remains the same as it was originally designed; all the revenue from this tax goes into a special fund, out of which allocations are made to each State, as the needs of the States are put forward for the granting of additional road funds. In that respect there is a saving, and I will deal with this aspect shortly.

Some years ago the Commonwealth Government—not the present regime—deemed in its wisdom that no longer would the revenue from the petrol tax be returned in the form of grants for the provision of roads in the States and in its own territories. It decided that the tax collected would form part of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and that the amounts returned to the States for the provision of roads would bear no relationship to the funds that are collected under this tax. That was an unfortunate move by the Commonwealth; this is one sphere of finance which should be retained for road and transport purposes.

If the Commonwealth had not departed from the original method the States would be able to get along far better in the provision of roads. In that event the Commonwealth would have to raise more revenue by imposing other taxes to enable it to meet its responsibilities. It would be far more equitable for the Commonwealth to do this, than to include the revenue from the petrol tax in the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Mr O'Connor: The shortfall would be about \$700 million a year.

Mr JAMIESON: Something like that. It ranges up to about 60 per cent of the intake derived by the Commonwealth. As I indicated earlier, the Commonwealth Government followed the pattern adopted by the United States in respect of funding road construction. However, the system is not all plain sailing in that country.

I understand that the Central Road Fund of the United States has some billions of dollars in credit. That has come about because the President of the United States has control of that money, and he will not let the States have it as he fears the allocation of extra finance to the States would increase the problems of inflation. So, in that country a problem exists, because under the law all the money must be held in a fund, and it cannot be used without the President's sanction. The money is standing in a trust fund, and at some time in the future it will be used in some way. However, for the present the money cannot be used.

In Australia the money collected from this source is not placed into a trust fund. The money is placed into the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and as a result it is used for all sorts of purposes. This is fundamentally wrong. I realise that the revenue derived from liquor and tobacco is paid into the Consolidated Revenue Fund; and for that reason some people may ask, "Why should not the funds collected from the road users similarly be paid into the Consolidated Revenue Fund?"

In my view there is a difference. The revenue from liquor and tobacco is derived from a source of enjoyment, pleasure, and luxury; whereas the revenue from road users is derived from a method of transport in this country. The necessity to provide the best possible roads should be the aim of each and every State Government. However, I feel that we are not getting very far in our overtures.

If the Commonwealth Government is not prepared to revert to the original practice of using the revenue derived from road users for the purpose of building roads, then sooner or later it must find some method of giving the States equal right of access to taxes such as the fuel tax. We are aware that the Commonwealth Government has the exclusive right to impose excise taxes; and the petrol tax is a form of excise. For that reason the States cannot get their hands on it.

In fairness to all road users, the Commonwealth and the States, in their own spheres, should be allowed to impose a tax along these lines; in preference to an across-the-board increase in license fees. This increase in license fees seems to be unfair, for the reasons that have been outlined by my colleague.

I do not agree with some other features contained in this taxing measure. I cannot understand the reasoning of the Min-

ister when he said the Government would have to impose a higher charge when licenses are renewed every six months. He said those renewing licenses for six months should pay a surcharge of \$4. However, in the case of drivers' licenses, the Minister does not say that the cost to the department for collecting this fee is less when such licenses are issued for a three-year period.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr JAMIESON: Before the tea suspension I was making the point that some concession should be made when a license is issued for a three-year term. The Minister cannot have it both ways. He said that the reason for the increase in fees, including the increase involved for a half-yearly license, relates to the departmental cost associated with sending out notices and issuing the extra licenses. To some degree, I can understand this as a reason for increasing the short-term licenses. However, when a license is being issued for a three-yearly term, some concession should be made. For instance, in these circumstances the department would not have to send out two reminder notices so that at least a \$2 rebate should be applied in respect of the long-term license.

A few years ago when I was the Minister investigating the position regarding boat licenses, for which a charge of \$1 was made for most kinds of small power craft, it was demonstrated to me that the cost of issuing such a license was more than the \$1 a year charged for it. This cost involved the issuance of the license and the reminder notice plus the activities of the staff in connection with it. Therefore, although many more motor vehicle licenses are issued, it would be reasonable to assume that, with the inflationary trend, the cost of the extra work involved to the department would be approximately \$1 every time a motor vehicle license was issued. Consequently, I think that some incentive should be provided to encourage people to obtain a three-yearly license.

The Minister must also keep in mind that he has the use of the additional money. This can, of course, be used for Government activities, because it is available to the Treasury. In other words, for the benefit of obtaining a license for the extra period, the motorist will pay the increased fee. I suggest that consideration should be given to this aspect, because people ought to be given some encouragement to obtain a license for the longer term.

The other States which provide a license for a longer period do make a concession and this encourages many more people to obtain such a license, and thus the departments involved are spared the additional work of having to issue reminder notices or the licenses themselves.

I hope I have interpreted the provision correctly with regard to pensioners, although I am not too sure that I have. The Minister said—

The \$2 drivers' license fee concession for pensioners will also continue.

I understand this to mean that the concession license for pensioners will be \$3 for each year instead of \$1 for the one year.

Mr O'Connor: That is so.

Mr JAMIESON: This represents a 200 per cent increase which will not improve the tempers of pensioners very much.

I know a problem is involved in providing a concession to pensioners in respect of their motor vehicle licenses. However, this does not apply with regard to a driver's license which is a personal thing and cannot be lent to anyone. If a restriction were not placed on pensioners in connection with the licensing of vehicles, they could license such vehicles for members of the entire family and obtain those licenses at the concession rate. They could license the vehicles of their grandsons, granddaughters, and so on at the cheaper rate.

However, in respect of a personal driver's license this situation would not occur, because such a license is of no use to the granddaughters, grandsons, or any other member of the family. I do not think the Government is so poor, even with all its problems, that it must apply a 200 per cent increase in the case of pensioners when it is applying only a 66 2/3 per cent increase in the case of general licensees. This position should be examined.

I am aware of the fact that once pensioners reach a certain statutory age they must undergo an examination every year. However, in the years between the time they first receive a pension and their attaining the statutory age, they should be given a concession if they obtain a three-yearly license. Perhaps this could be \$2, so that instead of paying \$9 for the three-year license, they could pay only \$7. This could constitute the saving involved, because it would obviate the issuance of two reminder notices and the issuing of the licenses themselves, thus avoiding all the associated clerical work for the extra two years in question.

I do not think the Government would lose anything if it applied such a concession. On the contrary it would probably gain quite a deal, because pensioners would be encouraged to obtain a three-yearly license instead of the yearly license, thus helping overcome a lot of departmental problems.

As I said earlier, we have, to the best of our ability, compared the various rates. The Minister is probably not to blame for this, but the Bill has been dealt with earlier than we expected. We have contacted his department and other depart-

ments in a vain attempt to obtain a comparison of the situation which obtained under the old system with that which will obtain under the new system. We wanted to find out the comparative difference for the various makes of vehicles. However, with the exception of the information supplied by the Minister in a news release, and a little other information we were able to obtain today, we have been able to ascertain very little as to where the motorists will stand.

It is of interest to note that our proposal last year was that the license fee for a Holden van or utility would be \$38. This increase was to enable money to be made available for road works. The proposal in the Bill states that the license fee for the same vehicle will be in the region of \$61. This is one comparison we were able to make.

We are aware that money must be made available for road works. The Minister made great play of the fact that some of the roads which are causing concern are those in rural areas. I draw the attention of the Minister and the Government to the fact that local authorities in this State are not paying their way to the same extent as are the local authorities in the other States.

Until this is done it cannot be expected that the people who draw up the programmes for the Commonwealth will be sympathetic. They have to learn to accept their responsibilities for some money to be directed back into the road system. If this were done the requirements would not be so great and we would be able to prove our case more easily and be more successful with our claims.

Statistics show that ours is the State worst affected, and that we are at fault. I have delved into many other features previously, and I have mentioned the provision of special roads for people in areas which are highly remunerative to the Commonwealth. Indeed, the Minister mentioned the fact that roads are required for the Pilbara area. With the exception of the major highways, the Pilbara does not have very much at all, and it is not likely to get very much with the exception of the development of the Great Northern Highway—and that is on the Commonwealth roads programme anyway. The Commonwealth is obliged to do that work. The black road will extend from the metropolitan area to Mt. Newman, but many other major towns such as Paraburdoo, Tom Price, Pannawonica—towns of that type—will still be a long way from the black road system.

Because of the high cost involved, and the overall shortage of finance, I cannot see that local authorities will be very interested in maintaining and providing black road systems. I believe we must continue to prevail on the Commonwealth Government for more finance, and point

out that not only should the people be encouraged to live in outback areas by providing a black road system, but that it is the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government because extensive Commonwealth income is derived from the activities around those towns.

I feel that the Commonwealth system probably leaves something to be desired. I understand that in America the Federal Government has undertaken to connect towns with populations of 50 000 or more people to the black road system. It is a Federal undertaking. Of course, we do not have many towns with a population of 50 000 people and I imagine that the requirement for a black road system, in this country, could probably be about 5 000 people or more in a region. Ultimately we have to obtain finance to help people in areas such as Tom Price and Paraburdoo. They require lead roads only of 100 or 200 miles to get to the coastal highway or the Great Northern Highway.

It should be our aim to provide those roads. The people would feel less isolated if they knew they could travel to the city in their own vehicles. They can travel to the city at the present time, but it is usually on roads that are subject to wash-outs and other failures due to climatic conditions. I suggest we should press for the provision of black roads in those areas as soon as possible.

We have to bear in mind that the agreement is for a triennium and not a quinquennium. The time will soon pass. I can recall taking up this matter several years ago with the then Federal Minister, Mr Nixon. I refer to the establishment of a continuing road grants system. My approach was made well before the last programme ran out. Unfortunately, Mr Nixon did not move fast enough. The State Ministers kept on prevailing upon him but his attitude was that maybe he would and maybe he would not still be responsible.

When the Ministers met in Darwin in November, several years ago, Mr Nixon did not show up. An election was imminent and I suppose he had a responsibility in his electorate. We all have those responsibilities when an election is due. The main topic under discussion on that occasion was the method of introduction of the new system, and how the finance was to be made available. That did not occur just a few months ago. It is of no use the Treasurer saying that the Commonwealth should have made up its mind, and that there should have been a continuation of the scheme as a result of a decision arrived at some time ago. Certainly, the State Ministers—despite their various political colours—felt that something should be done to ensure a rolling scheme so that there was no hiatus during which no-one would know whether or not there were to be any funds. This is a ridiculous situation, and creates a stop-go economy which never works out. It upsets plan-

ning and the labour force and does not help the development of a road system in this State.

I suggest that although the present system is to cover a three-year period the Ministers should be giving their attention to some form of a continuing and rolling system so that they will know there will be a minimum of finance available for the beginning of the next triennium, or quinquennium, or quadrennium—whatever is determined. For some reason or other it seems that the system has changed from a five-year period.

Those are my major comments on the Bill. I again ask the Minister to examine the long-term license because I believe it can provide a saving to the licensees and the licensing authorities. People will rely on the reminder notice and keep the few extra dollars in their pockets. However, if there is an incentive to take out a license for a longer term, then both the licensees and the licensing authorities would save money.

It is more than passing strange that in spite of all the squealing, screaming, and commotion which occurred both in 1971 and in 1973 to the effect that the increases at those times would practically kill the farmers, and do all sorts of other things, apparently the present increases are being accepted without the meekest or mildest protest in the Parliament by the people who are supposed to represent rural areas.

Mr McPharlin: You don't think we like having to put up these licenses, do you?

Mr JAMIESON: That is a most amazing statement. I used to say the same thing when the Deputy Premier was on this side of the House, and he did not believe me any more than I believe him now.

Mr McPharlin: I think the Minister will give the reasons when he answers.

Mr JAMIESON: Of course the Minister will give reasons; I could give the reasons and make the Minister's speech for him myself! However, one abhors the State Legislature when one examines the situation and knows that funds are to be provided and roads built, and at the same time one observes the unnecessary goings on of members who represent rural areas and who think that their areas will be the most severely hit. Of course they will be hit. Everybody will be hit by this and I deplore the fact that it is necessary at all.

I think it is quite unjust that we should continue with this system. Even though we are not making much progress by way of representation to the other States, the day must come when roads are built with revenue received through either a fuel tax or a tyre tax, or a tax on something that wears out and through which it is possible to gauge the extent to which a vehicle is used. To me, it is ridiculous to expect the people who do a few miles a year to accept the same responsibility for roads as the

people who use them day in and day out. It is a matter with which the Governments of Australia must grapple until they come to a final decision, and I say the final decision must involve taxing motorists by way of a fuel or a tyre tax, or in some other way which would ensure an equitable situation for the motorists who use their vehicles for casual outings as against those who use them in order to make a living.

In general terms, for those reasons I oppose the rises in general license fees, and I make the suggestions in respect of the personal driver's license in the hope that the Minister will give them some consideration.

MR J. T. TONKIN (Melville—Leader of the Opposition) [7.52 p.m.] : The member for Collie and my deputy leader have adequately dealt with the Bill before the House, but I feel it is necessary and desirable for me to make a few general observations.

I am convinced that the high charges which the Government is levying upon the people are much higher than is necessary to deal with the inflationary position, and the reason for such charges is that the Government, having indulged in extravagant promises during the election campaign, is now endeavouring to finance those promises by levying additional taxation upon the people. I remind the Premier that he said on the hustings he was not making extravagant promises with the people's tax money. That is precisely what he did, and he is now establishing that he must get this tax money in order to provide for the unnecessary highway patrol and for the programme of education development, which, of course, cannot possibly be implemented, although the Government will make a gesture and put in some pilot schemes which will cost money.

I well recall, Mr Speaker, and I think you would also, how much trumpeting went on from this side of the House when I proposed some increases in license fees in order to make possible the abolition of road maintenance tax. I am wondering what the Minister for Transport was thinking when he agreed to these very steep increases in licenses and compared them with what we proposed in order to abolish road maintenance tax. Much more money will be derived from these increases than would have been derived from the licensing I proposed, and, had my proposals been agreed to, the road maintenance tax which is still a worry would be no longer in existence. Not only the Liberal Party but also the Country Party came out very eloquently against the high increases which my licensing proposals involved.

Mr McPharlin: Had you imposed it over all vehicles there would not have been that opposition.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: No. That does not excuse what is proposed here.

Sir Charles Court: How else will we get a road programme, in view of the Commonwealth allocations?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The Treasurer can save several millions if he discards the highway patrol idea. He is proposing through these increases to raise \$10.5 million in a year.

Sir Charles Court: Why are these increases being imposed?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: To pay for the extravagant promises that were made.

Mr O'Neil: It is specifically for roads.

Sir Charles Court: There would be no road programme—

Mr Jamieson: Local authorities would have to bear greater responsibility.

Sir Charles Court: There would be no road programme in country areas if it were not for this.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: So the Government will now justify these extra charges by saying it needs money for roads. Would that not have applied equally to the lesser charges I proposed to impose, because we could not afford to give away all the money, in order to get rid of the road maintenance tax? Members of the then Opposition who are now in Government argued against the imposition of those licensing fees because it was considered they were too high. It did not matter to them then that the money was to be used on roads. That is a sound argument now but it was not sound then.

