

think he should be protected, and a restriction placed on the big fellow to prevent him from handling oysters.

This seems reasonable. There would appear to be quite a good little business in some of the prawn trawling areas in catching and bagging fish for bait. As a sideline this would seem a reasonable proposition, and we might prohibit a certain person from engaging in this in order to provide a lucrative business to someone who is prepared to collect these fish. This provision would be used intelligently to protect and look after the industry.

The honourable member must bear in mind that our fishermen in Western Australia are comparatively well off. This is not the world pattern. The world pattern is that fishermen live at a subsistence level. This is borne out by the fact that in Canada 25,000 people are taking 30,000,000 lb. of lobster, whereas in Western Australia 2,500 fishermen are taking 21,000,000 lb. of lobster. This is a pattern we want to retain, and we believe our fishermen should get this protection.

Section 35A of the principal Act deals with another question the honourable member raised. "Processing," however, is clearly defined in part IIIB of the principal Act, as follows:—

"processing", in relation to fish, includes cutting up, breaking up, filleting, preparing, packing, freezing, canning, preserving or otherwise treating in any manner whatever.

I am aware of the problem at Cape Leschenault. Again, the honourable member was right when he said that we are coping with our crayfish. The industry seems reasonably well divided, though, of course, everyone no doubt seems to want a little bit more. I can see no purpose in adding capital investment—particularly shore-based investment—to the industry, and it would take a lot of persuading to convince anyone holding the position I occupy at the moment that we should have more processing plants.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Representatives of all the metropolitan processing plants call in to Cape Leschenault. This would mean that the local processors would go out of production.

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: That is so.

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.

*House adjourned at 9.28 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 9th October, 1968

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

### QUESTIONS (28): ON NOTICE

#### LAND AT BALCATTa

##### *Zoning and Subdivision*

- 1 Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister representing the Minister for Town Planning:

Reference questions the 19th September and the 2nd October, 1968, regarding land zoned residential in an area bounded by North Beach Road and Cedric and George Streets, Balcatta—

- (1) Will he state definitely whether there is at present any application before any authority to zone portion of the area for hotel purposes?
- (2) If so, what stage has been reached in the determination of the matter?
- (3) If not, does this mean the the question has been finally resolved?
- (4) If the reply to (3) is "No," then what is the position?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

- (1) and (2) As previously stated, there is no application before the Town Planning Department or Town Planning Board. In response to the honourable member's further question, I have had inquiries made and understand that an application has been made to the Perth Shire by the Swan Brewery for rezoning for hotel purposes in the area described. It rests with the Perth Shire to decide whether it will amend its by-laws.
- (3) and (4) No. As stated in my reply to the honourable member on the 19th September, the final resolution of any such application is subject to the processes detailed in the Town Planning and Development Act, Town Planning Regulations, and the Local Government Act.

#### RURAL LAND

##### *Taxation Exemption*

2. Mr. DUNN asked the Premier:

- (1) Because of the high values applicable to metropolitan land, has any consideration been given by the

Government to exempting owners of land zoned "rural" in the metropolitan region plan area from paying—

- (a) vermin tax;
- (b) noxious weed tax?
- (2) Is any allowance made for owners of land zoned as "rural" in the M.R.P.A. scheme but which is of no practical use for rural purposes?
- (3) If these matters have not been previously considered, would he investigate them with a view to making a suitable and equitable arrangement?

Mr. BRAND replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) No.
- (3) As some of this land could harbour vermin and noxious weeds there appears to be little justification for special treatment.

#### TOWN PLANNING

##### *Kenilworth Street: Zoning*

3. Mr. HARMAN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Town Planning:

Will he table the papers dealing with the zoning of 141 Kenilworth Street, Maylands?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

There are no papers dealing with the zoning of 141 Kenilworth Street, Maylands.

##### *Gosnells: Extension of Urban Area*

4. Mr. BATEMAN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Town Planning:

In view of the fact that a dairy in Gosnells Road, Gosnells, has been closed by the Milk Board and the owner forced to sell his herd, will he give consideration to extending the urban area from Alcock Street to Dellar Road, Gosnells?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

The Minister cannot initiate the extension of urban zoning. This must be done by the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority or a local authority in accordance with the provisions of the relevant legislation.

#### SEWERAGE

##### *Kenilworth Street*

5. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Is it a fact that the installation of new soak wells or some such

activity is at present being undertaken in respect of a commission dwelling at 29 Kenilworth Street, Maylands?

- (2) What is the total cost of the work being undertaken?
- (3) Is it a fact that in 1952 a deep sewer main was constructed passing the dwelling?
- (4) Why has not the dwelling been connected to the sewer, in lieu of the work mentioned above?
- (5) What would be the cost of such connection?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) See (5).
- (3) Yes.
- (4) As a result of activity referred to in (1) and reported inefficiency of soak well operations, this property will be connected to the sewer.
- (5) Subject to tender.

#### LOTTERIES COMMISSION

##### *Unclaimed Prize Money*

6. Mr. CASH asked the Chief Secretary:

- (1) What action is taken by the Lotteries Commission to locate the winners of unclaimed prize money?
- (2) What is the total amount of prize money now listed as unclaimed?
- (3) From which lottery consultations are there 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th prizes still unclaimed, and what are the details?
- (4) What were the names and addresses of the persons, or the names of the syndicates, on the butts of the prize winning tickets listed in (3)?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

- (1) Approximately four weeks after the drawing of each consultation unclaimed prize winners are notified where possible.
- (2) Under its regulations the commission's liability to pay moneys being unclaimed is extinguished after seven years. The amount of unclaimed prize money listed as available for payment from lotteries conducted during the past seven years is \$392,922. Since the inception of the Lotteries Commission, the total amount of prize money listed as unclaimed is \$772,910.

## (3) and (4) For the past seven years—

Consultation Ticket No.	No.	£	
1352	9848	100	Blank Butt
1354	34321	100	Ah Yook
1377	89254	250	My Turn
1388	47043	100	Indecipherable
1476	50893	100	Last Day, FHT Building
1482	8914	3,000	E. Asher?
1501	85491	500	8BC, A.M.P.
1534	83149	250	S.O.S.
1537	1527	100	Blank Butt
1542	34452	500	?? Perth
1550	5904	500	TA
1607	88980	100	Indecipherable
1636	18609	500	Last Chance, 181 Genge Street, Cannington
1649	22434	250	Kennedy, Bruce Rock
1680	13410	100	Blank Butt
1697	52407	500	M. Pierone Demosi, Moora
1726	11917	500	Roy
		\$	
40	3402	500	Tax
69	31731	1,000	Merry Christmas, Manjimup
83	99701	200	Just \$1,000
119	95031	6,000	Lucky Chinaman's Dream
145	20160	500	Excitement 4 + 1 = 5, Bicton
150	85836	200	Raven
157	81438	200	R0
166	1670	200	Indecipherable
171	84629	1,000	Blank Butt
180	518	200	42
182	80872	1,000	R. Myles
197	58166	500	PRS, Bassendean
204	83102	200	Lucky Cent
		£	
129 (Sa.)	44010	500	Easter Greetings Pop
Hospital Special		\$	
16	79245	1,000	Ours
Maroons Foot-ball Special	60402	1,000	Blank Butt

## CATTLE IN THE NORTH-WEST

*Pleuro-pneumonia Line*

## 7. Mr. BICKERTON asked the Minister for Agriculture:

Will he advise when a reply can be expected to my letter of the 17th July, 1968, concerning the pleuro-pneumonia line for cattle in the north-west?

## Mr. NALDER replied:

Consideration is still being given to the suggestion contained in the letter of the 17th July, referred to by the honourable member.

Relocation of the pleuro line cannot be agreed to at this stage. However conditions covering the limited movement of cattle south of the pleuro line are currently being developed. An early announcement may be expected.

## UNSIGHTLY FENCES

*Controlling Legislation*

## 8. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government:

Is it intended during the session this year to introduce legislation for the purpose of empowering local authorities to control unsightly fences?