Mr O'Neil: You are saying we are raising this money to finance some other operation.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: That is so. It is proposed to raise more money overall than is necessary in order to provide for the extravagant election promises.

Mr Jamieson: This will more than match the Commonwealth.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: And the Government will have to keep on doing the very thing the Premier said he would not do; that is, use the people's tax money to finance extravagant promises.

Sir Charles Court: Wait until you see our Budget. It will show a very interesting picture. You will wonder where some of these ideas of yours came from.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: I am waiting to see how the Civil Service will be reorganised without the employment of additional workers.

Sir Charles Court: Who said no additional workers would be employed?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The Premier said so.

Sir Charles Court: That is not true.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: He made a public statement about it—no increase in the Public Service.

Sir Charles Court: We talked about a net increase of 2 per cent as the target.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: It went further than that.

Sir Charles Court: There is a wastage of 1 800-odd a year; we were aiming at a net 2 per cent and, if possible, a negative figure.

The SPEAKER: Order! I think this is an improper discussion at the present time. The Leader of the Opposition should return to the Bill.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: I think you would concede, Mr Speaker, that I did not introduce it.

Mr Jamieson: Our Government got it down to the lowest it had been for 10 years.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: I come back to what I was endeavouring to emphasise—that it rings a bit hollow when the members of the Government attempt to justify these savage increases in licensing by saying the money is needed for roads. When I proposed much lower increases for the purpose of abolishing the road maintenance tax, those same members would not agree to them because of the tremendous impost they would be upon the people. If the licensing fees I proposed to introduce would have been a tremendous impost upon the people, what adjective should we apply to these increases?

I join with the member for Collie and my deputy leader in making a special plea for more consideration to be shown to the pensioners. This is a way in which they can really be assisted. To put up pensioners' license fees in this way is, in my opinion, unconscionable, and in view of what the Minister for Traffic Safety said to the pensioners earlier, they are entitled to expect something far better from him than what he proposes to do.

We are extremely disappointed at these continual increases in taxation and levies which the Government keeps on imposing. Of course, this is only the start of it. There will be many more increases, and the blame for each increase will be put on the Australian Government.

Sir Charles Court: Why not? Aren't they to blame?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: No, of course it is not to blame.

Mr Jamieson: If you did not have a whipping horse you would not get anywhere!

Sir Charles Court: The Prime Minister made it clear to all Premiers that they had to go away and increase taxes and charges. In fact, he went further to say that public utilities ought to be made to pay their way. Would you like to see the railways made to pay?

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The Federal Leader of the Liberal Party has gone out of his way to say that there ought to be substan-

tial reductions in Government expenditure. The Premier did not take any notice of that. So I emphasise the responsibility is not wholly that of the Australian Government at all, and this Government could substantially reduce its expenditure—as the Federal Leader of the Liberal Party keeps on urging—in order to reduce the level of taxation and charges which the State Government feels obliged to impose.

MR DAVIES (Victoria Park) [8.02 p.m.]: My remarks tonight will be merely an echo of what has already been said. However, it would be most remiss of me if I did not make some comment on the very savage increases proposed, because this, more than anything else, has been a matter of constant concern throughout my electorate.

As members know, I represent a working-class district. My constituents have taken the other imposts put on by this Government with some grumbles, but the provisions of this legislation have created quite a furore, and I have had a constant stream of people to my office to complain about what they regard as vicious, unprincipled, immoral increases in vehicle license fees.

Mr O'Connor: I bet they are queued up in the morning again.

Sir Charles Court: We will give you more adjectives if you like.

Mr DAVIES: I am perfectly willing to show members opposite the names of people who have called to see me about this.

In times of inflation we are all aware of the need to reassess charges and to see what economies can be effected. However, we have very little to go on other than the clues given by the Minister when he introduced the Bill. He told us that in this financial year the road grants in one section will go from \$49.2 million to \$49 million. When we consider the way costs are rising all the time, we can quite understand the difficulties there. By the same token we were told that the provisions in this legislation will bring in \$8.1 million this financial year and \$10.9 million in a full financial year. Of course, taxes and charges always go up—they never come down.

I hope the Minister, when he replies, will tell us what action the Government has taken to prune its programme to make sure that it undertakes necessary work only. Has there been any attempt to effect any economies at all? There is not the slightest evidence in the Minister's speech that these matters were looked at. I can imagine that Cabinet said, "License fees have not been raised since 1965—whoopee—we can slug the taxpayers in this way." This is what the Government has actually done, and in some ways it is quite unfair in the stand it has taken.

Previous speakers have referred to the plight of the pensioners, but I must make a few comments on this very real problem. As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said, it is very difficult to ensure that a pensioner who receives a concession for a motor vehicle license is the only one to gain advantage from the concession. However, when a pensioner permits a relative or friend to use his car it is generally for the purpose of assisting the pensioner. The attitude of the Australian Government in relation to sales tax on motor vehicles should be a good enough standard for the Government to follow. If the Australian Government allows a person a car without sales tax, then the license concession should automatically follow. I am not quite certain how the system works.

Many pensioners, and not just the ones in my electorate, use their cars on infrequent occasions and for travelling short distances. These people will find it increasingly difficult to maintain their cars. It is well known that the less one uses a car the higher the cost per mile. When one uses a car a great deal, the cost is spread over a greater mileage and this gives a more economical running cost.

Some pensioners have invalid wives, and if the couple do not have a car, they are unable to move out of the house. Of course, sometimes the husband is an invalid and the wife likes to have an independent form of transport. We all know that taxi fares are going up along with everything else. It must be very difficult for pensioners to keep up with inflation, despite the recent increase given to them by the Australian Government.

The Minister made his second reading speech in record time. I do not think it is a true reflection on the context of the speech to say that it took 13 minutes—normally, with a few interjections, the Minister could have spun it out to at least half an hour. However, the Minister did his best to ensure that we did not need to come back after the tea suspension on Thursday. He did a very good job in presenting the speech in record time.

A few of the remarks made by the Minister deserve comment. Of course, one is that pensioners' driving licenses will now cost \$3 instead of \$1. I do not think the community generally realises this fact yet. It is a vicious rise to inflict on pensioners. The token fee of \$1, as presently charged, is sufficient to pay the recording costs, and surely this is all that is necessary. I was also rather disappointed that pensioners will not be permitted to take out a driver's license for the three-year period. I do not know the reason behind this—perhaps the pensioner concession is likely to be cancelled altogether at some time and a few pensioners may get a two-year advantage in the fee they pay.

Mr O'Connor: It is because they have to have an annual medical check after they turn 70.

Mr DAVIES: Yes, but surely a three-year license could be organised for them with present-day computers. I have remarked before about the wonders of the computer—anyone wanting a particular number plate is able to purchase it. If the Department of Motor Vehicles can bow to the whims of the public for that kind of nonsense, surely the computers could be used to remind pensioners that they are to attend for a medical or sight test—whichever it may be—once they turn 70. Perhaps the Government could raise a little more revenue in that way because pensioners probably have a greater prospect of dying in a three-year period than do younger people. It is a little disappointing that the Government has chosen to deny pensioners this opportunity.

I was a little confused about this power-weight system of licensing. I see that it is intended to use the RAC horsepower rating as it is used in all other States.

Mr O'Connor: I think that it is not used in one State.

Mr DAVIES: I am not quite certain about this horsepower rating as I am not well versed in mechanical matters. Is it less than another rating?

Mr Sibson: On the average it is.

Mr DAVIES: It is less than the manufacturer's rating?

I wonder why we have accepted the RAC horsepower rating instead of the manufacturers' rating, or some other rating. No explanation of that was given. The Minister also said—

At a time when an increase in vehicle license fees is proposed, it is opportune for us to remove any anomalies which have emerged under our present licensing system.

I agree wholeheartedly this is a good time to remove such anomalies, but I wonder whether at the same time the Government has had a look at the various concessions granted in respect of license fees. Mention has been made already of concessions given to farmers, but no mention has been made as to whether or not other concessions which have been granted, probably long ago, are still worth-while concessions. Often the reason for the concession being granted in the first place disappears; to wit, the superphosphate bounty, which apparently should have been removed years ago but has only recently been removed. There may be other concessions of a similar nature which have applied for years and have never been reconsidered, and will thus continue to apply. This might be an opportune time for the Government to consider such concessions to see whether they are still reasonable and whether the reasons for which they were originally granted still exist.

I notice also that the Minister made play of the fact that the Bill does not alter the existing third party insurance rates surcharge, and he said the actual percentage increase on the total amount a motorist pays to license his vehicle will be much less than the percentages involved in the examples he gave. However, the fact remains that I believe insurance rates are to be increased by 25 per cent, as the member for Collie has indicated, and we have no indication of whether or not the surcharge will also be increased.

Mr O'Connor: You would not agree with his mathematical calculations would you?

Mr DAVIES: Probably the member for Collie added the percentages together instead of taking them separately and calculating an increase from the result. However, they are still very steep. No indication has been given as to whether or not the surcharge which has been applied—and this has always been a mystery to me—will continue to be applied. Here again, the surcharge was added for a particular reason which I cannot remember at the moment, and it has remained ever since. No-one has queried it; it is a case of "no-one has queried it; it brings in money, so don't rock the boat." When we consider the insurance fees it might be an opportune time for us to remove the surcharge. I do not know whether the reason for its introduction still exists.

We are to have a considerable general increase in the cost of keeping a motor vehicle on the road and this, of course, is of serious concern to many of my electors.

The next feature which I abhor in the Bill—and it is becoming widely used throughout Australia—is that of charging a service fee. We have a Department of Motor Vehicles established as a licensing authority to license our motor vehicles, and now it is going to charge us \$4 every time we license our motor vehicles; that is, if a person licenses his car once a year it will be \$4, and if he licenses it each six months he will pay \$8 a year. So, again, the person who can least afford to pay will be the hardest hit. I think always in the past it has been a little dearer to license a vehicle if one takes advantage of the six-monthly period, but now a person who does that will have to pay an extra \$8, or \$4 more than those who license their vehicles once a year. So if a person wishes to take advantage of the opportunity to save \$4, he will have to pay something like \$70 if he has a Holden or some similar vehicle; and this would constitute a fair lump out of his wage for that week.

I said this principle is becoming evident throughout Australia. It is similar to the system department stores in Perth now have in operation whereby if a person wants a parcel delivered he is charged according to the size of the parcel. I think that is immoral and wrong; it is something which is contrary to the general

history of retail trading. I think now for the smallest parcel one must pay a delivery fee of 40c. This system is being copied—I would not say perpetuated, because it has not been in operation long enough to use that word—by the Government, which is saying, "We are here to provide a service and to license your vehicle, and on top of taking the fee from you, we will take \$4 extra just for doing it for you." What advantage will accrue to the motorist as a result of his paying an extra \$4; if he can get away with paying \$4 and, as I said, in this State the people who can least afford it will pay an extra \$8?

All the Minister has said is that the \$4 will be used for administration costs, and the license fees will be put into road funds. Surely to goodness we do not need to charge the poor, suffering public \$4 and to say, "This is going to pay for your right to go to the police station, hand over \$80, and receive a license renewal. We will charge you \$4 to do that for you." Are we not lucky!

This is a feature I abhor, and if it starts now it will spread into all kinds of Government service. Every time the Civil Service does something for us we will be charged a fee, and this will go on and on. We had the Bill to amend the Stamp Act before us tonight, and perhaps in that case the method of calculating duty is a little more lenient, but a charge for the service will be added to the duty. I am quite certain that eventually every time the Government is asked to do something it will say, "All right, we have to pay to have people here to do this for you, so you are going to pay for us to do it for you." That is immoral, completely wrong, and a bad practice. It is a practice I can see growing, and it is a principle which I suggest should be removed from this Bill right now.

It has been indicated that the additional revenue to be obtained from the increased license fees this year, allowing for inflation, will be greater than the estimated shortfall if the increases were not applied; so surely to goodness we do not need to say that on top of the additional license fees the public must pay an extra \$4 when they renew the registration of their vehicles. What will happen when the road grants are reviewed, as has been referred to by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition? He said now is the time to look to the next quinquennium or triennium—or whatever is the period—and to plan ahead. Surely it is good budgeting to know ahead of time how much money we will have so that we may plan ahead.

I have seen this practice used in the health services in England, and in other spheres. Those concerned know what amount of money they will have five years ahead, and this is of great help to them. Of course, they have problems with

inflation, but sound reasoning exists for that type of budgeting to be introduced in Australia. If next year the Australian Government says, "We are able to increase your allowance by 20 or 30 per cent" what will happen? Would we then enter into a greatly expanded road programme and say, "Now that we have the extra money we can do all this extra roadwork", and then suddenly find that the Australian Government has found it necessary to reduce the allowance? In that case the State Government would say that fees would have to be increased to maintain the programme. However, how is our programme being mapped out at present? How is it being balanced? The Bill contains no indication of this; all the Minister has said is, "We are not getting the money we want to get, so we are going to put up fees to meet the shortfall; and while doing that we will slip in a couple of other amendments, such as increasing the fee for a driver's license and adding \$4 to the cost of registering a motor vehicle."

It seems to me this is a bit of a hotch-potch. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition said that two years ago he endeavoured to introduce some kind of order into the chaos he could see developing. I can see the arrangement we now have before us as being self-perpetuating; we will never be rid of it. We might have wonderful roads, with the city people subsidising the roads for farmers—for which they will receive little thanks. I foresee that we will go on expanding and laying black-top roads and developing beautiful road programmes to please a few farmers in isolated places, because they expect black-top roads these days.

Mr Sodeman: You seem to forget the contribution they are making.

Mr DAVIES: If the member for Pilbara wishes to get up and defend the Government, he should do so instead of trying to look wise. These funds will be cut back and once again the city people will pay for the major part of the road programme in country areas. There must be a good linkup of roads throughout the State; the Deputy Leader of the Opposition mentioned this point in his speech. However, in Western Australia we do not have the towns which can be integrated into this type of road system. We would like to have good roads and we expect them, but when they get too costly we must look for alternatives.

I want to re-echo what has been said during this debate. I believe the recording fee is a very bad principle. I am quite certain something can be done for pensioners. I believe that in a few years' time we will find the same matters we are complaining about now occurring again and we will ask the same people to pay. Until we can arrive at a properly budgeted scheme and a proper plan, we are not going to get very far. Although the Aus-

tralian Government may have had to cut back its road funds this year, it is at least trying to get some kind of rationale into its road programme.

MR A. R. TONKIN (Morley) [8.21 p.m.]: The 65 per cent increase proposed for license fees is indeed a very savage impost. I remember in 1971, when we were left with an empty Treasury and were forced to increase charges, we were criticised by the then Opposition. I well remember the Ascot by-election, occasioned by the death of the then Speaker. It was a nonpolitical event which the then Opposition wanted to make political in order to seize the Government in a most unfair way and it gave the then Governor conflicting advice. During the course of that by-election, pamphlets were issued by the Opposition which were designed to resemble electricity bills and which referred to the "shocking" 21 per cent increase in electricity charges. Yet here we see a proposed 65 per cent increase.

I agree with the member for Victoria Park with respect to the \$4 increase in vehicle license fees, because such a charge is regressive. A regressive tax is one which hits hardest on the smallest income. The people who cannot afford to pay for one year's license will be forced to purchase a six months' license and will pay \$8 a year instead of \$4. The person who can afford only a very small car will pay as much as the person who drives a Cadillac or a Rolls-Royce. This is an unfair tax and is described in these proposals as "a recording fee". I know we live in the age of euphemisms, but surely the amount of recording involved would be slight and should not necessitate such a savage tax. It goes right across the board, irrespective of income. It is a bad tax and is certainly something with which we would not agree.

Of course, we know why these increases have been necessitated. The Minister for Police and "highway patrols" has been watching too much television and he is sold on the idea of highway patrols.

Mr H. D. Evans: Highway robbery!

Mr A. R. TONKIN: It has been suggested that it is highway robbery. We remember during the last Parliament—the Twenty-seventh Parliament—that the Labor Government tried to institute something that would have saved many lives on the roads of Western Australia. We attempted to give to the police Statewide control of traffic. However, our move was blocked for purely political reasons and, as a result, many Western Australians were sentenced to death.

Mr O'Connor: Do you know what your proposal would have cost?

Mr A. R. TONKIN: It certainly would not have cost as much as setting up a separate Government department. I have not costed it any more than the Minister

has costed his highway patrol. The Minister does not have the slightest idea what his proposals will cost.

Mr O'Connor: You are talking out of the back of your head.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: We have seen many conflicting statements from the Government. We do not know which Press report to believe. I have never seen so many conflicting statements coming from one Minister. The Premier finally suggested that the Minister shut his mouth before he put his foot into it again, but before that time, conflicting reports were issued weekly. It was obvious that the Minister did not know where he was.

Dr Dadour: But you have told us not to believe everything we read in the paper.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: These were Press releases, not articles in the paper.

Mr O'Connor: They were not Press releases.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: Yes, they were. I have studied carefully Press releases issued by the Minister and obviously a great deal of confusion existed in the mind of the Government as to what was meant by a highway patrol.

Mr O'Connor: Can you tell me of one Press release I made on this matter?

Mr A. R. TONKIN: When it was raised—

Mr O'Connor: You cannot.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: I cannot name a specific Press release made by the Minister; in fact, the Minister was not allowed to make Press releases.

Mr O'Connor: But you have just said that I did make Press releases on this matter.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: They were made by the Premier, were they not?

Mr O'Connor: You do not know what you are talking about. You are contradicting yourself.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: I am talking about Government Press releases and statements on this matter. It is suggested that an essential part of crime prevention is the control of traffic, because in many cases when a person is pulled up for dangerous driving, his offence is associated with other crimes and, therefore, the police are in the best possible position to deal with this area. It has been suggested that the police should do it and so we have this expensive gimmick of the Government which has come about, I suggest, because members opposite have been watching too much television and have become obsessed with the idea of a highway patrol.

I hope the Government will take up the suggestion that concessions should be made available to pensioners. Under the Tonkin Government, more aid was given to pensioners than by any previous Western Australian Government and I would like to

see this Government keeping Western Australia on the move by giving more concessions to pensioners. We remember how free travel was introduced.

Mr Old: In the country areas.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: Yes, certainly; these were great steps forward and we want to see this sort of government continued. We do not mind if members opposite receive the praise for it, as long as pensioners are given a fair deal. Although I believe it would be very difficult, we on this side would like to see the Government try to emulate the record of the Tonkin Government.

Mr O'Neil: We would want to be here more than three years!

Mr A. R. TONKIN: Members opposite can squeak, but the fact remains that they are jealous of the record of the Tonkin Government, particularly in the field of giving concessions to pensioners, the like of which this State has never seen before.

In a speech recently on the Pay-roll Tax Act Amendment Bill I mentioned the desirability of Governments producing green papers and here again we see the need for a green paper so that we can see laid out the State finances and we can see where we are going. The Premier indicated that there was such a document which might fill the bill, but I have not yet seen it and I hope he makes it available. We need a green paper to see where the Government is going.

However, I believe we can guess where the Government is going. Determined to win the election, no matter what the cost, the Government came up with expensive gimmicks. But who will foot the bill? Of course, it will be the people of Western Australia. We oppose these savage increases; we oppose the implementation of a regressive tax by the use of a "recording fee". But, above all, we urge the Government to give some concessions to pensioners. I know that, generally, Conservatives are not very concerned with people who cannot help themselves. If it were not for the Australian Labor Party, there would be no pensions at all! We remember the arguments of the Conservatives years ago and we know very well that Conservative parties help people who cannot help themselves only because they expect to win votes. Well, even if that is the only reason for doing it, please give concessions to the pensioners.

MR O'CONNOR (Mt. Lawley—Minister for Traffic Safety) [8.29 p.m.]: I will endeavour to cover the points raised by the various members who have taken part in this debate.

Mr Nanovich: Do not say anything that might win you a vote.

Mr O'CONNOR: I do not think I will be speaking to win votes. I believe that members made a fair contribution to the debate and provided us with details and opinions from their points of view. I refer

first to the remarks of the member for Collie, who was the first speaker for the Opposition on this Bill. He said he was a little concerned about the lack of time between the introduction of this Bill and the commencement of the second reading debate. As members know, the Bill was introduced last Thursday and I admit that members opposite have not had a long time in which to study it. However, when the member for Collie brought this to my notice, I mentioned I was prepared to take it to the Premier to see whether we could work out a satisfactory arrangement.

Mr T. H. Jones: I mentioned that in my speech.

Mr O'CONNOR: I merely wish to make that point. The member for Collie complained about the proposed increases and the fact that the Country Party members and others were not complaining. While they did not do so in this House they certainly complained to me personally. Members of the Country Party and the Liberal Party contacted me in my office personally and also by correspondence complaining about the increases and seeking details of them. They realised eventually that if we had a more sympathetic Commonwealth Government in office this problem would not exist.

Mr J. T. Tonkin: Here we go! Here we go!

Mr T. H. Jones: What would you do without the Commonwealth Government? You would not have an excuse.

Mr O'CONNOR: The Premier says, "Here we go! Here we go!"

Mr Barnett: Who is your Premier?

Mr O'CONNOR: I am sorry. I meant the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Barnett: Don't be sorry; it shows foresight.

Mr O'CONNOR: When one looks at the increase in Commonwealth taxation, it will be found that it is now in the vicinity of \$2 800 million, which is not an unsubstantial amount. Despite the large increase in taxation which the Commonwealth Government has imposed, what do we find is the position in regard to the road funds? We find that the road funds have been reduced. That is the reason the Bill is before us tonight. As members know, this year Western Australia received \$49 million which, despite inflation, is a reduction when compared with the amount advanced last year. To carry out the same volume of work this year as was carried out last year we would need approximately \$64 million.

From those figures it will be realised to what extent work on the roads will be reduced in the State this year as a result of the policies adopted by the Commonwealth Government. Speaking on this subject during the week, the Victorian Government indicated that in the last three years the amount of fuel tax going out of

that State was \$500 million, and from this sum it has received only \$240 million in advances. Therefore, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition pointed out, a great deal of the money collected goes into Consolidated Revenue and is never spent on the roads in this State, or in Australia generally.

One of our main concerns has been to try to keep local authorities going in accordance with our road programme. Unless we do this many people will be thrown out of work not only in the metropolitan area, but also in many other parts of the State. Further, a great deal of equipment, used by both the Main Roads Department and by local government, would be left lying idle. I know that the New South Wales Government, for instance, contemplated having to put 12 000 people out of work in that State had the road programme not gone through. Apart from the lack of money coming forward from the Commonwealth Government, another matter that concerns us is the intrusion by the Commonwealth Government into the rights exercised by the States over their roads.

In Darwin in July the Commonwealth Minister (Mr Jones) indicated quite clearly that the Commonwealth Government intended to control not only the road funds in this State, but also to physically build them and participate in the actual road works.

Mr J. T. Tonkin: Would not that help you?

Mr O'CONNOR: With the moneys we are now getting? Of course it would not!

Mr J. T. Tonkin: Would not that help you if the Commonwealth Government relieved you of the responsibility?

Mr O'CONNOR: Is the Leader of the Opposition saying that it should do all the work?

Mr J. T. Tonkin: I am not saying that at all.

Mr O'CONNOR: If this were done it would mean duplication of existing equipment, because this work at present is being done by the Main Roads Department and the local authorities and I believe they are doing it quite well. If the Commonwealth came in, another headquarters would be set up, another set of equipment would have to be purchased at greater expense and, I believe, finally, we would get less work done.

Mr T. D. Evans: You are going to duplicate the Police Force with a highway patrol.

Mr O'CONNOR: The honourable member does not know. The members opposite will see eventually whether this will be done. It amazes me that the Opposition members should talk so much tripe. The member for Morley hands out so much tripe he could quite easily get a job in any butcher's shop.

Mr B. T. Burke: The Minister would look well in a butcher's shop.

Mr O'CONNOR: The honourable member certainly would be prime beef.

Mr B. T. Burke: It would not be bull.

Mr O'CONNOR: Getting back to the Bill, the \$49 million we will get in this State for road funds this year, includes \$10.1 million of the national expenditure on roads. That is the road works the Commonwealth Government was talking of doing. This would reduce to \$38.9 million the amount the State Government would have to spend on roads. Members have spoken of the increases over the next few years. We know that we will get \$50 million next year and \$51 million the following year. However, of the \$50 million we get the following year, the Commonwealth will get back \$2 million. Therefore, although we will receive an extra million, in fact, we will have a million less. As a result, we are quite concerned not only for the local authorities but also for the people who work for them, together with those men who are working for the Main Roads Department throughout the State. We do not want to place their jobs in jeopardy.

Members spoke on pensioner concessions. This is a subject about which we are all concerned. None of us would like to see the pensioners placed in a worse plight than they are in now. We want to help them as much as we can. To do this Cabinet has formed a subcommittee to investigate the complete scheme relating to pensioner concessions. At this point I might mention that the concessions applying to pensioners in this State are better than in any other State.

Mr T. H. Jones: You can thank the Labor Government for that.

Mr O'CONNOR: Cabinet has appointed a subcommittee to investigate the prospect of applying to pensioners concessions which can be more beneficial.

I tried to be fair in quoting figures when I introduced the second reading of the Bill and, as members will know, I said that the average increase in motor vehicle registration fees is 65 per cent. Some increases are less; in fact, some are increased by 113 per cent. The increases have been spread as fairly as possible. It will be noticed that the individual who owns a small car which costs less to run and causes the least damage to the roads will be the person who will pay the least in motor vehicle registration fees. In other words, the small car, which the average pensioner would drive, will be subject to an increase in registration fees of less than 30c a week. Therefore, in that instance the increase is not as substantial as some members would indicate.

Mr T. H. Jones: It is not only the 30c in registration fees; electricity charges go up, the price of butter goes up, and so on.

Mr O'CONNOR: Unfortunately, because of inflation, nearly every commodity has been increased in price recently.

Mr Davies: It is a 61 per cent increase on small cars.

Mr O'CONNOR: With some of them the increase varies considerably.

Mr Jamieson: The only prices that have not gone up lately are the prices at the racecourse.

Mr O'CONNOR: Whatever price a person gets there, I do not think it would do him much good. I gave members some details of the figures in the Eastern States. Also, both the member for Collie and I think the Deputy Leader of the Opposition quoted some of them this evening. However, figures can lie a little and if they are quoted in a certain way they can misrepresent the complete details. I am not suggesting that members opposite did misrepresent the details. They quoted the figures as they were presented here, and I think that is fair enough. However, a different picture is painted when we look at the figures and compare them with the increases other States intend to make in registration fees.

For instance, in New South Wales a driver's license fee is \$10. Also, the registration fee, or the recording fee, in that State, is \$10. So there is an annual amount of \$20 covering those two fees. In repeating the figures I have quoted in the House, let me mention the license fee for a Ford Falcon. In this State it is \$52.97. In New South Wales it is \$41, but that State proposes to impose a 60 per cent increase. I do not know whether or not members opposite pointed this out, but the \$4 registration fee is included in the \$52.97 license fee.

Mr T. H. Jones: It is also included in theirs.

Mr O'CONNOR: It is not.

Mr T. H. Jones: The \$6 is.

Mr O'CONNOR: The figure for New South Wales is \$41, but in that State there is a 60 per cent increase and an additional registration fee. The fee in that State is \$70 and is ahead of the figure of \$52.97 for Western Australia.

In most cases the Western Australian figures are higher, because it is the first State to introduce the increases. However, all the other States are now doing the same.

Let me deal with the license fee for a Ford Cortina. In Western Australia the fee will be \$32.22, as compared with the figure of \$53 in New South Wales after the increases have taken place.

Mr T. H. Jones: What about the fee in South Australia, where it is still cheaper after applying the 25 per cent increase?

Mr O'CONNOR: I draw attention to the license fee for a Holden HQ which will rise to \$49.65, as compared with the figure

of \$67 for New South Wales, after taking into account the 60 per cent increase. In each case the license fee in New South Wales is considerably higher than that in Western Australia.

Mr T. H. Jones: In South Australia the fee is \$42 for the same car; and that State is just over the border.

Mr O'CONNOR: With the 25 per cent increase in South Australia the fee will be \$42.38.

Mr T. H. Jones: As against \$49 in Western Australia.

Mr O'CONNOR: But the \$42 for South Australia does not include the registration fee.

Mr T. H. Jones: I am not certain of that.

Mr O'CONNOR: The South Australian figure does not. There is no registration fee included in the South Australian figure.

Mr T. D. Evans: Is there a registration fee in South Australia?

Mr O'CONNOR: I do not know.

Mr T. J. Burke: Could you not reduce the \$4 registration fee for six months, to a fee of \$2?

Mr O'CONNOR: No, because it takes \$4 to pay for the cost of the work. In the case of the Holden 202 the fee in Western Australia will be \$51.31, as against \$67 in New South Wales with the increase, and \$49 in South Australia which does not include a registration fee. The South Australian figure is \$2 less than that for Western Australia.

Mr J. T. Tonkin: The argument you are now using applied with greater force when I tried to abolish the road maintenance tax.

Mr O'CONNOR: The honourable member could not have put his story across as well as I am doing.

Mr Hartrey: If the price of a tin of jam does not cover the cost of selling it, the question one asks is, "Why does it not?" If the cost of selling licenses does not cover the cost of the work involved, then why not?

Mr O'CONNOR: In this case our proposal is to increase the fee so that it does cover the cost. It is important for us to compare the figures for Western Australia with those applying in the Eastern States following the increases over there. If we do this we find that the figures give a very different picture.

Mr J. T. Tonkin: Why is it so important now, when apparently it was not in 1971?

Mr O'CONNOR: I am not talking about 1971. Let me turn to the fees for the Valiant Charger. In Western Australia, with the increase, the fee is \$49.65; but in New South Wales, also with the increase, the fee is \$68.

Mr T. H. Jones: You are quoting a Liberal State. What about South Australia and Tasmania? You are only talking about your counterparts.

Mr O'CONNOR: The honourable member quoted the figures for South Australia.

Mr T. H. Jones: I quoted them all.

Mr O'CONNOR: I turn to the license fee for a Ranger. In Western Australia it is \$50.48; in New South Wales it is \$70; and in South Australia, without the registration fee, it is \$47, or only \$3 behind the Western Australian figure.

Mr B. T. Burke: How much does one registration cost?