## Mr. NALDER replied:

Amending legislation is proposed. If not presented this half of the session, it will be presented in the second half.

## BREATHALYSER TESTS

*Convictions*

## 9. Mr. BICKERTON asked the Minister for Police:

- (1) How many convictions have been recorded as a result of breathalyser tests?
- (2) Of the recorded convictions, how many have been as a result of tests taken after an accident has occurred?
- (3) How many convictions have been recorded as a result of tests taken where no accident has occurred?

## Mr. CRAIG replied:

- (1) From the 1st January, 1968, to the 30th September, 1968—476.
- (2) This information is not tabulated, but from January to September, of a total of 589 breathalyser tests taken in the metropolitan area, 203 or 34.5 per cent. were in connection with traffic accidents. This indicates that a little more than one-third of all convictions would have reference to traffic accidents.
- (3) On the same basis, it would indicate that approximately two-thirds of convictions would not be connected with traffic accidents.

## PORT AT DAMPIER

*Regulations*

## 10. Mr. BICKERTON asked the Minister for the North-West:

Will he advise when it can be expected that the regulations or by-laws governing the Dampier area will be tabled in accordance with the Iron Ore (Hamersley Range) Agreement Act?

## Mr. COURT replied:

This matter is still under discussion. A definite date cannot be stated at this juncture.

## RESIDENTIAL LAND, KALGOORLIE

*Sale*

## 11. Mr. T. D. EVANS asked the Minister for Lands:

Is he able to advise the likely or expected date when available residential lots in the Lamington area of Kalgoorlie will be auctioned?

## Mr. BOVELL replied:

The Lands Department is currently taking action to release for sale about 50 residential lots in Kalgoorlie and Boulder and of these, several are located in the Lamington area.

Every effort is being made to have the auction conducted during November, 1968.

**DONNYBROOK HIGH SCHOOL***Extensions: P. & C. Concern*

12. Mr. KITNEY asked the Minister for Education:

What consideration has his department given to the concern expressed by the Donnybrook Parents and Citizens' Association on the following matters relating to the junior high school:—

- (a) The poor siting of the proposed new manual training centre;
- (b) the failure of the department to make adequate extensions at this school to an overall plan including a manual training centre, staff room, and library; and
- (c) that extensions should not encroach on existing limited playing field space?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

The department has not received any communication from the Donnybrook Parents and Citizens' Association expressing such concern.

- (a) The proposed new manual arts centre is designed as part of a new wing of the school. The siting is not considered to be unsatisfactory.
- (b) The manual arts centre is planned, but requests were only received for other facilities in April, 1968. Other pressing priorities prevent provision of these in the present building programme.
- (c) The extensions do not encroach on to playing fields.

**KALAMUNDA HIGH SCHOOL***Upgrading*

13. Mr. DUNN asked the Minister for Education:

As the population of the Kalamunda Shire is increasing very rapidly, could he advise—

- (a) The latest position regarding the upgrading of the Kalamunda High School?
- (b) If there is any estimated time when the school will become a five-year high school?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

- (a) The Kalamunda High School will not be classified as a senior high school in 1969.
- (b) The possible upgrading will be reconsidered after the receipt of statistical returns early in 1969.

**RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM***Extension to Armadale*

14. Mr. RUSHTON asked the Minister for Railways:

- (1) With the opening of the very attractive and effective Midland rail and road passenger terminal, will the department now introduce a feasibility study for a rapid co-ordinated transport (rail and bus) service for the Perth-Armadale and adjacent areas?
- (2) When is it estimated a firm decision will be taken to introduce a rapid transport service on the Armadale route?

Mr. O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) and (2) Some consideration has already been given to this proposal.

A decision will be taken in the light of transport requirements in this area and on experience gained from the co-ordinated system at Midland.

**RAILWAYS***Concession Fares for School Children*

15. Mr. RUSHTON asked the Minister for Railways:

With the necessity of educating people to make more use of public transport in the metropolitan area—

- (1) Will the department introduce a fare charge comparable with that provided by the Metropolitan Transport Trust for school children?
- (2) If "No," why is the department of this opinion?

Mr. O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) The Railways Department provides monthly, quarterly, or term tickets for children, travelling to or from school, at fares comparable with those charged by the M.T.T. In addition, reduced fares are available at all times to children under 15 years of age.
- (2) Answered by (1).

*Armadale-Kelmscott Area: Provision of Siding and Pedestrian Crossover*

16. Mr. RUSHTON asked the Minister for Railways:

With the completion of large numbers of homes between Armadale

and Kelmscott and letting of contract to build a new primary school to commence February, 1969, will the department—

- (a) provide a siding for commuters at a suitable point between these two towns;
- (b) construct a crossover for pedestrians at this central point to enable children from west of the railway to attend the new school?

Mr. O'CONNOR replied:

- (a) The department is aware of the development taking place in this area but provision of a stopping place between Armadale and Kelmscott will be dependent on resolution of the question of a co-ordinated rail and road transport system for the district as a whole.
- (b) I will arrange for this request to be examined.

### CRAYFISH BAIT

#### *Netting*

17. Mr. FLETCHER asked the Minister representing the Minister for Fisheries:

- (1) Adverting to my question of the 19th September last and in particular to his reply to part (5) thereof, will he open closed waters for netting for the brief period that scallies and mulies abound on a seasonal basis in, for example, the area adjacent to Robb Jetty?
- (2) Since regulation size could surely be waived in the case of these otherwise non-commercial fish, why should these fish not be taken for storage as inexpensive but very effective cray bait?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) No. Waters in this area have been closed to net fishing for the benefit of the angling public. The Minister for Fisheries is not prepared to permit net fishermen into these areas for the purpose of catching crayfish bait.
- (2) There is no legal minimum length for scallies. The Minister will examine the necessity of retaining a legal minimum length for mulies with a view to removing this fish from the second schedule.

18. *This question was postponed.*

### SUBSOIL TESTING

#### *Canning Electorate*

19. Mr. BATEMAN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

In view of answers given on the 1st October last re suitability of subsoil in the Lynwood area

and the answer to a question on the 31st July last, will he advise—

- (1) Did the Public Health Department instruct the local authority to carry out subsoil tests?
- (2) If so, what were the dates of these tests and what conclusions were drawn from them?
- (3) Did the results from these tests satisfy the Public Health Department that the land was suitable for high density development?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) and (3) Not applicable. There appears to be some misunderstanding on the part of the honourable member concerning the role of the Public Health Department in this matter.

The normal procedure is for a proposed residential project such as the Lynwood one to be referred by the developer to the Town Planning Board in the first instance. The latter then seeks the comments of relevant Government agencies in regard to their special interests in the proposal; e.g., water supply, roads, power, liquid waste disposal, etc. In the case of the Public Health Department an opinion is sought in regard to general suitability of the land for building purposes and specifically whether septic tank systems would be acceptable. In the case of Lynwood the department advised that some portions of the area were suitable, but that the remainder of the area required to be drained and filled. In short, the department offers its advice in principle and in general terms.

### PENSIONER FLATS

#### *Means Test*

20. Mr. MAY asked the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Will he advise what income criteria is used when assessing eligibility of applicants for pensioner flats?
- (2) In view of the recent increase in pensions, is it anticipated that this criteria will be amended shortly?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Generally, any applicant must be eligible as a "worker" as defined in the State Housing Act. Thus

pensioner couples in the metropolitan area without dependants and where the husband is in receipt of not more than \$50.86 per week would be eligible for pensioner cottage flats. A lone woman pensioner is deemed eligible for a single unit flat where—

- (a) Her weekly income is not more than \$2 above the age pension or its equivalent.
- (b) Her cash or liquid assets do not exceed \$250.
- (c) She does not own or share ownership of residential property.

Allocations of single-unit flats are made on the basis of relative need at the time accommodation becomes available.

- (2) A situation where a pensioner couple would be deemed ineligible because of a pension increase cannot be envisaged. Existing criteria for lone women pensioners allow for pension variations.

#### SCHOOLS IN CLONTARF ELECTORATE

##### *Sewerage*

21. Mr. MAY asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) Will the new Como high school be provided with deep sewerage?
- (2) If so, will this service include the adjacent Koonawarra State School?
- (3) Will the work be completed in time for opening in February, 1969?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The Koonawarra State School is already served.
- (3) Yes.

#### FLINDERS BAY-AUGUSTA AREA

##### *Water Softening Plant*

22. Mr. MAY asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) Is he aware of the inconvenience being occasioned to residents in the Flinders Bay-Augusta area resulting from the hard nature of the local water supply?
- (2) If so, would he kindly give consideration to providing a water softening treatment plant to alleviate the present unsatisfactory situation?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) Any inconvenience can be overcome by the installation of a small commercially manufactured water softening unit by each consumer.
- (2) Consideration has already been given to a request by the honourable member for the district, but the limited number of consumers does not justify the installation of a water softening plant.

#### TRANSPORT CONCESSIONS

##### *Eastern Suburbs*

23. Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Railways:

- (1) Have the Railways Department and the Metropolitan Transport Trust abolished the concession to commuters on their respective services?
- (2) If "Yes," what are the alterations which have taken place as applying to workers in eastern suburbs?
- (3) Are weekly and monthly tickets available on both above systems of transport?

Mr. O'CONNOR replied:

- (1) Assuming that the questions relate to the combined Rail-Metropolitan Transport Trust bus services to points previously served by the Midland-Chidlow, Midland-Koongamia railways, some concessions have been abolished.
- (2) The issue of weekly and 28-day tickets at rail fares and conditions, as well as railway employees' privilege tickets, have been discontinued.  
Single and 28-day tickets at Metropolitan Transport Trust fares now apply on these bus routes similarly to other routes serving the Midland terminal.
- (3) Concessional weekly and monthly tickets are available for rail journeys only. Metropolitan Transport Trust concessional 28-day tickets are available for bus or combined bus and rail travel.

#### TOTALISATOR AGENCY BOARD

##### *Agency at Thornlie*

24. Mr. BATEMAN asked the Minister for Police:

- (1) Has the Totalisator Agency Board purchased land in the Thornlie area with a view to establishing a T.A.B. agency?
- (2) If so, what is the location?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

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

## SERVICE STATIONS

*Ratio per District*

25. Mr. BATEMAN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government:

In connection with the allocation of garages, will he advise—

- (1) What is the area or distance allowed between garages?
- (2) Is there a ration or allotment of garages per district?
- (3) If answers to (1) and (2) are "Yes," who is responsible for the allocation?

Mr. NALDER replied:

- (1) It is assumed that the question refers to petrol pump licenses. Draft Model By-laws (Petrol Pumps) No. 10, which have been adopted by 58 municipal councils, include the following:—

5. (1) The Council shall not issue a licence to a person to install a petrol pump in any place other than such as has been set aside in a Town Planning Scheme made under any Act or by zoning by-laws made under section two hundred and forty-eight of the Act, as a site for a petrol station or petrol pump or to keep a petrol pump installed for the sale of petrol to the public in a street, public place or any place other than such as has been so set aside unless—

- (a) the Minister consents in writing to that place being used as a site for a petrol pump; *et seq.*

6. The Council shall refuse to grant a licence pursuant to these by-laws in any case where, in the opinion of the Council, a sufficient number of petrol pumps are already installed in the district to satisfy the existing reasonable requirements thereof.

Uniform by-laws made under the Road Districts Act and applying to some councils have not yet been repealed. These provide that—

A licence shall not be issued for the installation of the

supply of petrol to the public if there are premises where petrol is sold to the public within a distance of a half mile, measured along the shortest road route; and provided—

- (b) Provided nevertheless that, notwithstanding the provisions of this by-law, the Board may, at its discretion, issue a licence for the installation or use of a petrol pump, tank, cistern, pipe or installations as in this by-law referred to where such distance is less than a half-mile but not less than thirty-four chains.

(2) No.

(3) Answered by (1).

## CASINO AT ROTTNESST

*Establishment*

26. Mr. JAMIESON asked the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Has the Rottneest Island Board given any consideration to the establishment of a casino complex at Parker Point?
- (2) If so, what was the determination?
- (3) If not, will the board investigate this possibility in view of the move to set up a similar complex at Wrest Point in Tasmania, which, besides being a tourist attraction, is expected to be of great assistance to the Tasmanian Treasury?

Mr. BOVELL replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Answered by (1).
- (3) Not at this juncture.

As chairman of the board I would like to say that I believe Rottneest has special attractions which should not be spoiled by a casino. Furthermore, I would not like to encourage gambling on the island.

Mr. Jamieson: There is already a T.A.B. agency.

## INDUSTRIAL WASTE, KWINANA

*Analysis*

27. Mr. TAYLOR asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) His reply to my question on the 18th September last requesting an accurate description of chemical analysis of all materials discharged as waste from the Western Aluminium N.L. refinery, Kwinana, advised in part, "The

remaining 24 per cent. comprises varying percentages of alkalies and alumina." Would he advise—

- (a) is one of the alkalies free caustic soda; if so, approximately what percentage;
  - (b) is sodium aluminate present; if so, approximately what percentage;
  - (c) what other alkalies are present and in what percentages;
  - (d) is the 24 per cent. referred to a water soluble fraction; if not, then approximately what percentage is water soluble?
- (2) Approximately what volume of water used in the refining process, and also as a vehicle to transport the refinery waste, is pumped into the settling beds each 24 hours?

Mr. COURT replied:

- (1) (a) Yes. Approximately 0.7 per cent. of final residue.
  - (b) Yes. Approximately 1.0 per cent. of final residue.
  - (c) Sodium carbonate is also present and comprises 0.2 per cent. of final residue.
  - (d) The 24 per cent. referred to is not primarily water soluble. It is primarily an insoluble sodium aluminium silicate. About 2 per cent. of the final residue is water soluble (see (a) to (c) above).
- (2) (a) Three hundred gallons per minute of new water is used in the process.
- (b) Five thousand gallons per minute is recycled between the plant and the settling beds.

### STIRLING

#### *Use of Name*

28. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Lands:

- (1) In how many cases has the name "Stirling" been used in this State to denote localities, features, or things?
- (2) Will he list the localities where these occur, also the features to which they refer, such as town, suburb, mountain, river, street, and so on?

Mr. BOVELL replied:

- (1) Lands Department records indicate there are 39 instances of the name "Stirling" in this State to denote various localities, features, etc.
- (2) Stirling Range—Named by J. S. Roe, 1835.

Mount Stirling—Leonora. Named by H. S. King.

Mount Stirling — Kellerberrin. Named by R. Dale.

Stirling Peaks—Near Lake Darlot.

Stirling locality—Shire of Capel.

Stirling estate—Shire of Busselton.

Stirling homestead—Kojonup.

Stirling telephone exchange — Kojonup.

Stirling Dam—Shire of Harvey.

Stirling Park—Shire of Swan-Guildford.

Stirling Highway — Metropolitan area.

Stirling electoral district.

Stirling streets, roads, crescents, etc.—Twelve occasions in country townsites in Western Australia. Fifteen occasions in the metropolitan area.

### AIRFORCE TRAINING

#### *Night Flights: Grievance*

MR. JAMIESON (Belmont) [4.52 p.m.]: I have a grievance I wish to air within the State Legislature; namely, aircraft being used for R.A.A.F. training purposes at the Perth Airport. One might readily jump to the conclusion that this is primarily a Commonwealth matter. I believe that is so, but the State Government, having determined the site for our principal airport, and also because of the number of housing areas which surround it, has some responsibility in regard to this matter.

At a certain stage of the training of pilots it is evidently necessary for them to perform night flights, which usually take place between 7.15 p.m. and 9.30 p.m., approximately. The people residing in this particular area are repeatedly subjected to the howling, screeching, and screaming of aircraft flying at only a few hundred feet above their homes, and they have complained constantly to me in an endeavour to have something done about it. Following their complaints I have raised the matter with the Commonwealth authorities, but in the previous Commonwealth Ministry, Mr. Howson, who was the Minister for Air, was not very helpful. Last year he stated that we were lucky to have R.A.A.F. aircraft in Western Australia and I should not be growling about night flights of aircraft, and so I had to leave the matter at that.