Mr O'CONNOR: I do not know, but it will take all of the \$4. I am quoting the Western Australian figure, including the registration fee.

Mr McIver: Only the Liberal Party members will be able to afford cars!

Mr O'CONNOR: I am quite sure the honourable member will not be without a motor vehicle; and I am sure he will not come to work on a bicycle. Turning to the Datsun 1200, the license fee in Western Australia, taking into account the increase and the registration fee, is \$26.41; in New South Wales it is \$46, and in South Australia it is \$21.

Mr T. H. Jones: The figure for Tasmania is \$18.62, as shown in the last column.

Mr O'CONNOR: What increase will be applied in Tasmania? We have to talk about the relative positions of the States, and to compare the figures following the increases. In New South Wales the drivers' license fee is \$10 and that is much higher than the figure for Western Australia.

Mr T. J. Burke: It has a Liberal Government.

Mr O'CONNOR: In connection with the \$4 to be imposed for collecting the license fee, most members have asked that it be reduced to \$2; that is, the fee for half-yearly registration. The reason for the imposition of the \$4 fee arises from the need to cover the cost of registration and the book work. Whether the work is done twice or three times a year, the same amount of work is involved each time. I hope that by this means the people will be encouraged to take out yearly licenses, because by doing so the department will be able to avoid a lot of unnecessary expense and it will reduce the volume of work.

The member for Collie was attempting to impress us as being a mathematical genius when he quoted figures relating to certain increases. He stated that by adding the 65 per cent increase in motor vehicle licenses and the 25 per cent increase in insurance, the total increase was 90 per cent. I would point out to him that if he examined the position closely he would find that the total increase would be 45 per cent, and not 90 per cent.

Mr T. H. Jones: The 65 per cent is the increase in license fees.

Mr O'CONNOR: That is so, and the 25 per cent increase is on the insurance. Let us assume that each figure is \$100 at the present time. A 65 per cent increase would make the license fee \$165, and a 25 per cent increase in insurance would make the figure \$125. If we add the two amounts together they come to \$290, as against the existing \$200. A \$90 increase on \$200 represents a 45 per cent increase.

Mr T. H. Jones: I applied the principle correctly.

Mr O'CONNOR: It is a strange principle.

Mr T. H. Jones: You should go back to the point.

Mr O'CONNOR: The increase is not 90 per cent, but 45 per cent overall.

Mr T. H. Jones: That is, on one figure.

Mr O'CONNOR: On the two figures.

Mr T. H. Jones: On an average.

Mr O'CONNOR: That is right. I suggest the honourable member talk to the Leader of the Opposition who understands figures very well. I am sure the Leader of the Opposition would be able to sort out the figures for the honourable member. Overall, the increase is 45 per cent.

Mr T. H. Jones: There are two ways of looking at the question.

Mr O'CONNOR: The honourable member is right. There are two ways—the right way and the wrong way. However, we are looking at the right way.

Mr T. H. Jones: One can look at these increases in different ways.

Mr O'CONNOR: Members have made reference to other increases, such as the increase in freight rates. Any increases we have introduced we have not liked; just as the previous Government did not like the increases it introduced. However, I should point this out: there was not a time when the previous Government was in office when it experienced the inflationary trends that we are experiencing today.

Let me refer to the State Shipping Service. Our Government has increased the freight charge by about 30 per cent, but the amount obtained does not cover the increase in wages that has been effected since the beginning of the year. That will give members some indication of the problems we are facing in this regard, when we take into account the fact that these people work 30 weeks and have 22 weeks off and are paid around \$9 000 a year.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition made some comment about the introduction of a pay-as-you-use system. This method has been discussed frequently, and in many ways it has merit in making people pay for the services they use, rather than compelling others who do not use those services to pay for them.

The honourable member referred to an approach by his Government to the Commonwealth regarding the imposition of a fuel tax, and he said the then Premier could not get a seconder for his proposition. I should point out that at the Darwin conference we brought up this very point, and arrived at a different result. The Commonwealth Minister said he would take the proposal to the Commonwealth Government, to ascertain whether it was prepared to agree to a growth tax. This was the very thing which the Prime Minister had promised; he believed the States should be given the right to a growth tax. I received a reply from the Commonwealth Minister for Transport (Mr Jones) during the week indicating that this proposal was still being examined.

With regard to the optional license for three years, I do not see any need to reduce the amount involved. We are providing a three-year optional license for anyone who desires to take advantage of it.

Mr T. J. Burke: If they can afford it.

Mr O'CONNOR: That is right. Motorists do not have to get one, but if they do, it will not cost them any more. We are giving them the option because some people do not like to have to go in or arrange every year to obtain a license. This applies in other States and the principle is reasonable.

Mr T. J. Burke: If they go in every year for three years it costs the department three times as much.

Mr O'CONNOR: It probably would cost a little more, but motorists do not have to get the three-year license if they do not want to.

Mr T. J. Burke: How are the demerit points handled with a three-year license?

Mr O'CONNOR: No problem is involved.

Mr T. J. Burke: The demerit points will not be recorded on it for three years.

Mr O'CONNOR: The demerit points are also recorded in the office.

Mr T. J. Burke: But they will not appear on the license.

Mr O'CONNOR: That is not necessary.

Mr T. J. Burke: So if a person accumulates more than 12 points within the three years, what happens?

Mr O'CONNOR: The license is lost; that is what happens. Members know that.

Some members believe that pensioners should have a three-year license as well. Some problems are involved with pensioners because the health of aged people deteriorates very quickly and, from a safety point of view, it is felt that they should be examined annually.

The point the Deputy Leader of the Opposition raised regarding local authorities and the fact that they are not contributing a great deal towards roads is one the Commonwealth has raised; but it is very difficult to decide how the local authorities can obtain any further funds from taxes. I admit that some of the authorities could do a little more than they are doing now; there is no doubt about that. Nevertheless, their taxing powers are virtually limited to rates, and very little else. Consequently it is difficult for local authorities to obtain any additional tax from the fields in which they operate at this stage.

The Leader of the Opposition stated that we were introducing these increased charges because of the extravagant promises we made involving the single traffic authority. This is just not true.

Mr J. T. Tonkin: Are you going to stand there and tell me that it will actually cost \$4 to process a license and that you will not make a profit out of it?

Mr O'CONNOR: In accordance with the information I have received from the department, that is what the cost will be.

Mr J. T. Tonkin: Common sense tells me it will not cost half that amount.

Mr O'CONNOR: We consult the same officers who advised the previous Government and they have told us that this is what it costs. I take it for granted that what they tell me is the truth.

What I am trying to emphasise is that this money is not needed for a single traffic authority as indicated by the Leader of the Opposition. This money is required for roads and to fill a gap to bring the amount for local authorities up to what it was last year.

The point made regarding road maintenance tax is irrelevant. When the Leader of the Opposition was Premier we did not know where we stood with regard to road maintenance tax because he changed his mind on the issue so many times.

I think I have covered most points. I do not want to miss any, but I am sure that, during the Committee stage, members will again refer to any I might have forgotten.

Mr T. H. Jones: Do you think you will do something for pensioners? That is what I want to know.

Mr O'CONNOR: I have already explained that Cabinet is examining the ways in which it can best help pensioners. This will be done through the Cabinet subcommittee which is investigating the situation now.

Mr T. D. Evans: You would have to bring back fresh legislation.

Mr O'CONNOR: The member for Victoria Park said that maybe we should consider a little more pruning of expenditure. We have studied this possibility very closely. The Commissioner of Main Roads—a very qualified man—has been into this aspect fairly thoroughly with me. The

Deputy Leader of the Opposition will know the qualifications of the commissioner. From the information he supplied, we have done as much pruning as possible. Unless we get the necessary funds, the local authorities will drastically have to reduce their road programmes. Even with the money they will receive they will not be able to do the same amount of work they did last year.

The member for Victoria Park also mentioned that we might get a further amount next year from the Commonwealth. However, the Commonwealth has indicated what we will get for the next three years and what we will get next year for road works will be less than for this year, and the following year it will be less still. With inflation—

Mr Davies: You have already said that the Commonwealth is using some of the money for road works and it will not cut back on the total amount of work done.

Mr O'CONNOR: Oh yes it will. I think the honourable member has misunderstood what I said. The amount we will get this year from the Commonwealth is \$49 million. Of that, \$10.1 million is for national roads. Last year we obtained \$49.2 million; so we will receive less this year than last year. Next year we will receive \$50 million, but instead of retaining \$10.1 million the Commonwealth will retain \$12.1 million.

Mr Davies: What happens to that?

Mr O'CONNOR: It will be used for building national roads. Here again, virtually all the \$49 million has strings attached to it, although with the amendments passed in the Senate, the situation is much more acceptable.

Mr Davies: With the Commonwealth roads programme there is a greater sum going to roads.

Mr O'CONNOR: No. This year there is less.

Mr O'Neill: There is \$200 000 less this year.

Mr O'CONNOR: Surely if the member for Victoria Park received \$200 a week two years ago and he received \$200 a week this year he could not say he was virtually getting the same because of inflation. We must judge the situation on the amount of work which can be done with the money. The member for Victoria Park must be realistic. According to the information I have received, \$64 million would be necessary this year to do the work that was done last year with \$49.2 million.

Mr Davies: The Commonwealth is extending its programme.

Mr O'CONNOR: Out of money we normally get.

Mr Davies: So more money is being spent.

Mr O'CONNOR: No, less money is being spent this year.

Mr Davies: You said that next year there will be an extra \$11 million.

Mr O'CONNOR: I did not. I said there would be an extra \$1 million.

Mr Jamieson: You had an expensive programme of 18 bridges in the north-west. This is not a recurring expense.

Mr O'CONNOR: Maybe the Deputy Leader of the Opposition does not think we need funds for roads in Western Australia.

Mr Jamieson: Of course I do; but that will not be a recurring expenditure.

Mr O'CONNOR: We do want the same amount of work done by the individuals concerned. We could argue this subject for some time, but I do not propose to do so. I merely wish to thank members for their comments generally, and commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Thompson) in the Chair; Mr O'Connor (Minister for Traffic Safety) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 7 put and passed.

Clause 8: Section 14 amended—

Mr DAVIES: I wonder whether the Minister could explain the rationale behind this clause. As I read it, the clause provides that the local authority shall collect the fees, and will retain certain amounts under certain conditions. The amounts set out in the Act are \$4 per 1 000 vehicles and \$3 thereafter.

The Commissioner of Police—and then the Director of the Department of Motor Vehicles—withheld \$3, but the amendment provides that he will now withhold only 75c. This amount, I take it, is a pittance or a charge which the Government will allow the local authorities, or the Director of the Department of Motor Vehicles, to deduct for doing the work. The balance of fees collected will go into the Main Roads Trust Account.

Clause 8 of the Bill provides that the \$4, in respect of a local authority, will now become \$1 and the \$3 will become 75c. In the case of the director, the present amount of \$3 will become 75c. The charges have been adjusted and the local authorities will still be paid for doing the work for the Government. On top of that, the clause states that the local authority is to retain any recording fees paid to it during the financial year. As well as receiving an allowance for doing the work, it appears the local authorities will receive the recording fee. Can the Minister explain whether the local authorities will be better or worse off?

Mr O'CONNOR: My note on clause 8 states that the clause for amending section 14 of the Act provides for the transition on the 1st October from the present cost of collection allowance of \$4 per vehicle for the first 1 000 vehicles and \$3 thereafter for local authorities, and in the case of the Department of Motor Vehicles, \$3 per vehicle, to the new system providing for the recording fee of \$4 each time a vehicle is licensed or the license is renewed. The licensing authorities, for the three months July-September, will retain one-quarter of the old cost of collection allowance to cover those three months, and will then transfer over to the new system.

Mr J. T. TONKIN: The explanation given by the Minister again raises the question of whether it actually costs \$4. If it costs \$4 to process a license in Perth that would mean if the local authority takes out a proportion the Government must lose on the transfer. Is this a subsidy to the local authorities or does it mean that it does not cost \$4?

Mr O'CONNOR: The information I have is that it does cost \$4.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 9 to 16 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

HIRE-PURCHASE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 22nd August.

MR J. T. TONKIN (Melville—Leader of the Opposition) [9.06 p.m.]: The Hire-Purchase Act Amendment Bill of 1973 was deficient inasmuch as it did not make provision for bringing the various parts of the Act into operation. This amending Bill is necessary to make good that deficiency and to provide the facility for bringing the separate parts of the Act into operation at the required time.

Without this amending Bill the 1973 measure would be inoperative and of no value whatever, so it can readily be seen that this measure is very necessary for the operation of the Act. It has been pointed out that, because of the comprehensive nature of the amendments, the framing of regulations has been a matter of some difficulty. That difficulty has caused some delay in bringing into operation the amendments made in 1973.

We are in accord with the amendments and consider them to be essential and, therefore, there is no opposition at all from this side of the House. Under the 1973 amendments to the principal Act it is necessary for licenses to be issued to credit providers, and there is also provision

for licenses to be given for a period longer than 12 months in certain cases. We feel this is desirable to meet the exigencies of the situation and we are in agreement with the provision.

As that is all the Bill purports to do there is no point in speaking to it at length. I again indicate it is very necessary and very desirable. As a matter of fact, the action taken in 1973 would be of little value, if of any value at all, if this amending Bill were not passed. In the interests of considerably improving the operations of the Hire-Purchase Act, it is most essential that the Bill be agreed to and given a speedy passage.

MR GRAYDEN (South Perth—Minister for Consumer Affairs) [9.08 p.m.]: I rise simply to thank the Leader of the Opposition for his comments, and the co-operation he has extended to enable the Bill to have a speedy passage.

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.

PLANT DISEASES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 15th August.

MR H. D. EVANS (Warren) [9.13 p.m.]: Although this Bill is comparatively small, it raises the whole spectrum of the fruit-fly problem, which has previously been aired in this Chamber; that is, the need for adequate control throughout the State and the financing of the scheme. What is more, the Bill not only demonstrates the attitude of the Government to this problem but also its policy of increasing charges and laying the blame on the Commonwealth Government, as it has been wont to do. The Government has been consistent in doing this and is certainly becoming adept at it.

In the Bill we dealt with previously, the increases in licenses were of the order of 65 and 25 per cent, but in the Bill now before us fruit-fly baiting committees are to be given the opportunity to increase their charges by 100 per cent. So we can see that with practice the Government is improving very steadily.

The provisions in the Bill are two in number. The first is not a matter of great import. It seeks merely to delete the obsolete definition "Under-Secretary", which is no longer applicable to the Department of Agriculture.

The second provision proposes to allow fruit-fly baiting committees to increase their charges to the maximum amount stated in the schedule contained in the amending Bill. The concept of charging has also changed, but it is worth noting

that previously the practical method of charging by the committees was on the basis indicated in the schedule. The Act required that a charge be made for every individual spraying and every individual visit. This charge is no longer to be required, and indeed has not been applicable for some time; so in that regard it is quite a rational and sensible amendment.

The Opposition recognises that fruit-fly baiting schemes have been handicapped through lack of finance and inevitably the charges must be increased. We accept that. However, we query the level of the increase, which in this case makes provision for increases of 100 per cent. Let us not lose sight of that point. It will be the subject of an amendment to be moved by my colleague the member for Mundaring at the appropriate time.