I do not know whether it is as a result of my taking action on this matter, but now, whenever night flying is to be done by these training aircraft it is advertised in the Press, and as soon as the Press release appears I receive telephone calls at all hours of the day and night from people lodging complaints, apart from



those who visit my home requesting me to do something about this nuisance. I tell them, of course, that I cannot do much about it, but as the Minister for Air now resides in Western Australia I follow the only course I can by suggesting to these people that they should make their complaints direct to that Minister.

However, I maintain the State Government has some responsibility in this matter and it should make overtures to the Commonwealth Government to have something done about it, because the people residing in the Cloverdale district are suffering undue stress as a result of these night training flights. In my opinion it is quite unnecessary that these flights should be made in a built-up area. The Commonwealth authorities have reported to me that the airports in both Sydney and Brisbane are used for a similar purpose. Those airports would be known to the members of this House, and they would be aware that the runways of those airports head out to sea and therefore the effects of the screaming of the aircraft are not felt by people who may live in the vicinity of the airports. Apparently this screaming noise, which is part and parcel of the training on night flights, is the cause of all the complaints.

Mr. O'Connor: Have you made an approach to a State Minister about this?

Mr. JAMIESON: No. I am pointing out that it is the responsibility of the State Government to take some action, because the matter has been voiced through local organisations and by local parliamentary representatives, and it has also been raised in the Senate by senators who represent Western Australia in that House. However, each time a senator has raised the matter he has received the stupid reply that he is attempting to do something to prevent pilots from continuing with their training.

Following upon my advice to people to contact the present Commonwealth Minister for Air (Mr. Freeth) there was a rather unusual occurrence last week when the aircraft started to train on a Thursday. One of the first to make a complaint to Mr. Freeth was a new Australian, and after listening to him for a little while Mr. Freeth said he was not a very good Australian anyway and he hung up on his caller. This man protested by saying he felt it was a large country and surely there were other places where this night training of aircraft could take place instead of being conducted within a built-up area during a time which was most popular to viewers of television programmes, and when children were trying to get to sleep.

There is also the additional hazard of possible crashes in a built-up residential area. All members know that many of the Vampire aircraft which are stationed

at Pearce have crashed; it is just fortunate that a crash has not occurred in the vicinity of the Perth Airport.

Having lodged his complaint with the Commonwealth Minister for Air, this new Australian approached me to see if I could do something about the matter, but I told him there was not much I could do. However, after about a further hour of torment caused by the operations of these aircraft, I rang Mr. Freeth myself and received treatment similar to that which he had meted out to the new Australian. The conversation that took place was very brief, and I intend to relate to the House what passed between us so that all members may know I have lodged my protest.

The Minister told me I was unreasonable and was against the training of the pilots who were flying the aircraft. I immediately said that this was a lot of rubbish. I told him there was an alternative, and pointed out that this was the attitude that had been adopted towards any senator who had raised the matter in the Senate. I even held the receiver away from me so that Mr. Freeth could hear over the telephone, the screeching and screaming of the aircraft. I told him that the alternative was the construction of a simulated airport at which the training of pilots could be conducted.

I also mentioned the number of crashes that had occurred at Pearce and I suggested to him that the first time a crash occurred among the houses in the vicinity it could result in great tragedy. He completely disregarded this aspect in his written reply to me. I then told him that I would give him a blast in the State Parliament if this happened and he replied, "You are hoping for a crash tonight, aren't you?" I immediately told him this was quite stupid, and I suppose, in doing so, I provoked him to the state where he quickly hung up on me.

When there is the alternative that I have suggested, it is quite ridiculous that these aircraft should continue with their night training flights in the vicinity of the Perth Airport, and when I suggested this alternative to the Minister he said, "Oh, you would be in agreement to increasing the taxation by so many cents in the dollar to provide this, I suppose?" to which I replied, "Yes, if necessary." He then said, "I will quote that in the Commonwealth Parliament," and he hung up on me. Such an attitude is completely stupid.

If we are to be responsible for the training of pilots, we should ensure that the training is conducted in a proper place. It is all very well for Mr. Freeth to adopt such an attitude when he is residing at his home in Dalkeith. He does not get disturbed by the howling and the screaming of these aircraft, but there are many people in the Cloverdale area who are constantly disturbed by them. It is said

by the authorities that these training flights are held on only a few days in the year, but apparently these few days are becoming more and more and the residents in the nearby districts have to put up with the noise. I have heard reports from people who have said that high-ranking officers in the Air Force have stated it is high time the member for Belmont stopped complaining, otherwise overseas commercial jets will stop using the Perth Airport.

Although I live in a district located between the two flight funnels I have never complained about the noise of the commercial jets, because they do not come in that often. When they do it is over and done with very quickly. The training in R.A.A.F. aircraft causes the nuisance.

I hope the Government will take some action, because the people of Belmont, particularly those living in the Cloverdale area, are certainly entitled to something better than the boorish treatment that was meted out by the Minister for Air, who is a member of the Federal Parliament and represents an electorate in this State. I certainly hope the Government will take this matter up with the Commonwealth authorities to see whether some relief can be provided, so that the people living in one particular district do not have to suffer the consequences.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Up to what hour do these aircraft fly?

Mr. JAMIESON: From about 7.15 to 9 p.m. They could not fly over on Friday last—

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

## INTRASTATE AIR SERVICES

### *Subsidy: Grievance*

MR. BURT (Murchison-Eyre) [5.2 p.m.]: Strangely enough I wish to discuss a subject which is somewhat similar to that mentioned by the previous speaker. I take this opportunity to bring before the House the situation that has been created in the Murchison, and will shortly be created in the eastern goldfields, with the cessation of the MacRobertson Miller Airlines service to those areas.

The MacRobertson Miller Airlines service in the Murchison has been replaced, as from the 1st October, by a service run by Hicks Airlines Pty. Ltd. From what I can gather from the timetables, the aircraft that are being used are very satisfactory indeed.

The point I wish to bring to the notice of the House is the cessation of the Government subsidy which applies to the MacRobertson Miller Airlines, which has discontinued the service to those particular districts. The inauguration of air services in Western Australia goes back a long while. They commenced with the

establishment of the Western Australian Airways by Major Brearley and others in the post-Great War period. Those services throughout Western Australia were extremely efficient. In the early 1930s, Airlines (W.A.) Limited commenced air services which took in the eastern goldfields and the Murchison. These areas were at that time more populated than they are today. A very good service was given to the public by that company which was interested in the towns it served.

About 1950 MacRobertson Miller Airlines, which took over from W.A. Airways in regard to serving the north-west in the 1930s, bought out Airlines (W.A.) Ltd. From that time onwards the Murchison section was given scant treatment, compared with the service given to the north-west.

With the addition to the population in the north-west caused by the mineral boom, the Murchison district definitely became the poor relation of MacRobertson Miller Airlines. There was a certain amount of justification for that situation to arise, because the smallest aircraft the company had were the DC3s which were, in fact, too large to cater for the demands of the less populated areas of Western Australia. For that reason the people of the Murchison were receiving, more or less, the crumbs left over from the wealthier towns which were, and still are, serviced by MacRobertson Miller Airlines.

On the 1st October this year Hicks Airlines took over from M.M.A. As I said previously, the subsidy which had been granted to M.M.A. to look after the needs of the more uneconomic areas of Western Australia ceased, as far as the incoming airline company was concerned. A subsidy of something like \$350,000 a year was paid to M.M.A. up to the 30th September last. I assume that on the company ceasing to operate in the Murchison and in other districts in the Pilbara and East Kimberley this subsidy will be reduced considerably.

Mr. Davies: Was it a Commonwealth or a State subsidy?