You are probably aware, Mr Speaker, as I am, of some of the extraordinary changes in the attitudes of Government members. In their approach to this Bill they have evinced their failure to appreciate fully the fruit-fly control problem and the conflict that arises because no change is contemplated other than increasing the charges. All the Government is doing about the issue is raising the fees and nothing else. I point out the contrast in the attitude of the Opposition which has shown a very real concern for fruit-fly control and has endeavoured very strenuously to institute and reconstruct the fruit-fly baiting scheme. It made what I consider to be a very gallant showing on it, but of course numbers are fairly important when it comes to amending a piece of legislation successfully.

The members of the present Government made great play of their opposition to the amendments we proposed in relation to fruit-fly control, but it should be noted that they introduced no alternatives and made no worth-while suggestions. All they did was bring forward criticism from which some kind of political capital could be made. No constructive criticism was offered. Their philosophy has continued into their period in government, and it is now a matter of crying, "Blame the Feds". That is about all the initiative they can show and, as I said, it is fairly in keeping.

I would like to remind some of the members opposite of comments they have made in the past. I refer back to the debate in 1972, which is contained in Vol. 1 of *Hansard* for that year. Some very interesting speculations and attitudes were revealed. The Deputy Leader of the Country Party at the time—now the Deputy Premier—made this very significant statement—

I do not believe the present position is satisfactory.

He did not believe the position in regard to fruit-fly baiting schemes as they operated then, and still operate, was satisfactory, yet no attempt was made to bring about a change at that time or to deal

with the matter constructively. The present Government is now in a position to make a move in the matter but we still find that no effort is being made, just as no effort was made in the 12 years prior to the Tonkin Government. At page 729 the same honourable member went on to say that the Bill would fail because there was no compulsion. He felt a compulsory approach to the matter of fruit-fly baiting was necessary if the problem was to be tackled successfully.

Another speaker in the 1972 debate—a former Minister in the Brand Government—said the matter of fruit fly should be tackled in the same way as the Argentine ant campaign was fought and won; that the prime responsibility should be put on the department and the Government. I will not give the name of the speaker, but he was a very respected Minister in his time and he occupies an even more illustrious position now.

I would like to recall to the mind of the Minister for Local Government his very bold words which echoed through this Chamber and sounded most impressive at the time. We were told that fruit fly is a Government responsibility because the Government represents the people, and that the Department of Agriculture should be doing this work. Now, if the Government is to be consistent, why is this approach not continued? Why is the Minister for Local Government mute and unobtrusive at this time?

Mr Rushton: I am not mute; I was thinking back to the time when you introduced that Bill. If I remember rightly, a Government member was absent and the Bill was defeated.

Mr H. D. EVANS: At the time I said that the present Minister for Local Government had not read the Bill, and I can see the same thing has happened here. The Minister has not changed one iota.

Mr Rushton: The then member for Blackwood read it and rejected it.

Mr H. D. EVANS: The then member for Blackwood was a former President of the Fruit Growers' Association, and he drew the attention of the House, in some detail and with some force, to the very strong need, the dire necessity, to improve fruit-fly control in the interest of the industry. He saw the need to convince the Japanese authorities that fruit-fly was virtually under control in Western Australia before the Japanese would accept fruit from this source. At the time the member for Blackwood put forward a very cogent argument and indicated that he approved of much stronger measures. He said that his thoughts and his ideas were not his alone, and that he had very strong backing from the party he represented in this House. The honourable member referred also to the Eyre Highway checkpoint and all that

was involved in it. Incidentally, this checkpoint was another first for the Tonkin Government, and I am happy to look upon it as being a success.

The concluding remarks of the Minister for Agriculture during his second reading speech left no doubt in our minds about the Government's thinking on this matter. He said—

Since the scheme—

He is referring to the fruit-fly baiting scheme. To continue—

—takes over from the individual his responsibility for the carrying out of fruit-fly control, it is appropriate for the cost of the scheme to be met by the particular individuals rather than from general revenue.

This conflicts with statements made by the then Opposition in 1972 that the scheme should be a Government and a departmental responsibility. Now that we have switched sides, we find that the Government's point of view has changed dramatically. This also leads me to comment on an item in *The Sunday Times* of the 25th August, 1974. It is headed, "Shedding light on hypocrisy" and the columnist referred to the Government's attitude on daylight saving. The comments could well apply also to the fruit-fly baiting scheme and the approach of the present Government. We have seen a cynical approach right throughout, and a lack of consistency.

The problem of Mediterranean fruit fly still remains with us. It is not being tackled or approached in any different way at all. As I have indicated, the Minister for Agriculture in the Brand Government was not satisfied with the situation and here, when this critical Government has an opportunity to make some changes, it is taking no action except to increase the charge up to a maximum of 100 per cent. The problems of fruit-fly eradication cannot be minimised. We are painfully conscious of them, and we recognise that a tremendous effort is required for a high level of eradication to be achieved. We must pay close attention to the problems of the various baiting schemes.

I recall that in 1972, 55 schemes were operating. During that year the number diminished to 45. In a reply to a question last week I was told that 49 schemes are still operating. Most of these schemes have problems, and most of the committees are confronted with grave difficulties from a number of sources.

The most recent criticism of the scheme to which I can draw attention is a report in *The West Australian* of the 28th February of this year. The bold headline says, "Fruit scheme 'a shambles'". The article refers to a statement made by a Mundaring Shire councillor. We are given his impressions of the scheme as well as the opinion and comments of other councillors. I sympathise with the committees

which endeavoured to operate these schemes. It is certainly not an easy task and they do not receive any thanks or appreciation—rather the contrary.

Local government is frequently criticised about the fruit-fly baiting schemes. As has been said, control rests with individuals, but the whole system at the moment is most cumbersome and awkward. A referendum at local government level is needed, and it requires a 60 per cent acquiescence by those who participate in the poll to initiate a scheme. Another difficulty arises where the vote represents 20 per cent or less of the eligible ratepayers. This is an initial cumbersome approach to the establishment of a scheme.

Once a scheme is established, problems usually revolve around staffing—probably the greatest difficulty encountered. These problems arise for a number of reasons, but the major difficulty is the lack of supervisory staff and the difficulty in obtaining suitably experienced people with a sound character and the ability to administer something of this kind. We see a direct correlation between the quality of the supervisory staff and the efficacy of a particular scheme—this is demonstrated time and time again. Of course, the cost factor is of major importance also. The costs incurred by the various committees stem not only from the cost of equipment and materials but also from the clerical and administrative side of the scheme. The staff must send out notices, follow-up notices, etc.

The supervisory work in the actual ascertaining of whether the control measures have been carried out, rests with the Department of Agriculture. Accommodation, too, in many places becomes a problem; and not only accommodation for staff, but the storage of equipment, bearing in mind the seasonal nature of the operation. So it has these twofold disabilities in regard to equipment and staff. The lack of a professional approach is also a problem. This is something which is difficult to cultivate or to engender in staff that is of a temporary nature only; and this is one of the very strong criticisms levelled in the newspaper article to which I made reference earlier.

The article refers to complaints in regard to notices going out to a particular ratepayer and, of course, creating bad blood, to say the least; but a more significant criticism contained in the article was that it would cost \$1 000 in administrative charges to collect \$10 000 charged for the scheme this year. The cost involved is indicative of the problem of administration, which in some way could be overcome. This is something to which I would make a little further reference.

As a Government we suggested that a proper effort should be made towards eradication. I am not saying eradication is achievable at this time in the light of

the technology we possess. It may be that we might be able to emulate Florida, which has actually managed to eradicate completely Mediterranean fruit fly. This was achieved only by aerial baiting over a wide area, followed up by an intensive campaign. I shudder to think what would happen if malathion baiting by aerial spraying were suggested for the metropolitan area; I think the furore would take some considerable time to die down.

Bearing in mind that complete eradication is something to which we could not look forward, we could make a far better study than we have made so far of the inherent problems of fruit fly and their very adaptability; and, of course, the natural advantages they have in the State of Western Australia, which make them a very difficult pest to contend with. Any direct eradication can only be considered at the highest possible level. Members will appreciate it is in the metropolitan area that the major difficulties are encountered, because we have within that area a series of schemes which are not contiguous with each other. We have the spectacle of one side of the road being baited while the other side is not.

This causes contention among those participating in the scheme who are paying religiously, and frequently in good faith and with the best intentions, their contribution towards a fruit-fly eradication scheme; while across the road from them no baiting is being carried out. There is a fairly lax attitude on the part of the community as a whole, and prophylactic measures are not taken. The destruction of fallen fruit is required by law, and the destruction of that fruit in the proper manner is the responsibility of the householder. Frequently this is not done and, of course, it is one of the reasons that the propagation of fruit fly is able to continue season after season.

It is not only fruit that harbours fruit fly; a wide range of garden shrubs and ornamental trees are also involved. Even the cumquats at Parliament House were infected one year. Such things as lilli-pill, rose hips, and, indeed, capsicums and other vegetables have proved to be hosts for Mediterranean fruit fly, making their control just that much more difficult.

Under the existing scheme we also have the problem of the shifting population. Frequently, in some suburbs we have a transient population to a larger degree than the more stable areas, and often a householder will plant a grapevine or some shrub which is a potential host, and in a comparatively short time he moves on without having registered the particular fruit or drawing attention to it in any way, and certainly without pulling it out. The new owner or tenant probably thinks it is no concern of his, since he did not plant it anyway. So the plant remains and still provides the host potential for the insect.

This brings me to the very controversial subject of just who should be paying for a fruit-fly scheme which involves the whole community. While it can be argued that the people who are actually growing fruit receive the benefit of the fruit-fly scheme and the eradication of fruit fly, at the same time it is more than arguable that the person who is not involved with baiting or paying the baiting charges, but has a number of shrubs that are just as great a hazard as fruit trees, should also be required to pay. Should he be able to provide a hazard for his neighbour who, each summer, is faced with the very frustrating task of getting rid of infected fruit?

This is one of the problems inherent in the eradication of fruit fly, and one of the major factors which make the whole issue so emotive and subject to less dispassionate and rationalised examination than otherwise would be the case. The solution I feel is to adopt some much wider approach: to have much wider power and a much broader concept.

It is in this respect that we must take note of the Minister's remarks in his second reading speech when he indicated the prime responsibility of fruit-fly control rests with the householder. It cannot be expected that any Government department can accept responsibility for every tree grown in Western Australia and for every fruit fly propagated in every town. That is just not practicable.

If a person owns a dog or grows a tree, then he has some responsibility to the rest of the community. The community has to be involved, too; otherwise we just cannot maintain the efficiency or effectiveness of a scheme. The present scheme is not working as well as it could or should. The involvement of local government is probably the most efficient and economic way of achieving this; and this is what was initially suggested in 1972. I would like to comment on a reply given by me, as Minister for Agriculture of the day, to a question asked by the then Leader of the Country Party (now Sir Crawford Nalder) towards the end of 1972. He asked—

Will he accept the proposal I made during the second reading debate on the control of fruit fly to call together interested parties in an endeavour to work out a satisfactory arrangement for the control of fruit fly in Western Australia?

Two points seem to emanate from that question. Firstly, it was rather obvious that the then Leader of the Country Party was not satisfied with the fruit-fly control situation. Secondly, I am rather curious as to whether the present Government has considered the subject of fruit-fly control sufficiently important to have initiated a series of discussions of the kind envisaged in the question. From the lack of informa-

tion on this subject, I can assume only that this has not been done and it leaves me with some little surprise, having regard to the strength of the arguments levelled in 1972.

Without a shadow of doubt this Bill does not go far enough if we are seriously to tackle the control of fruit fly in this State. There is no serious recognition of the problem. The Government has not come to grips with the difficulties inherent in this question—and, there are a multiplicity of them. No real support is provided to the commercial fruit industry, which represents something like \$12 million annually to the economy of this State. To move an amendment to the fruit-fly scheme as it exists would involve amendments to three separate Acts. This was sought in 1972. As a consequence, it is not practicable for the Opposition to move amendments at this time and it is for this reason that we take no action on the matter. So it is that I support this measure with a certain degree of repugnance.

MR MOILER (Mundaring) [9.42 p.m.]: When the Minister introduced this Bill he stated that it consisted of two fairly small amendments. I would agree with that statement. One of the amendments is very minor and the most important section of the Bill is that which refers to fruit-fly baiting. As the member for Warren has just pointed out, this represents an attempt to alter the maximum charged by committees running a fruit-fly baiting scheme. However, the Minister has missed a golden opportunity to introduce into this Parliament measures enabling action to be taken to remove the deficiencies evident in the principal Act. In his second reading speech, the Minister for Agriculture said—

The existing charges permitted under the Act were prescribed some 15 years ago and are now, of course, out of keeping with costs associated with the running of baiting schemes.

Unfortunately, the charges promoted under the Act are not the only things out of keeping with fruit growing and fruit-fly baiting in the metropolitan and outer metropolitan areas. The legislation authorising the establishment of committees to run fruit-fly baiting schemes was introduced almost 30 years ago and it is only reasonable that amendments and improvements to the scheme are needed.

Whereas initially the scheme was introduced to protect the commercial fruit grower, it has become more of a community service. In many cases, the commercial fruit grower is quite capable of looking after his own fruit trees, and in some cases is very definitely prepared to carry out his own spraying. However, fruit-fly baiting has reached the stage where it provides more of a community service to the people within the residential zones who may have a small number of fruit trees. So, I believe, this change alone brings us to the point

where the Minister should take this opportunity—especially in view of the arguments put forward two years ago by the then Opposition—to consult with the various local authorities, obtain their opinions and introduce similar legislation to that proposed by the previous Minister for Agriculture.

Mr Rushton: You would have to be joking! Not one local authority would support you.

Mr MOILER: The Minister for Local Government, who just interjected, two years ago challenged the Minister introducing the three Bills designed to amend the Local Government Act to allow local authorities to play a bigger part in the control of fruit fly within their areas to state whether his proposals had been discussed with the local government authorities. I challenge the present Minister now to state that local authorities presently involved in fruit-fly baiting schemes have been asked about their attitude to these amendments; I do not believe they have been consulted. The Minister who has just interjected is very quiet on this point. Of course, the local authorities have not been contacted.

The previous speaker recalled the great furore created by members of the then Opposition; once again, this highlights the hypocrisy of this Government. At that time, members of the then Opposition said the Government should have consulted local authorities and had not done so; but I am quite sure that the local authorities have not been consulted in relation to their views on this measure.

Mr Rushton: You know very well the local authorities objected two years ago.

Mr Jamieson: And they object now.

Mr MOILER: The steps proposed by these amendments are inadequate. This is typical of a Liberal Government. It merely wishes to patch up a scheme. It will not get down to the job of solving the problems. Let the Government get down and do the job it has been elected to do. In co-operation with local authorities, let us get to the seat of the problem and try to do a better job of controlling fruit fly.

I believe that if this Government were to introduce a Bill to amend the Local Government Act to allow local authorities to become more active and to accept their responsibilities and to co-ordinate the actions of the fruit-fly baiting committees, we would be in a far better position to control the fruit-fly pest. If we were to give local authorities the initiative, we would find they would provide these committees with more direct support. I feel quite sure that such committees would still be formed, but that better co-operation and results would be achieved.