Mr. BURT: I am referring to the Commonwealth subsidy. I am advised that no subsidy will be payable by the Department of Civil Aviation to a second air service or to any other services which are established in Western Australia, because the subsidy is paid to only one airline company in each State. The previous air services to which I have made reference did receive subsidies.

It seems rather unfair that a company which is prepared to tackle the less-populated areas of the State has been refused a subsidy. As a result—and this is the kernel of my grievance—fares have had to be increased by almost 30 per cent., and freight by about 10 per cent., to enable this new company to provide a service to the

Murchison area. I feel it is too much to expect the people of the areas concerned to pay the increased fares.

What concerns me is that, without the availability of a subsidy, the new company might eventually be forced to cease these air services, and the people of the Murchison and the eastern goldfields—I do not include Kalgoorlie, but I do include towns like Leonora, Laverton, and Norseman—might suddenly find themselves without any air service at all.

One of the Ministers of the Government did state that consideration would be given to a State subsidy, if such was warranted; but I feel this is a Commonwealth responsibility, particularly as the subsidy which it has been paying for many years to M.M.A. will be reduced considerably with the cessation of the company's services to the interior of the State. I ask that every consideration be given by the State Government to having a subsidy made available to Hicks Airlines as quickly as possible to enable the services I have mentioned to continue operating.

I conclude by congratulating Hicks Airlines for its enterprise. On Monday last I travelled on this airline, which is serviced by Cessna 402 aircraft, which have accommodation for eight passengers. These aircraft are faster than the DC3s, which were used previously, and are giving a better service in that they call thrice weekly at all the towns in the areas I have mentioned. This is better than the service that was operated by M.M.A., but if no subsidy is made available then either the fares will continue to rise, or the service will be discontinued—and this would be a retrograde step, detrimental to the people of Murchison.

## TEMPORARY OR SUPPLY TEACHERS

### *Long Service Leave: Grievance*

**MR. DAVIES** (Victoria Park) [5.8 p.m.]: I might have the distinction of being the last speaker on grievance day during this session of Parliament. When this privilege was extended to members last year and the Standing Orders were altered, it was hailed as a great leap forward in the rights of members of this House to bring forward complaints. I take this opportunity to remind members that there have been only three occasions during this session when it has been possible for speakers to air their grievances.

My grievance is related to an anomaly which appears to exist in regard to payment for long service leave to supply or temporary teachers. It appears that the department has engaged temporary school teachers for periods of 10 to 15 years, and there are conditions under which they can qualify for three or six months' long service leave. When the Government agreed to the permanent employment of married women, I imagined that steps

would be taken to place these temporary or supply teachers on the permanent staff. However, it appears that nothing in this respect has been done. It is not right that these teachers should continue to be employed in a temporary capacity when the Government policy on the employment of married women has changed.

I bring this matter forward, because on a number of occasions it has been placed before me. The first time I was approached I asked the person concerned to put the case in writing. This was promptly done, which, to me, indicates that the complaint is genuine.

It appears that supply teachers are paid the same salary as the permanent teachers, but they are paid in 41 or 42 equal periods over the year, whereas the permanent teachers are paid in 52 equal instalments each year. That is all right for each and every full year of service completed, without leave being taken. The total sum payable for the 365 days of the year is the same for the supply teacher as for the permanent teacher; but when the supply teacher takes long service leave after 10 or 15 years of service he is paid at 1/52nd of his salary for each week of his leave, instead of 1/42nd of his salary. The person who submitted the case in writing said—

In most firms a person who has given 15 or even 10 years of good continuous service would be considered a fairly permanent employee—but not in the Education Department which classes its married women still as temporary and dismisses them with a weeks' notice as necessary. These teachers are paid the same annual amount as a permanent teacher on the same grade but the money is paid over 42 weeks (actual working weeks) instead of 52—and pay notices are given not as annual salary but as so much per week.

When the time comes therefore to collect 6 months on full pay (for 15 years' work) one would expect the annual amount to be cut in half. But this is not so—the regulation states that a temporary teacher will be paid at the same weekly rate as a permanent teacher on the same grade. At first glance there is nothing sinister in this but when interpreted by the Treasury it means a loss of over two hundred dollars to the victim.

I took this matter up with the Education Department, and wrote to the Director-General of Education on the 17th September, setting out the case. In the concluding part of the letter I said—

I understand there have been some difficulties in arriving at a satisfactory solution, but could not some adjustment be made to ensure that the total annual salary is paid in the 12 month period?

I feel quite certain the Department does not seek to profit from the fact that teachers clear leave, and should appreciate any comment you could let me have on this matter.

On the 3rd October, more than a fortnight later, the Director-General of Education replied in the following terms—

I refer to your letter of 17th September, concerning the payment of long service leave to teachers on the temporary staff. Although it appears that anomalies occur when comparisons over a one year period are made between teachers, these anomalies disappear when the full periods of service of teachers are compared.

Long service leave is a privilege that is granted after a completed period of service and if the aggregates of earnings during the qualifying period are compared, it will be found that no teachers are disadvantaged and teachers who are contemporaries, whether they remain on the permanent staff or have married and rejoined on the temporary staff, receive for the qualifying period plus the long service leave period, exactly the same total remuneration.

That appears to answer the question, but the answer is not in accordance with fact. As I have said, year after year the supply teacher and the permanent teacher received the same remuneration, but in the year when they take long service leave the supply teacher receives remuneration for each week of leave at the rate of 1/52nd of the year's salary, whereas if he remains at work he receives remuneration at the rate of 1/41st or 1/42nd of the year's salary. If a lower proportion is paid each week, then obviously there is a difference in the total salary for the year. Irrespective of what happened in the qualifying years, there must be a difference in the year leave is taken. I rang the Teachers Union and I was informed that was so; but the union has not been able to get the department to alter the regulation. The official of the union who spoke to me said the union had a file which he described as being a foot thick.

The **SPEAKER**: Order! There is far too much talking in the Chamber. I have received complaints from members on the cross-benches that they cannot hear what is being said. I must ask members to speak in private conversation in whispers, otherwise they should leave the Chamber.

Mr. **DAVIES**: The official of the Teachers Union told me that the union had taken this up with the department on many occasions, and that it had a file a foot thick; but, still, the department will not admit there is a difference. He said one could take the figures for a teacher and a supply teacher on the same salary, add up the salaries over the qualifying period and for the period of leave and

there would be something like \$200 difference. I am sure the department does not want to rob teachers of this \$200; and it cannot be beyond the capacity of the department to work out a system whereby a supply teacher at the end of a 12 months' period would receive the same salary for 12 months as a permanent teacher.

If a teacher gets married, leaves the permanent staff, and then goes onto supply, the position as stated by the director-general could be correct; but he is still ignoring the fact that in the year that leave is taken there is this difference of roughly \$200. I have had several cases brought to my notice and have checked with the Teachers Union, which stated that the position is as I put it to the union and stated it here today.

I can only describe this letter from the director-general—it would be put up for him by one of his officers—as so much bilge. The union would not continue to make complaints, and the teachers would not continue to make complaints to me, if there was not this \$200 difference. I am sure the department does not want to make anything out of teachers on supply. There must be an answer to this problem and I hope it will be adjusted. Perhaps the Minister can tell me what action is being taken in regard to teachers who are on supply and have been for something like 10 years. Do they have any chance of becoming permanent?

**MR. LEWIS** (Moore—Minister for Education) [5.17 p.m.]: I wish to say to the member for Victoria Park that I accept his version that this is a matter that has gone on for some time between the Teachers Union and the department, but I had no knowledge of it up to this moment. Incidentally, these teachers are not known as being "on supply"; they are now referred to as "temporary teachers." I will have the matter that has been put to the House this afternoon by the honourable member re-examined. I am not expressing any comments on the merits or otherwise of the arguments adduced on behalf of the teachers concerned, but I will have an examination made and advise the honourable member.

Resolved: That grievances be noted.

#### **STAMP ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

*Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr. Brand (Treasurer), and read a first time.

#### **BILLS (2): RETURNED**

1. Nickel Refinery (Western Mining Corporation Limited) Agreement Bill.
2. Railways Discontinuance and Land Revestment Bill.

Bills returned from the Council without amendment.

**BILLS (2): THIRD READING****1. Western Australian Marine Act Amendment Bill.**

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr. Ross Hutchinson (Minister for Works), and transmitted to the Council.

**2. Aerial Spraying Control Act Amendment Bill.**

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr. Nalder (Minister for Agriculture), and transmitted to the Council.

**FIREARMS AND GUNS ACT AMENDMENT BILL***Report*

Report of Committee adopted.

**COAL***Inquiry into Greater Utilisation: Motion*

MR. JONES (Collie) [5.22 p.m.]: I move—

In the opinion of this House the Government should institute an inquiry into the possibilities of the greater utilisation of coal in the various sections of the energy market for the purpose of giving improved stability to the town of Collie and advantage to the State's economy.

At the present time the position in Collie is most alarming and disturbing. Following approaches from businessmen, the union, and organisations in the town, generally, I felt it was incumbent upon me to move through my party to bring this question to the notice of the House. In doing so, it may be necessary for me to traverse some of the ground I have already covered, but I am sure, Mr. Speaker, you will appreciate that in order to look at the coalmining industry and the policy enunciated in Australia and other parts of the world, it will be necessary for me to refer to the various policies, the types of fuel, and what is happening in the coalmining industry in those places.

I appreciate that we cannot hold up progress and that we must move along with it, but the position at Collie at the moment is most disturbing. Although orders for coal may have improved slightly, the labour position in the town has declined. At the moment there are fewer than 700 men in the coalmining industry, whereas in 1954 there were some 1,561 workers employed to produce the same volume of coal.

The policy of the Railways Department on dieselisation and the introduction of bigger locomotives has had quite an effect on railway employment in the town; and, during the last two years, over 25 per cent. of the railway workers have left. Now that the Muja power station is almost completed, we have a similar position and men

are leaving the town. This is having a big impact on the town, especially on business people, and they are looking to the Government to do something to relieve the situation.

It might be true that the State Housing Commission homes are not vacant but, as I indicated during my opening address in this House, these homes are being filled only by widows or women whose husbands are in prison. Members will appreciate that this is having a marked impact on the economics of the town of Collie.

I was prompted to bring this matter before my party because we are not happy with the administration of the coalmining industry, or the policy introduced by the State Electricity Commission. What gives rise to this situation, in the main, is the secrecy of the Government in not disclosing the price it is paying for fuel oil, the policies that are being introduced, and its secrecy in relation to questions I have asked during this session in regard to the generation of electrical power.

If we cast our minds back to the argument which was pursued last year when the coalmining industry and the people of Collie, generally, were opposed to the Government's decision to burn oil in preference to the local product, we find that the administration of the State Electricity Commission leaves a lot to be desired.

If members look at a Press report by D. B. Smith, published in *The West Australian* newspaper of the 16th June, 1967, they will clearly realise why we see the position as we do. It is indicated in the report that Mr. Smith approached a number of the members of the State Electricity Commission who had apparently made the decision—or were associated with the decision—to double the capacity of the Kwinana oil-burning power station. On questioning these members, it was found that some knew the price of oil and some did not, while others could not care less.

A most alarming statement appeared in the *Daily News* of the 17th June, last year; and one wonders whether BP or the Government governs this State. A reference to this quotation will make the position clear to any fair-minded person in Western Australia. I will quote from the *Daily News* of the 17th June last year, and members will realise why I made that statement. The Press was questioning the late Sir Alex Reid on the decision to burn oil, and this is what the report had to say—

Sir Alex said that he or Electricity Minister Nalder could release the price to the public if permission was given by BP.

So I put it to you, Sir: Irrespective of whether the State Electricity Commission or the Government of the day felt it was desirable to release the price that the commission was paying for fuel oil, and remembering at the same time that the State

Electricity Commission is a public utility, is it any wonder there is concern in the coalmining industry and in the minds of the people in Collie?

I have a volume of Press reports here, and a number of leading articles that were published in *The West Australian* newspaper, which criticised the Government because of its secrecy and which said that the Government had no compunction in stating to Parliament what it is paying for other commodities. However, for some unknown reason—or one that causes suspicion—the Government refuses to disclose the price being paid for fuel oil. It is quite evident, according to the reference I made, that BP has a big say in this matter.

What was said last year is water under the bridge; and with this I agree. We often hear members on the Government side of the House say that this State is on the move, so it will be necessary for the Government or the commission to find out from where new supplies of power are going to be obtained. I preface this point by saying that I hope and trust we will not see an extension of oil-burning power stations in this State.

If we look at the cost of producing electricity by nuclear means in other parts of the world and compare it with the cost of coal generation; and if we look at the policy enunciated in Australia, including Tasmania, we will find that nowhere is oil being used in preference to coal.

Mr. Williams: What about Great Britain?

Mr. JONES: I will have plenty to say about Great Britain in a moment. There was an announcement made a week ago of which the honourable member cannot be aware.

Mr. Williams: Was it a political decision or economic?

Mr. JONES: The decision was made in Scotland; and I will fully acquaint the member for Bunbury of the decision and its economics and he will then have a chance to speak. For the moment, let me refer to America and what is done in that country. The policy being introduced in America, which is favoured, is for a lot of oil companies to buy into the coalmining industry. References I will make, will clearly indicate this position.

Firstly, I would like to indicate that it is true there are other forms of fuel being used; but it is also true, according to the voluminous information I have here—I have obtained this from America, Great Britain, and other countries—that old King Coal is still holding his own, and will continue to do so for years to come.

We hear questions raised regarding long transmission lines, and whether power houses should be built in the city or elsewhere. I shall refer briefly to America, where this position does not worry the American people one iota. I shall quote

an article from the latest issue of *Time* which refers to power generation in America. It reads as follows:—

#### Lighting Up with Coal

The world's largest seller of coal, Peabody Coal Co. of St. Louis, last week signed one of the biggest single contracts in the history of the industry. The \$500 million agreement calls for the delivery by Peabody of a minimum of 117 million tons of coal to the yet-to-be-built Mohave Power Project in Clark County, Nev., 80 miles from Las Vegas. Being built by three Southwestern utility companies headed by Southern California Edison, the \$188 million electrical-power plant will have two 750,000-kw. generators on 2,500 acres of Colorado River land. Power from the plant, along with that from a similar project already under construction in western New Mexico, will light up the lamps of Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, and the proliferating lower two-thirds of California.

The Mohave furnaces will gobble up the equivalent of two 110-car trains of coal each day when they begin operating in 1970. Peabody will mine the coal in the Black Mesa area of northern Arizona, crush and convert it to slurry by adding water, pump it to the Mohave plant by way of a 275-mile coal pipeline (the longest of its kind in the world).

The Nevada site for the Mohave project was selected because (1) there are no antismog regulations out on the desert, (2) the Colorado River is an ideal source of the water required by the plant, and (3) the desert land is central to the areas it will serve. Selection of coal, rather than gas-oil or nuclear energy to fuel the Mohave power plant, was determined by the simple economics of electric-power production. Coal-generated power costs about 60 per cent. as much as that produced by a new nuclear plant, and at least 10 per cent. less than gas-oil generation. Moreover, new, extra-high voltage power lines, such as the ones that will carry current 200 miles from Mohave to San Clemente, Calif., have made long-distance power transmission economically feasible.

Mr. O'Connor: Would that be better quality than the local coal?

Mr. JONES: There is not that much difference. To continue—

The choice of coal will also result in additional jobs and some \$30 million in royalties to the Hopi and Navajo owners of the Black Mesa coal mines. So it is quite obvious that some members in this House are not acquainted with power generation. What I have quoted is the position in America at the present time.

To go a stage further, an article published late last year in the *Mining Journal* shows that the power-generating authorities in America have considered, and are using to a minor degree, nuclear power stations. However, the costs associated with the production of nuclear power are not comparable with those associated with coal-burning stations. Another reference which I have concerning America shows that last year the demand for coal rose by 3,000,000 tons in the period from the 1st January to the 1st April.