Inadequate investigation has been conducted into this proposal. The amendment relating to fruit-fly baiting charges,

which we are now discussing, was introduced in a similar form years ago and debated then.

We have had the suggestion put forward that maximum charges should be imposed on individuals who have from one to 10 plants. However there will be 10 different charges. There will be 10 different charges applying from one to 10 plants. From that point onwards the charges are—

Plants	Maximum charge
11-15	14.00
16-20	15.00
21-30	16.00
31-40	17.00
41-50	18.00
51-100	20.00

If the Minister made inquiries he would find that the committees that are conducting fruit-fly baiting schemes find the exercise time-consuming and, needless to say, there are many separate and individual rates. Instead of having the 16 different rates proposed in the Bill, it would be far better if there were, say only four different rates within a range of—

1-6
7-20
21-40
41-100

I believe in some areas these are the figures that are being used. It is logical that it would be more economical and far better to work under a scheme such as that than under the set-up suggested in the Bill. One can readily imagine the volume of work and the problems that will be created under the proposal in the Bill if in an orchard of less than 11 trees, one tree dies, or an extra two or three trees are planted, and so on. We would have this continual variation in the number of trees that may be in a particular area. Members may say that the same could happen if there were only four groups. That is so, but not to the same degree.

The volume of book work and the variation in the number of trees that would occur from season to season would be reduced considerably. I am sure the Minister would find that, if he made some inquiries among the local authorities that are trying to conduct a reasonable baiting scheme to the best of their ability under the existing legislation, they would be more in favour of a scheme which had only four areas of registration covering up to 100 trees, with additional areas covering more than 100 trees or part thereof.

I am sure they would be more in favour of such a scheme than the present set-up which will have 16 different scales of registration up to 100 fruit trees.

I also feel that a local authority should be granted more discretion. I have already spoken about this. This could only be done

by an amendment to the Local Government Act. Local authorities should be given authority to organise fruit-fly baiting schemes. Under the present set-up we have a most undemocratic situation because only those people registered as having an orchard are eligible to vote in a poll held to decide whether or not a fruit-fly baiting scheme shall be established. At least 50 per cent of the people in an area would not be registered as having an orchard. No effort is made to require people to register an orchard at the present time; in fact, that has been the position for some considerable time. Less than 50 per cent of the people who should have their orchards registered under the Act would not be registered.

Under this Bill only those who are registered are eligible to vote, and 60 per cent of them will carry the decision as to whether or not a fruit-fly baiting scheme will be implemented. If a local authority were responsible for the control of fruit fly within its area, the members of that local authority, as elected representatives, could decide whether or not a fruit-fly baiting scheme was required within their district. Instead of holding a poll where only a small proportion of the people—who later would have to pay for the baiting scheme—would be eligible to vote, the local authorities could have a questionnaire circularised among the people and, by their own knowledge of the district, they would be able to arrive at a better decision as to whether or not the majority of the people in the particular area wanted a fruit-fly baiting scheme. This would be far better than the present set-up where possibly only 40 per cent or 50 per cent of the people who should be eligible to vote would make the decision which, in effect, would represent only 30 per cent of all the people living in the area. Yet this decision would be affecting the majority of the people residing in that particular ward or shire.

I cannot emphasise strongly enough my disappointment at the manner in which this amendment has been introduced to the House. Here was an excellent opportunity for the Government to put in train the policies the Premier set out in his policy speech; the policies the Government included even in the Governor's Speech. In an endeavour to emphasise this I will read to the House two paragraphs taken from the Governor's Speech. They are as follows—

The important role of Local Government in meeting the needs of the community and generally assisting in the development of the State is recognised by the Government.

Particular attention will be given to the financial problems of Local Government, with a view to further strengthening its role as a vital and valuable partner in the government of this State.

Here is an ideal area in which the Premier and the Government could have carried out these policies. A local authority is the ideal and logical body to initiate any community involvement in its own area. The Government is shying away from this problem and trying to leave matters as they are. If its only move is to increase the fees, it is burying its head in the sand. Instead of tackling the problem it is showing its colours in typical fashion, and I am sure it will continue to do so.

Of course, in his policy speech the Premier indicated the same sort of attitude towards local government, because the first paragraph in his policy speech states—

We want local government to play a bigger role.

Here is the opportunity for the Premier to allow local government to play a bigger role.

Mr Rushton: You are just talking rubbish.

Mr MOILER: This is what the Government is doing; it is trying to get this done on the cheap.

Mr Rushton: You are trying to get it done without financial backing.

Mr MOILER: Is the Minister suggesting the Government should do it?

Mr Rushton: I am happy with the position we have in our area, and the scheme is being carried out by very good people.

Mr Jamieson: Pretty useless, too.

Mr MOILER: We would have to know how much success they are having to judge whether or not the scheme in the Minister's district is satisfactory. There are some 48 baiting areas in all; the problem is that we are not successfully controlling fruit fly. The position is that local authorities are the logical groups, with the Department of Agriculture, to implement all the necessary schemes among the various communities to combat fruit fly in the backyard gardens.

As I have emphasised before, the commercial producer is quite capable of controlling the fruit fly in his orchard. However, in most cases he is prepared to let the local authority do the work for him, because by this means he himself would be saved a certain amount of work.

The present Government has missed the opportunity to bring in legislation, conjointly under the Local Government Act and the Plant Diseases Act, which would effect a vast improvement in the fruit-fly baiting scheme.

MR A. R. TONKIN (Morley) (10.01 p.m.): The situation relating to fruit-fly control seems to me to be absolutely farcical. The electorate of Morley is covered to about 99 per cent of the area by two local authorities—the City of Stirling, and the Shire of Bayswater.

In the City of Stirling area a fruit-fly baiting scheme is in operation; but in the Shire of Bayswater area there is none. There is a great deal of resentment in Dianella and Morley, because on one side of the street the residents pay a compulsory levy for the eradication of fruit fly, while the residents on the other side of the street are not covered by any such scheme. Consequently in the areas not embraced by control schemes the fruit fly breed, and reinfest the adjacent areas. What does the Minister intend to do about this situation?

Mr McPharlin: I shall answer the honourable member when I reply to the debate.

Mr A. R. TONKIN: This creates a very serious situation; the residents of the area concerned have a great grievance. I have received many complaints on this matter. I find that the people in general do not mind paying a levy, if the money is to be used in the eradication of fruit fly; but they do mind paying into a scheme when the money is wasted completely because the residents on the other side of the street are not covered by the scheme.

This problem should be tackled; but perhaps in the metropolitan area it should be tackled by a different method from that applied in country areas. Generally the local authorities in country districts administer large areas, and it is fair enough to say that a country shire could control the fruit fly in its district. The area is so great that there is little likelihood that fruit fly reinfestation will come about as a result of motor vehicles travelling from one district to another.

In the city where the areas administered by local authorities are so small, we find that in some cases people on one side of the street are embraced by a fruit-fly control scheme while the people on the other side are not. I believe the only sensible and rational way to control the fruit fly in the metropolitan area is to bring the whole of the metropolitan area under a control scheme.

For that reason I believe the Department of Agriculture should take over this responsibility, in conjunction with local authorities, and rationalise fruit-fly control. Local authorities could do this on the same principle they use to design and construct roads in the metropolitan area. Although the roads are built by different local authorities, the roads are rationalised. Invariably, there is agreement between the different shires which have common boundaries. In the same way it should be possible to arrive at agreement among metropolitan local authorities in respect of fruit-fly control and eradication.

At the moment there is no uniform control scheme, and some people are compelled to pay a levy to an ineffective control scheme. I suggest the present system is inefficient and unpopular, and certainly should not be propped up. I would be in-

terested to hear the Minister's solution of the problem which exists in the Morley district, because at present there is a great deal of ill-feeling over this question.

MR JAMIESON (Welshpool—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [10.05 p.m.]: I am sure that former Ministers for Agriculture—Mr Hoare, Mr Kelly, Mr Nalder, and the member for Warren—would not sleep soundly if I did not say a few words about fruit-fly control. Although I do not claim to be an expert on agricultural problems, over the years I have been in this Parliament on each occasion that this question has been raised I have made my voice heard. Whilst I could not do that during the time the member for Warren was Minister for Agriculture, I did have some things to say to him across the Cabinet table.

It would appear that local authorities are entitled to spend as much of the ratepayers' money as they like on the eradication or partial elimination of the house fly and the mosquito, but when it comes to the control or eradication of the fruit fly for some quaint reason the question becomes a sacred cow. It seems to be no longer a responsibility of the local people to take action by the payment of a uniform tax or rate in order to cope with the problem in the area.

I do not understand the difference in the two methods of approach. In the case of the eradication of the Argentine ant we see the same sort of method applied. A rate is struck, and the local authorities concerned subscribe to it. The Government takes the necessary action for eradication.

In the case of fruit-fly control, somewhere along the line I seem to miss out on my argument; it seems that this is not to be the responsibility of local government because of the need to make an impost on ratepayers. I say there is a responsibility on local government, and this responsibility is growing greater each year.

I would like to recount my experiences. I like to travel into the Hills area, and often I go to Bickley Valley to get some fruit on a Sunday afternoon. Over the last few years I have experienced varied results. On one of my trips I spoke to an old fruitgrower. I asked him, "How do you manage to control the fruit fly?" He told me it cost him a fortune to try to keep the fruit fly out.

On one occasion this year I bought some nice looking fruit, but within two or three days of getting the fruit home I found it literally crawling with fruit fly. So, I say the growers in the hills are not keeping the fruit fly out, and they cannot do so, with one exception—the growers that spray their orchards with the systemic type of spray. Goodness only knows what ill-effects are caused to the human system through the ingestion of this fruit. It is clearly labelled on the bottle containing the spray that people should not eat

fruit within a fortnight of its being sprayed. There is no way to determine whether fruit has been sprayed within a fortnight before it is purchased.

The growers are in business to sell their fruit and to keep the fruit fly out of the fruit. The people buying fruit on the roadside stalls have no way of telling whether the fruit contains an excess of systemic sprays or other types of sprays. So, the purchasers of fruit are subjected to the methods used by unscrupulous growers in their spraying activities.

The growers are there to produce fruit as a means of living. Unless some restriction is placed on them against their adopting methods which are a hazard to health, they will produce the fruit in the most profitable way they can.

There is no way out of the fruit-fly problem unless a uniform scheme of control is adopted. It would be ridiculous for us to go on as we are. Various members who took part in the debate tonight have pointed out that control schemes do not stop at the boundaries of local authorities. Good as the result of one local authority control scheme might be, all the good could be undone if the adjacent local authority did not introduce a similar scheme.

At one time there was a fruit-fly control scheme in the Belmont district. I think the shire councillors eventually hunted the fruit-fly control committee out of the district. They even evicted the committee from the room which it occupied at the old shire hall. When the committee established itself in a garage of a residence, the shire councillors had the committee evicted from the garage because it was contended that the committee was conducting commercial activities in a residential area.

That is how badly they were considered, yet originally they started their work as a result of a request by the local authority. However, the longer they worked the more unpopular the ward members responsible became. Because those members felt that they would be adversely affected they hunted them out of the place as quickly as they could. Ultimately the local authority approached the then Minister who put a roughie over it a couple of times because, he said, it did not apply at the right time for a referendum. The next year the council gave the Minister the nod that it did not want the scheme any more.

Where do we go from here? No-one is responsible now. The individual landholders may be, but I do not think that will achieve very much. As a matter of fact, I am not quite sure how much the scheme achieves. I say this because of my own experience. I have a few loquat trees and so on which were not infested at all with fruit fly until they were baited. Every year after that more and more fruit fly appeared. It was not until last year—when the scheme was abandoned—that I

again commenced to get some fruit-fly-free fruit. Consequently I am not quite sure how valuable the scheme is.

With great care I have used some of the systemic type sprays in an effort to minimise the effect of these creatures, but as recently as last week-end I noticed an indication of fruit-fly infestation in some overripe lemons on my property. I took action to eradicate the fruit fly, but how many other people do this?

I raised the matter with the former Minister, Mr Nalder—now Sir Crawford Nalder—and told him I did not believe the problem was being attacked in a very sound manner. The Government has resumed a number of properties on which were found several fruit trees for which no-one was responsible. Consequently no action was being taken to deal with the fruit fly. He told me that what I said was a lot of rubbish, but he apologised a few days later after he had sent some inspectors to the area. They found about 150 trees in various localities on properties which had been resumed and no-one was responsible for those trees.

Then again, an area in the Belmont Shire—at Newburn—was exempt. This area was owned then by DCA, but is now owned by the Department of Transport. That department had resumed a lot of land for the airport and no-one was responsible for the many fruit trees on that land.

Until we tackle this problem on a sound basis and make earnest endeavours to eradicate the fruit-fly infestation we will make little progress. I know what the various Governments in South Australia have done to overcome the problem because they are very scared of it. I suggest we should adopt one of their plans although it would not be very popular with many people. What the department in South Australia does is to send gangs of people to strip all the fruit from the trees in all the gardens. This they do for one to three years until the infestation is under control. They also get rid of all the host plants in the gardens. As I said, this is the action taken in South Australia where all tomato plants and anything else which is likely to be a host to the pests are destroyed.

We have never undertaken a true eradication programme here; certainly nowhere near as strict a programme as that applying in South Australia. Until we do we will get nowhere. While we rely on the individual to tackle the problem we will be in a great deal of trouble.

On a previous occasion I told the House what occurred when a former colleague and Minister, Mr Bickerton, invited me to take a can of mulberries from his tree in Nedlands. We picked the fruit, but after it had been in the fridge for a while it looked like a bowl of rice because all the maggots crawled out. I would not know how

many similar trees are to be found in the metropolitan area, but it must be a considerable number.

This is a problem we must face. The department itself has said that the problem is a tremendous one. Fumes of petrol attract fruit fly. An inspector was in a heavily wooded area one day a long way from any known host of the pest. He pulled up to refuel his vehicle and when he took out a drum and poured the petrol into the tank, two fruit fly alighted on the back of his hand. This is an indication of how far afield they are throughout the State.

A concerted effort must be made to tackle the problem. If it is not, our fruit will never be accepted on the world market. The Minister for Agriculture could verify that overseas countries are terrified of their fruit becoming infested with fruit fly. As soon as they learn there is a possibility that the country from which some fruit has come could be infested with Mediterranean fruit fly they wipe that country off straight away no matter how much they may want the fruit concerned. We cannot blame them for this because if their countries become infested with fruit fly they will be in as much trouble as we are in.

We must make a concerted effort to tackle this problem. An increase in the fees might enable the department to buy more bait or repellent, but it will not overcome the problem. It will not prevent fruit-fly infestation in the areas which are not baited. As I mentioned earlier, I am not sure whether fruit-fly infestation will be eradicated even in areas which are baited, judging from my experience.

All an increase in fees will do is compel those people who have fruit trees to pay more money. As a matter of fact, I can recall a person from Bunbury contacting me to tell me how he had nearly gone broke because in his ignorance he had planted rows of prunus down both sides of his block as he thought they would provide a nice red foliage, which they did. However, when members of the local committee inspected his property and counted the trees they said he just about had an orchard, but he gained nothing from it.

Mr Sibson: Was he a German?

Mr JAMIESON: I do not know. It does not matter very much. It does not matter what the nationality of the owner might be; his fruit trees can still be infested.