That is the information I have obtained; and, as I have mentioned, it is true that nuclear power stations are contemplated and are being built in America to a minor degree. However, the position is that coal is still preferred for power generation.

The member for Bunbury mentioned Britain. The position in Britain is staggering and most enlightening from the point of view of the coalmining industry. A white paper has just been published on what is considered to be the coal requirements of Britain for the next four years. Before dealing with that question, let us forget about nuclear power and see what other countries are doing with their natural resources. I will refer to the *Coal News*, and quote as follows:—

Site work has started near the Yorkshire coalfield on the world's biggest coal-fired station. The go-ahead has been given for generating plant which will need five million tons of coal a year. And Government approval for the second half of the giant power station at Drax, near Selby, would add another four million tons.

That clearly indicates the position, so far as Great Britain is concerned, with its natural resources. I shall now return to nuclear power and quote from the same journal. World authorities recently held a power convention in Britain and had the following to say about the question of power stations:—

#### Thinking alike

Other world powers—like great minds—are thinking alike about their future fuel needs for bustling industries and growing homes.

They are expanding on coal.

In the United States, coal production has leapt from 320 million tons a year to about 410 million tons over the past decade.

Power stations are already asking for more, and around 700 million tons of American coal are expected to be needed by 1980.

As NCB chairman Lord Robens told the British Power Convention at Brighton, American coal chiefs are planning no less than 1,000 million tons by the end of this century.

It is the same story from Russia, where it is planned to double coal output by 1980. The quotation continues—

Even if oil and natural gas supplies are discovered in the North Sea, they need not be a threat to coal.

They should replace oil imports from abroad—which are adding to the nation's balance of payments problems to the tune of £100 million a year—and shipments of methane from the Sahara for gas making.

A Dutch oil chief has just reported that nine drillings have so far been made in the North Sea—and all of them were dry.

Both America and Russia already have vast supplies of oil and natural gas. And, as we have seen, they are determined to expand on coal.

The same publication has made reference to the threat of nuclear power, and this reference indicates that as far as the power authorities in Great Britain are concerned, coal will still hold its own in the energy field. In the November issue last year, of the same paper, an interesting article appeared as follows:—

A statement that a coal station at Seaton Carew would cost £8 million more each year than all nuclear stations "wasn't worth the paper it was written on."

This statement was referring to the economics of nuclear power, and other sources of power. Another issue of *Coal News* states that a nuclear power station would cost an extra £525,000,000; and so I could go on.

For the information of the member for Bunbury, it has just been announced that a survey in Britain shows that 145,000,000 tons of coal will be required each year. The white paper which was published mentioned 120,000,000 tons a year by 1975, but Lord Robens thinks the figure must be nearer 150,000,000 tons. He also said that the extra 30,000,000 tons represents 60,000 extra mining jobs.

Mr. Williams: When you get a chance, read the *Economist* of the 17th August, from Great Britain.

Mr. JONES: I have the *Economist*. I have quoted a survey carried out by people who follow the British power pattern, and people conversant with power generation throughout the world.

A most interesting item refers to Scotland, and I would like to hear the member for Bunbury's comments appertaining to Scotland, seeing that he has just returned from that country. The position in Scotland is, and I quote from *The Dunfermline Press* of the 18th May, 1968, that the biggest power house in the world is to be built at Longannet. It will burn 6,000,000 tons of coal a year, which is equivalent to 10 tons every minute. The decision to burn coal

which has the same calorific value as Collie coal—9,500 BTUs—was made after a survey of all available fuel. It was stated that because of the cost of coal and because of the fact that it was a national product, it was preferred. Nobody can tell me that other power authorities in the world do not look at the situation before deciding that a certain fuel will be used.

Mr. Williams: Some opinions on Britain maintain that that power station will not be worth 20c.

Mr. JONES: Let me refer to what is said by people who know.

Mr. Graham: That is not the member for Bunbury.

Mr. Williams: We have not heard very much from the member for Collie, except quotes.

Mr. JONES: The member for Bunbury will hear plenty in a moment. I thought he would have more knowledge of the subject, as he has just returned from overseas.

Mr. Graham: There is plenty of room for him to learn.

Mr. JONES: Following representations I made to Scotland, the South of Scotland Electricity Board supplied the following summary of information:—

Longannet coal fired electric power station of 4 only generating units of 600 megawatts each (total 2,400 megawatts).

Coal requirements—6,000,000 tons per annum.

Calorific value of coal—9,500 BTU's.

Cost per therm (100,000 BTU's)—4.2d. sterling.

Cost per 1,000,000 BTU's—42d. sterling.

42d. sterling plus 7.5 per cent.=45 cents Australian.

Value per ton of coal—

9,500 BTU's x 2,240 lbs.=21.28 million BTU's.

21.28 million x 45 cents per million=\$A9.58 per ton coal.

Cost of electricity—sterling 0.57d.

Converted to Australian=0.57 + 7.5 per cent.=.61 cents.

Average cost per unit of electricity (Australian currency)—

Coal fired station—61 cents.

Oil fired station—not available.

Nuclear station 1320 megawatts (Scotland)—52 cents.

There is no reference to oil. The Minister recently supplied figures in answer to questions I asked regarding Muja. The power station at Muja is not yet at full load but the cost per unit was .33c, and at Bunbury it was .65c. It is very interesting to learn that the coal which will be sup-

plied for the mammoth power houses in Scotland is to be deepmined. So it is clearly indicated that other countries in the world do not use other fuel when coal is available. It is clear that King Coal is still preferred for a number of reasons.

Mr. Court: Have you seen the graphs showing the production sources of energy in Europe, Britain, and Japan?

Mr. JONES: I have.

Mr. Court: Have you seen what happens to coal on those graphs?

Mr. JONES: I have them here, as a matter of fact. Has the Minister seen the report to which I have just referred in regard to Scotland?

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will address the Chair.

Mr. Court: Scotland is a very small part of the total requirements of Great Britain.

Mr. JONES: If the Government would disclose the price of fuel oil nobody would be concerned. The Government is concerned about the question of fuel oil but if it would tell us the price, it would probably resolve many of our difficulties.

Mr. Jamieson: The Minister's sole ambition is to close Collie up, and it has been ever since he has been a Minister.

Mr. Court: If you would only stop telling people things are so crook, something might happen in the interests of Collie. Telling people things are so crook is only stopping them.

Mr. Jamieson: You are responsible for the situation.

Mr. JONES: The Minister certainly will not take any action.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will address the Chair.

Mr. JONES: Just to finish my remarks about that part of the world, in fairness to the House I will refer to the position elsewhere—where the situation which exists in Western Australia is not to be seen. These are countries which do not have economic reserves of coal available to them and, consequently, they have no alternative but to look for some other source of fuel. I want to refer to this matter because I do not want it to be thought that I have been obtaining only information that will assist my case. I have reports from different parts of the world to show that there is a need to have a look at the policy of power generation in Western Australia.

The only reference I wish to make to Ireland is from a report of the Electricity Supply Board of Ireland which deals with the production of electricity in that country. The report shows that there are no coal supplies in Ireland, but rather than go outside the country, and import oil as a fuel, the electricity authorities there are burning peat from the bogs because it is a



natural product. This has the effect of creating employment and the authorities in Ireland look upon this as a policy which is preferable to importing oil as a fuel; and it has an effect on the economy of the country, too.

I understand that a report in the *Colliery Guardian*, which unfortunately is not in my possession, shows that a similar policy is in operation in South Africa. So, despite the interjections from those who are possibly not aware of the situation, coal is still being preferred as a fuel in other parts of the world.

Now let us have a look at the Australian scene, and we have to place a big question mark after this question. Why cannot the policy which is in operation in other parts of Australia be applied to Western Australia? If we ask ourselves that question we must come to the conclusion—and it is the only conclusion—that either the Western Australian State Electricity Commission is the only one in step, and the authorities in other parts of Australia, and in other parts of the world, are out of step, or the position is the other way around.