We are all aware of the fact that the flowering peach trees in the proximity of this building must be stripped. If they are not, the fruit forms on the trees and attracts fruit fly because the fruit is very soft. The fruit then falls to the ground and myriads of maggots are seen in it.

The problem is tremendous, particularly in view of the colossal number of flowering peach and prune trees in the metropolitan

area. Although flowering peach trees do not bear a great deal of fruit they bear enough to become hosts to the fruit fly.

A scheme similar to that involving Argentine ants should be evolved. A systematic programme in every district should be undertaken to eradicate the pest. Otherwise in a few more years, because of inflation or something else equally frightening—allegedly forced on us by the Commonwealth Government—the Minister of the day will be asking for the fees to be increased yet again in an effort to eradicate the pest.

The situation is not good enough. We are not doing the job we should be doing for the people of Western Australia. A comprehensive plan must be introduced by the department or the pest will never be eradicated. I know that the department is doing a good job in the country areas, but I have noticed that when any form of pest is prevalent in the metropolitan area the department becomes frightened of the cost involved to eradicate it.

Transgressing a little, I will refer to onehunga weed. The department does not want to declare it a noxious weed in the metropolitan area because of the tremendous cost which would be involved in eradicating it.

We have to face up to the responsibility, whether the problem is in the metropolitan area or in the country, and keep these pests to a minimum. We should eradicate them if at all possible. If we were to plan in that direction we would get somewhere. In supporting these small schemes we are only fooling around and imposing an additional cost burden on people such as those mentioned by the member for Morley. The numbers of people involved in the schemes are becoming fewer and fewer because they find, in the ultimate that the schemes are not successful, but are merely an increased burden.

MR McPHARLIN (Mt. Marshall—Minister for Agriculture) [10.21 p.m.]: I would like to express my thanks to those members opposite who have spoken to this measure and for their constructive criticisms. I believe that those who have spoken appreciate, the same as does the Government, that the eradication of fruit fly is a serious matter.

As has been pointed out, the Bill now before us contains two amendments. The first is rather small and of very little consequence, but the second amendment is to provide for additional finance to be made available to those committees which are operating. The maximum charge which the committees can make will be doubled, but it will not be mandatory for committees to double their present charges. They will be able to make a charge up to the maximum. Therefore, it is not right to say that the charges will be increased

by 100 per cent; it will rest entirely with the committee concerned as to what charges it makes.

Several members said that they believed the eradication of fruit fly should be the responsibility, perhaps, of local authorities or of the Government. As I recall the Bill which came before us in 1972—I think it was—local authorities were to be responsible for administering fruit-fly baiting schemes. They would have had to strike a rate, or provide finance, to operate the schemes. As I understood the measure at the time, that was its intention, but the local authorities were not very keen on it.

Mr H. D. Evans: Some would have accepted it, and some would not.

Mr McPHARLIN: As I understood the situation at the time, some were not very keen about it. It did not matter how much good was in the measure; it did not receive the endorsement of the local authorities.

The member for Warren mentioned the checkpoint on Eyre Highway. As members are probably aware, a new building has been constructed and the checkpoint is manned for 24 hours a day. That is the point at which fruit can be inspected, or confiscated, so there is more control now than there was previously.

The representatives of several fruit-fly baiting committees have written to me, and others have made appointments and called on me after finding themselves in difficulty because of the lack of finance. That is one reason for the Bill being brought forward—so that those committees will have an opportunity to raise more finance in order to keep their schemes operating.

I think members will agree that some of the committees have done a very good job and have been successful in controlling fruit fly in their areas. There was some comment on the formation of committees. Of course, under the provisions of the Act a committee consists of five members, four of whom shall be persons entitled to vote at the poll, and shall be nominated by the organisation or the municipality making the request for the poll, and the fifth member shall be an inspector nominated by the Minister. The latter becomes the chairman of the committee. An association formed within a district for the purpose of fruit-fly control, or the local municipality, can make a request for the poll to be conducted. If 60 per cent of the poll agree to the formation of a committee the organisation can go ahead with the scheme.

The member for Warren also referred to aerial baiting over the whole of the metropolitan area, apparently the same as was done in a State in America. He said that the fruit fly could possibly be eradicated if aerial baiting were done in an efficient and thorough manner. However, he also mentioned the outcry which could result from the adoption of such a scheme

in this State. I can imagine that if the Government adopted this procedure in the metropolitan area we would receive all sorts of protests from people objecting to pollution, and from conservationists. I believe we would be adversely criticised if we adopted such a measure in an attempt to eradicate fruit fly with that type of operation.

We all agree that fruit fly is a difficult pest to control. We are aware that pests can become immune to certain insecticides and scientists have to be prepared for that and produce other types of insecticides to replace those to which the pests become immune.

It was also mentioned that the pest in the metropolitan area is most difficult to control and, I suppose, that is true enough. There was also criticism that the Department of Agriculture is afraid to take action in the metropolitan area.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition commented that in South Australia gangs from the Department of Agriculture move through an affected area and strip the trees and pull up anything which might be a host plant. The pest is controlled in that way. If the situation in Western Australia developed to that serious degree, and that sort of action was considered necessary, this Government would take more positive action to get rid of the pest. Perhaps it would not be as drastic as that taken in South Australia.

The member for Mundaring suggested that local authorities would support the scheme if they were consulted and brought in to assist in its operation. He asked whether any of the local authorities had been consulted in this matter before the introduction of the Bill.

I might mention at this point that the Bill has been brought forward because a number of the committees are in financial difficulties and they want the charges to be increased. This move was made to give them some immediate assistance to enable them to carry on with the schemes which are already in existence, and if any other areas are thinking of starting schemes the amendment will give them greater latitude in imposing charges and provide more money to finance the schemes.

Mr H. D. Evans: Why have you on that side changed your minds?

Mr McPHARLIN: What does the honourable member mean?

Mr H. D. Evans: When you were in Opposition you were all for the department taking it over lock, stock, and barrel. "This is where the responsibility should lie"; that was the cry. Now you are increasing the charges.

Mr McPHARLIN: This measure is designed to enable the committees operating to increase their charges so that the

schemes may continue; and if anyone else wants to start a scheme the amendment will give more latitude.

Mr H. D. Evans: You are propagating the inefficiency of the present system.

Mr McPHARLIN: That is not to say if a serious situation developed the Government would not institute and implement a more comprehensive scheme.

Mr H. D. Evans: Are you happy with the situation now?

Mr McPHARLIN: I am not completely satisfied with the situation but, should it become so serious that there is need for a comprehensive scheme the Government will certainly give the matter consideration.

Mr H. D. Evans: But there has to be a crisis first?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! There are too many members interjecting at the one time.

Mr McPHARLIN: The scheme mentioned by the member for Morley was brought to my notice by a group of people who came to see me in my office. They mentioned the problem which exists. We took note of what the problem was and the matter has not been just cast aside, as suggested by the member for Morley, but has been taken into consideration. The Government may in the future design a scheme—perhaps a scheme such as that mentioned by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, with local authorities contributing as they do to the control of other flies, Argentine ants, and so on. If necessary, consideration will be given to such a scheme.

Mr H. D. Evans: Do you intend to do anything about it?

Mr A. R. Tonkin: We want action, not notes.

Mr McPHARLIN: We will give the Opposition action if it becomes necessary. In the three years members on the other side were in office, I did not see much action.

Mr A. R. Tonkin: The Opposition killed the Bill.

Mr Rushton: You killed it yourself. You were defeated on the freeway.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Agriculture.

Mr H. D. Evans: Put up the fees and blame the Commonwealth.

Mr McPHARLIN: The Government is not unmindful of the seriousness of the situation. We will keep a very close watch on it as it develops from now, and if it becomes necessary for a more positive comprehensive scheme to be introduced I can assure members the Government will give very serious consideration to it.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

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

Clauses 1 to 4 put and passed.

Clause 5: Schedule added—

Mr MOILER: As indicated during the second reading debate, I wish to move an amendment to clause 5. I propose that the 16 various charges be deleted and that the following be substituted—

			\$
1-6	....	....	9.00
7-20	....	....	15.00
21-50	....	....	18.00
51-100	....	....	20.00

The CHAIRMAN: Does the honourable member have the amendment in writing?

Mr MOILER: No.

The CHAIRMAN: I have asked that amendments of a complicated nature be handed in in writing.

Mr MOILER: I do not consider it to be complicated. It merely means deleting those figures and substituting others.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I can accept only one amendment at a time, so I ask the honourable member to move the first amendment.

Mr MOILER: I apologise for the inconvenience I may have caused. I move an amendment—

Delete from the schedule the following passage—

Plants				Maximum Charge
				\$
1	....	....	....	4.00
2	....	....	....	5.00
3	....	....	....	6.00
4	....	....	....	7.00
5	....	....	....	8.00
6	....	....	....	9.00

Mr McPHARLIN: The honourable member has moved an amendment without giving me prior notice of what he had in mind. I do not think the amendment is necessary. The schedule as printed was drawn up in order to make it easy for a committee to calculate its charges and I am not prepared to accept an amendment to it.

Mr H. D. EVANS: I support the amendment moved by the member for Mundaring. Separate charges are listed for up to 10 trees, and for above 10 the numbers are grouped. Why is the line of distinction drawn at 10? If the numbers of plants were grouped as suggested by the member for Mundaring, there would be fewer charges and calculations would be easier to make.

This would effect a saving in recording costs and improve the overall efficiency of the scheme. It seems to me to be a much simpler operation and to fit in with the

rationale of the scheme. Perhaps if the Minister wishes to consider this point he could report progress and it could be discussed at a later date.

Mr MOILER: I apologise to the Minister for not giving prior notice of the amendment. The schedule proposes that for six plants an owner could be charged a maximum of \$9. The amendment would mean that for one to six plants an owner could be charged a maximum of \$9. It must be borne in mind that the committee has the discretion to charge what it likes up to that amount. I have suggested this particular grouping to save running costs. If the schedule contains 16 different groupings, the committees could be approached by an owner saying that one tree has died or that something else has happened. However, if we provide for a bigger range within the groupings, there will be less book work and an undoubted saving to the committees. In view of the past comments of the Minister for Agriculture, I feel he should look at this suggestion.

Mr McPHARLIN: The application of the charges in the schedule is a matter of simple arithmetic. I cannot see that it could be as involved as members opposite have suggested. I feel the Opposition is trying to be a little difficult and to prolong the debate on this measure. I am not prepared to accept the amendment.

Mr H. D. EVANS: I would like to correct the Minister when he states that the Opposition is being pedantic. We are quite detached from the operation of the scheme as we sit here tonight. Certainly the schedule is accurate, clearcut, and well presented. However, when the operators visit the various houses they encounter frequent disputes as to the number of trees involved, etc. I am sure the member for Mundaring is attempting to obviate the potential for abrasive situations. I am sure his amendment would achieve this.

Mr MOILER: I agree with the Minister that any committee running a baiting scheme could calculate charges according to the schedule, but that is not the point. If a person owns one tree and a committee renders an account for more trees, it will contravene the legislation. Charges will have to be calculated according to the schedule and it would be much easier for the committees to work on the system I have suggested. If the Minister does not agree with my suggestion he could report progress and check this matter with representatives of some of the committees.

Disputes could arise when an owner is charged for three trees when in fact two of these trees have died over the course of 12 months. Much unnecessary correspondence could pile up in such instances.

Mr McPHARLIN: The Opposition is raising a difficulty—

Mr H. D. EVANS: Common sense!

Mr McPHARLIN:—about a minor matter. I am not prepared to accept the amendment.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

TOWN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 15th August.

MR TAYLOR (Cockburn) [10.59 p.m.]: This is not a lengthy measure; it seeks to amend the parent Act in three ways only. The Opposition has no objection to two of the amendments because I understand that these particular matters were looked at during the term of office of the former Minister for Town Planning, and similar legislation was envisaged by the Tonkin Government.

However, we are not so happy about the third amendment. I have taken the opportunity to hand to the Clerks and to the Minister—regrettably at short notice—a copy of our proposed amendments.

Very briefly, clause 5 refers to vesting of land verges where roads may be widened, and where land may be taken or purchased from proprietors and become available for the widening of those roads. We have no objection to that provision, particularly as the Minister has explained—and it was known to us—that the matter has been discussed not only with his department, but with the Commissioner of Titles and other interested bodies.

The second provision to which we have no objection is the correction of a minor technical error; the substitution of the expression “(f)” for the expression “(e)”, which was missed in the printing of the Act.

It is the third matter to which we have some objection. I refer to clause 3, which provides for increasing the number of members of the Town Planning Board from three to four. On the face of it this is a very simple amendment, and one would expect little opposition to it. Two reasons are given for the amendment: firstly that it was requested by the Local Government Association and, secondly, that the additional member will allow more readily the gathering of a quorum. I think the second point is valid and deserves examination; however, I think something is wrong with the proposed method of appointing the fourth member and, in a sense, in the area from which it is suggested that member should come.

It is interesting to note that the Town Planning Board has had only three members since its inception in 1928 when the Act came into being. For 46 years the

Town Planning Board has been able to get by with a chairman, who is the Commissioner of Town Planning, and three members. I am not a Conservative, but having stood the test of time for 46 years there should appear to be some real need before a change is made. If one looks to the reasons for this composition of only three members, one needs to look not so much to the debates at the time, but to the report of a Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly in 1928 which considered the Town Planning and Development Bill. That Select Committee called witnesses and, as a result of the evidence presented to it, recommended the size of the Town Planning Board.

A number of suggestions were put to the Select Committee. As a matter of fact, the Perth City Council suggested that two additional members should come from the general area of local government, one to represent councils and one to represent road boards. A Perth City councillor suggested that five members should come from local government; and that, of course, would have given local government a majority on the board because we would have had four ordinary members and five from local authorities. However, the consensus of opinion of those who appeared before the Select Committee was that the board should be a board small in numbers and that it should be composed of people who were sufficiently technically qualified to be able to adjudicate on the propositions put forward by the Commissioner of Town Planning. The various members suggested were, as the parent Act still shows, an architect, an engineer—which was amended by the Parliament at that time to "an engineer or surveyor"—and a person with some knowledge of business affairs likely to be considered by the Town Planning Board.

As I said, that membership has stood the test of time for 46 years. The Minister gave two reasons why it should be increased, and as mentioned they deserve examination. The second reason is that members would make the gathering of a quorum less difficult, and there is some credence in that.

Mr Rushton: Three would make a quorum.

Mr TAYLOR: Yes, there will be four members, but three will make a quorum. Bear in mind that the present three members are paid only for their expenses at the moment and do not receive a salary; so the second reason given by the Minister has some value. The Opposition, although it cannot understand completely why this is necessary, is prepared to say that maybe a need exists for an extra member. Therefore, the quantum is acceptable to us.

However, the other reason given by the Minister—that is, the extra member is to be appointed as a result of a request from the Local Government Association—does indeed need examination.

Mr Nanovich: You haven't got any confidence in local government if you say that.

Mr TAYLOR: On the contrary, the member for Toodyay will see from my proposed amendment that local government has all the protection it needs, and we are not sure it needs more. The purpose of the parent Act, as a result of the findings of the Select Committee, was that those on the board should be people with some expertise who could give a qualified decision on propositions put before them. Not one was to be a representative of a vested interest; each one was to adopt an impartial and broad view in respect of whatever propositions were put forward.

We see that the Minister—and I am not sure whether or not he did this deliberately, but certainly it was not shown in his notes—chose firstly to appoint the fourth member from local government; and, secondly, to appoint that additional member in a particular way, a way with which members of this Chamber are not unfamiliar because it has happened in other areas. In this instance the member is to be appointed by selection by the Minister from a panel of three names to be submitted by the Local Government Association.

Here lies the objection of the Opposition: If we have a Town Planning Board which has on it certain experts—for want of a better term—who can adopt a broad view on town planning matters, and if those people have no vested interests and are not selected because they have a vested interest but because of their general knowledge, then it would appear the original reasons for the selection of members of the board are to be changed, in that we are now to have a member with a vested interest. The additional member is to be appointed as the representative, spokesman, or watchdog of the Local Government Association; he will owe his membership on the board to selection by that association. He will not be on the board as a result of his general knowledge of local government affairs or to look after the interests of local government, generally.

Mr Nanovich: But he comes with a fair amount of practical experience of representing the people in local government; that is the point.

Mr TAYLOR: Regrettably the member for Toodyay has not a copy of my amendment, and I am to blame for that. For his benefit I point out the amendment states that the new member should be a person having knowledge of and experience in matters pertaining to local government. I ask the member if that would be satisfactory to him.

Mr Nanovich: No, not at this stage.

Mr TAYLOR: Then I will hear his reasons later, and not during my speech. If the new member is selected from a panel

of three names submitted by the Local Government Association, presumably he would have to justify his position on the Town Planning Board to the Local Government Association and its members. He would not be on the board to look after the interests of local governments, generally; but because he is to be one of the three persons nominated by the Local Government Association, he must look after its interests. We are happy that someone from local government should be on the Town Planning Board. In fact, until very recently two people associated with planning boards were from local government. One is Mr White, who was until recently the Secretary of the Local Government Association; and the other is Mr Hawkins who was appointed by the Minister for Local Government. That gave local government two members on planning boards.

Mr Nanovich: The reasons for that were entirely different.

Mr TAYLOR: We will hear the honourable member's speech in a moment. As I said, that gave local government two members on planning boards. There is value in this.

However, neither of those members had allegiance to local government; they were there as independent people who gave opinions as they saw fit and were not beholden for their appointment directly or indirectly to the Local Government Association. In fact, if this proposition goes through, and if it is a matter of the selection of a member from a panel of three names given to the Minister by the Local Government Association, two things could result. One is that people such as Mr White, Mr Hawkins—who no longer is a member of a local governing authority—and Sir Thomas Wardle, all of whom have some qualifications and experience in this field probably would not be considered. While these people may not necessarily be excluded from any Local Government Association list, I suggest that the pressure would be there to nominate the panel of three from representatives of local government and that there would be pressure on local government itself to nominate people currently serving on local government authorities and this could be to the detriment of others who may give good value. In the amendment proposed by the Opposition, such people as Mr White, Sir Thomas Wardle, and Mr Hawkins could be nominated by the Minister without their having to go through a ballot among Local Government Association members.

The second point of course is that not all local authorities are members of the Local Government Association. I have endeavoured very quickly to check this point and I may not be completely correct but I understand that the City of Perth and the City of Fremantle are currently

not members of the Local Government Association. I think the City of Stirling is a member.

Mr Clarko: Due to me, thank you.

Mr TAYLOR: The member for Karrinyup may take the credit or the blame, whichever is appropriate. The City of Stirling for some six or seven years was not a member of the Local Government Association. In fact, as I recall it, it was the City of Stirling which broke away in the first place. I am not sure whether the member for Karrinyup was responsible for that.

Mr Clarko: I take the credit for getting it back in.

Mr TAYLOR: The point remains that for at least a seven-year period two of the largest and three of the financially strongest local authorities in the metropolitan area—Perth, Fremantle, and Stirling—were not members of the Local Government Association.

Mr Clarko: I think Melville is not a member.

Mr TAYLOR: Certainly, Fremantle and Perth are not members of the Local Government Association at the moment. Those two authorities would have no part in nominating names to submit to the Minister. Although there is nothing against the nominating of a councillor from Perth or Fremantle for this panel of three which is to go to the Minister, again the possibilities are not strong that someone will nominate a person from one of these two councils. The Opposition takes the point of view that although the Minister gave no real reasons for increasing the number of the board to four, other than the need for assisting a quorum and the request from the Local Government Association, after 46 years of it being seen to work, we concede the proposal to increase the number to four.

I would add one point before ending my remarks: There is also the worry that if this amendment goes through in its present form, and if a panel of three local government members is to be submitted to the Minister and he is to select one, there could well be an approach from the Institute of Architects for the right, also, to submit a list of their members, one to be similarly selected. There is already a provision that an architect shall be a member of the board; why should he not be one of three names submitted by the Institute of Architects? They would have just as much right, surely, to ask for that. The same could be said of the Institution of Engineers and the body representing the surveyors; they could also request the right to nominate a panel of three names to submit to the Minister. If it is to be a person of some business experience, as the parent Act now specifies, why should not the Chamber of Commerce or some such body submit a panel of names to the Minister?

Mr Clarko: But on education authorities you always supported the appointment of a union representative, rather than a teacher.

Mr TAYLOR: I do not see the relevance.

Mr Clarko: It is the same principle, is it not?

Mr TAYLOR: No, I do not see the relevance. However, I am not putting the pros and cons of the matter; I am merely making an observation. If the Minister wants to vary the authority in a particular way and if he decides to add a fourth member to the board and will select him from a group of three names, he will be subjected to pressure. I do not say whether I agree with that principle; I do not have to. What I am putting to the Minister is that he could well get pressure from those whose names appear on the list.

Mr Clarko: I think your practice was much the same in regard to education.

Mr TAYLOR: If it has relevance, perhaps the member can stand and draw our attention to it; I make no judgment here on the point at all.

In summation there is no objection to a fourth member or to the method of his appointment. There is no objection to his being someone from local government but, as I say, our amendment will allow the Minister to appoint whoever he may wish. In fact, it would still allow him to ask the Local Government Association to submit a list of three names from which he would select one name. But it does not oblige him to do it. I think it would be unwise for the Minister to put into the Act the provision that he must ask the Local Government Association for a list of three names. We think that is not good for the Bill and it could cause the Minister more worries than help. With those words we support generally the provisions of the Bill and I give notice of amendments consequential on my remarks.

MR RUSHTON (Dale—Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning) [11.06 p.m.]: Firstly, I should like to thank the member for Cockburn for his contribution to this debate. I appreciate the amount of research—some of it accurate and some not so accurate—he has applied to this rather minor amendment.

Mr Taylor: I felt that in your first effort some credit should be given to you.

Mr RUSHTON: Although the amendment is minor in some ways, it is quite important in others. I note that the amendment relating to road widening has been accepted, as has the amendment attending to incorrect drafting of the past and, therefore, I will not direct any remarks to those two issues.

In regard to the amendment relating to the increase in the membership of the Town Planning Board, I point out firstly that, as the member for Cockburn rightly

said, it will involve a request of the Local Government Association, representing 24 authorities in the metropolitan region. The association does not represent country areas; this could be a flaw in the legislation if the honourable member cared to project his arguments to that extent. Certainly, the legislation is related to areas where most of the town planning issues arise. However, this could be the subject of future consideration.

This proposal has the support of the Town Planning Board. It recognises that its task has grown over the period and that its members, who serve in other capacities, carry a very heavy workload. Anybody who is aware of the volume they handle each Tuesday afternoon would realise that while we may have improved the administrative practices in this area, backed up by supporting staff, it still would require only one person to be missing because of his busy schedule for the number of the board to be down to a bare quorum. So, I accept with pleasure the approval of the member for Cockburn, on behalf of the Opposition; I think that such an amendment is most necessary.

Let us return to the question of how the fourth member will be appointed. Firstly, I point out to the member for Cockburn that Mr Hawkins is the Chairman of the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority.

Mr Nanovich: That is what I was trying to tell him.

Mr Taylor: My apologies to the Minister; I will listen more attentively in future.

Mr RUSHTON: The Commissioner of Town Planning, of course, is chairman of the board. Messrs Morgan and Fitzhardinge are two other members, and Mr White is the fourth member. It is now suggested that the appointment of another member will be of assistance. I do not wish to defend the system, because it is a time-honoured one—the appointees being local government representatives—and it has been used for a long time.

The member for Cockburn acknowledged that the amendment came to me with a great deal of commendation. I can indicate that the method proposed is the method used to appoint local government members to the MRPA. As the honourable member knows there are four local government groups represented on that authority.

Mr Taylor: It is not time-honoured in the sense of this Bill, and the second point is that it does not preclude the Minister from making an appointment anyway; he can still do this under our amendment, but it would not be obligatory.

Mr RUSHTON: I will give the honourable member the reasons for my supporting my own decision and rejecting his. Briefly, that is only one of the reasons. The other one is that in regard to Swan River conservation local government appointments

to the river governing body have been made in the same way. Having served on the Local Government Association myself I appreciate the reason it is done in that way. The reason is that all member bodies have a say. This suggestion comes from 24 member bodies, because two are not members. I am endeavouring to encourage the other two to join, because it will be of advantage to local government to have all local authorities become members of the Local Government Association and speak with one voice.

I have already made a suggestion to the Perth City Council that it should join, and I know it is getting closer to making that vital decision. Also, I hope, when I visit the City of Fremantle, I can put that proposition to that authority, but that is something for the future. I would suggest, however, that this system of representation is purely for the appointment of a person representing local government. He would not have a vested interest in the sense that he does not have to report back to the Local Government Association. Sometimes this has been an issue but it is well recognised that this method of selection and representation has been used to ensure that local government has a direct say in the appointments.

However there is no vested interest, allegiance, or direction which requires that person to report back to the Local Government Association. So I think in this respect the Minister's objections are removed.

Mr Taylor: Thank you for the title.

Mr RUSHTON: I am well versed in this system because I have been through it myself and I know how the system works. Therefore I support this amendment for no other reason than I have seen the system work.

Another point that is worth bearing in mind is that the appointee should have a wide knowledge of the town planning aspects of local government and the method we suggest supports that contention. If we supported the suggestion put forward by the member for Cockburn the appointee could be a person who had not served in local government for 30 years.

Mr Taylor: That person would still be the one the Minister selected.

Mr RUSHTON: The appointee may be a person not acceptable to local government in the current scene. It is my desire that local government should be represented on the Town Planning Board purely for the purpose of ensuring that the members of that board have a knowledge of local government. The object is not to have someone who will report back to the Local Government Association on the activities of the Town Planning Board. The object is to have someone appointed who is currently serving in local government and who will ensure that the other members of the

board will give consideration to those aspects of local government which are necessarily related to town planning matters. Precisely, those are the reasons for this amendment.

Therefore I do not think there is any need for me to speak at great length on this point. Without doubt I have put forward sound reasons for this appointment, and I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Thompson) in the Chair; Mr Rushton (Minister for Urban Development and Town Planning) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.

Clause 3: Section 4 amended—

Mr TAYLOR: In noting the comments of the Minister on the amendments which I will move, I ask your guidance, Mr Chairman, in view of the fact that the amendment is not on the notice paper, whether I should read it for the information of members.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, I would ask you to read the amendment, before speaking to it.

Mr TAYLOR: I move an amendment—
Page 2, lines 11 to 17—Delete subparagraph (ii).

If this amendment is agreed to I intend to move an amendment to insert in lieu—

(ii) by deleting the passage from and including the passage "such members being" in line 5 down to and including the passage "by the Board" in line 7 and substituting—
such members being—

- (a) an architect;
- (b) an engineer or a surveyor;
- (c) a person having knowledge of and experience in matters appertaining to local government and—
- (d) a person appointed by reason of his qualification in business matters to be dealt with by the Board.

I think the Minister and I were on all fours in regard to all points but one. Certainly the key to the issue seems to be the method of selection of Local Government Association representation on the Town Planning Board. We agree there should be a member representing local government interests. There is no question of local government interests being excluded or whether or not it should have an interest. We agree on that. The amendment relates solely to the method of selection.

Despite what the Minister has said in his remarks, I would suggest to him, as a result of experience, that those who are

selected from a panel of names submitted to the Minister for approval could, in effect, have a vested interest. Persons representing local government are appointed to other bodies such as the Swan River Conservation Board, and some members that I can recall are elected in this way. From experience I suggest that these people are very watchful in regard to where their support emanates in the ensuing period when people have to be nominated again for selection for the panel of names submitted to the Minister.

Despite what may be said, they are like members of Parliament. They know that at the end of their term they will be up for selection at the convention, general meeting, or other gatherings. For that reason they have to be watchful of the source of their support.

We agree there is no inhibiting factor; and that there should be a representative of local government. We are suggesting to the Minister that he should have greater freedom in his selection. We suggest he could still make that appointment by asking the Local Government Association to submit a panel of three names, from which he could select one. By this method the Minister would not be obligated. As the Bill stands, the Minister is obligated to ask the Local Government Association to submit three names. We suggest the Minister could make the appointment with greater freedom. The important aspect is that our amendment is in conformity with the selection of the present three members, and with the parent Act. It would not intrude a new method of selection.

Mr Nanovich: What happens to a member who has a vested interest somewhere else? You are criticising the local government representation because of vested interest.

Mr TAYLOR: I am not.

Mr Nanovich: He could have a vested interest elsewhere, and still be included in the board.

Mr TAYLOR: The Minister should have full power to appoint whom he wants.

The CHAIRMAN: The member will address the Chair. The member for Toodyay will have an opportunity to make his point.

Mr TAYLOR: I suggest the Minister is always in a better position to assess the impartiality, the merits, and the qualifications of the member he selects, than is a body which through a vote puts forward a panel of three names. I suggest the Minister should take into consideration his position in the future, because he might want somebody with special qualifications to fill this appointment. I have instanced some people who might be more suitable to him and to the sections over which the Town Planning Authority has control. We do not question the ability of local government to handle

the method of selection. This is not a major amendment; it merely seeks to bring the Bill into line with the Act.

Mr RUSHTON: The proposition put forward by the honourable member is unacceptable. I have already canvassed the reasons for the provision in the clause. The method proposed in the clause will allow local government to participate in the appointment. It has the objective of encouraging and strengthening local authorities, by giving them an opportunity to participate.

Mr Taylor: So will this amendment.

Mr RUSHTON: It will allow other things to take place.

Mr Taylor: Such as?

Mr RUSHTON: I accept the way that local government is handling its responsibilities, and I have no fear of the method we are putting forward. It acknowledges the responsibility of local government, and gives local authorities a say without their having to submit the name of a person. A person with a vested interest in many areas of local government is not appointed.

Mr Taylor: For a start they will not represent Fremantle or the City of Perth.

Mr RUSHTON: I appreciate the presentation of this case by the member for Cockburn, but I think the viewpoint which I have put forward is preferred by the Government.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4 and 5 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 11.26 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 28th August, 1974

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

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS ROYAL COMMISSION

Tabling of Report

THE HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central—Minister for Community Welfare) [4.32 p.m.]: I have here for tabling the report of the Aboriginal Affairs Royal Commission. A copy of the report will be made available immediately at the Western Australian State Library for public examination.