I challenge the Minister to name any State in the Commonwealth of Australia where oil is preferred to coal for power generation. The submissions which I propose to make, and the reports to which I shall refer, will clearly indicate that in no State of Australia is oil preferred to coal. If members look at the latest report of the State Electricity Commission of Queensland they will find that authority is extending the use of coal for power generation; and coal-burning power stations are at present under construction at Calcap and Collinsville.

It is true that the Queensland commission has been looking at the question of producing power by gas turbines, but it will be noted in the report that the power produced by this source of energy is limited. The report I have before me shows that coal is still preferred; as a matter of fact, the report confirms my submission in that regard. Under the heading, "Investigation and Planning," the report states—

The principal task of the commission in 1966-67 has been to further the studies which will enable a recommendation to be made to the Government on the site of the next major power station or stations to supply south and central Queensland. Investigations into the next major project for supply to North Queensland following the completion of the Collinsville power station are proceeding concurrently. The economics of inter-connecting the southern, central, and northern grids are an essential part of the investigation.

Joint planning committees of the

commission and the generating authorities concerned in each of the areas are engaged on this work which is now well advanced.

New sources of power will be required to meet demands in all the areas by 1973 or 1974 so that a decision on the next power station or series of power stations will be necessary early in 1968.

Let us have a look at the position in New South Wales. It is rather alarming. However, in a highly industrialised State like New South Wales, nobody can tell me that the electricity authority has not looked at the economics of power generation to determine the type of fuel which it will use.

To illustrate the position, I should like to refer to the 1967 report of the Electricity Commission of New South Wales, which I have in front of me. From that report we find that the Munmorah power station is at present under construction, and also a big new power house in the northern part of the State, near the Queensland border, which will burn 6,000,000 tons of coal a year. We will also find from that report that the question of conveying power over long distances is not exercising the mind of the Electricity Commission of New South Wales; because power in that State is being transported over long distances due to the advancement made in the reduction of line losses.

The report from New South Wales clearly shows the position, and gives details of the power stations I referred to. In the case of the station being built in the northern part of New South Wales, the cost will be \$200,000,000. Work on the project will involve the deviation of main railway lines, the building of dams to provide the cooling water, and the installation of pipelines over several miles. This power house will be similar to the one I referred to in Scotland, and the assistance I mentioned being given in that case also applies to the New South Wales project.

If we go a stage further we will find that the Liberal Government in New South Wales has now decided to extend, in the western districts of New South Wales—

Mr. Jamieson: It follows what the Liberal Party dictates.

Mr. Gayfer: Don't get nasty.

Mr. JONES: The Government of New South Wales has decided to extend the Wallerawang power station at a cost of \$55,000,000, and it is interesting to note, from the *Australian Financial Review* dated the 26th March, 1968, the following:—

While the area is not as close to the seaboard as mines in the Newcastle area, costs of extraction are much lower and the western area enjoys

Government-induced rail freight concessions.

That was referring to the extensions planned for the Wallerawang power station.

What is the outlook for power generation in Australia in the future? The question might be asked: What about the introduction of nuclear power stations? Do Governments intend to extend the use of oil as a fuel? To see what the authorities have to say about nuclear energy I shall quote from the report of a conference recently held in Sydney. The report is to be found in *The Coal Miner* of August, 1968, and under the heading of, "Power—The Nuclear Outlook," it reads as follows:—

Addressing a quarterly meeting of the Colliery Managers' Association in Sydney last month, Sir Philip Baxter, chairman of the Australian Atomic Energy Commission gave an optimistic assessment of the prospects of nuclear-generated electricity supplementing coal-based supplies in N.S.W. by 1975. Sir Philip, a distinguished nuclear physicist and adviser to governments on atomic power developments, made it clear that, to satisfy the rapid growth of demand for electricity, maximum effort would be required in the construction of both conventional and nuclear stations, which would complement each other in the future.

But he said that, to justify themselves economically, the nuclear stations would need to be of large capacity and located close to major centres of population.

A somewhat more cautionary note is evident in recent comments by State Government authorities who are actually responsible for building and operating electricity generating stations. It is evident that, from the practical viewpoint, the new science of nuclear energy will have to prove itself firmly, in terms of power costs, before massive spending on Australia's first nuclear station can be justified.

It is obvious that that is a note of warning, and it indicates to me that the expenses associated with the setting up of nuclear plants, in view of the power requirements of this country, are such that they would not be a practical proposition for Australian authorities.

I should now like to touch briefly on the position in Victoria and refer to the 47th Annual Report of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria. The report shows that developments are in hand for the construction work at the Hazelwood power station, and the building of a new power station at Yallourn. I shall not dwell on this point, but the report shows that the work is proceeding at both those

power stations, and it is considered that these units will be extended in the future. These are all coal-fired power stations.

I hope Opposition members are listening to what I have to say because there is a question I would like them to answer, if they can.

Mr. O'Neil: They are all listening.

Mr. JONES: I apologise; I should have said, "Government members." We have a deposit of coal at Collie that any State in the Commonwealth would dearly love to have. In South Australia, at Leigh Creek, which is some 160 miles from the point of consumption, the output of coal has jumped from 713,521 tons in 1960, at 41s. a ton, to over 2,000,000 at the present point of time.

Mr. Jamieson: The Commonwealth gives them some decent rail concessions.

Mr. JONES: I will come to that point in a moment.

Mr. Cash: Let him go.

Mr. JONES: This is the point that stuns me.

Mr. Cash: He doesn't need any assistance.

Mr. JONES: The calorific value of Leigh Creek coal is 6,500 B.T.U.s, whereas the average calorific value of Collie coal is 9,500 B.T.U.s. Also, the Leigh Creek coal has to be carted a distance of 160 to 170 miles. It is a porous, or poor quality, coal, but last year, the 1967 report discloses, 2,031,639 tons of coal were used in power-generation in South Australia. So if it is possible to use this poor quality coal in South Australia, why is it not possible to use the Western Australian coal in this State? That is the question I ask members of the Government.

In South Australia the coal has to be transported over long distances, but it is obvious that in that State assistance is being given for the production of coal. The point I wish to make in this regard is that at Collie we have a seam of coal some 38 to 40 feet thick, and 1,000,000 tons of coal are there ready to be used, but we have no-one to buy it.

Surely, at some point of time, some responsible authority or someone who is interested in the south-west portion of this State, and the State's economy, will look at the situation! I suggest that now is the time to have a look at it.

A good deal of argument took place when the Government made a decision to extend the Kwinana oil-burning power station. It was argued at that time that if the Government had offered the Griffin Coal Mining Company—which it did not do—a contract for the supply of coal, the position could have been overcome. The Government did not ask the company by how much it would reduce the price if a large order were placed with it. The

company has advised me that no approach was made by the Government to reduce the price for a big order; and the figures in the Press indicate that Government contracts for an extra 87,000 tons of coal a year would reduce the price by 25c per ton.

The Government did not approach the Griffin Coal Mining Company to ascertain what the price of coal would be if the Government's order was increased as a result of its deciding to increase the coal-fired stations instead of doubling the Kwinana station. I also suggest that if the company were approached with an order of the magnitude of that given to the Leigh Creek coalfield, or the companies in Newcastle, and Scotland, the Griffin company would have been prepared to come forward with a proposition that would have suited the Government.

I suggest that if this Government were to give the coalmining industry concessions similar to those it has given the alumina refinery and the companies mining iron ore, etc., the coalmining industry and the town of Collie would be in a much better position than it is today.

Considering the question of oil, we are inclined to lose sight of the revenue which is lost to the railways. When the East Perth and South Fremantle power stations were recently changed to oil-burning stations there was a tremendous loss of revenue to the railways. We have the situation where, in connection with wharfage charges, the Government allowed B.H.P. some \$2,000,000 a year. Any fair-minded person will at once see that the town of Collie and the coalmining industry have not received fair treatment at the hands of this Government.

A great deal has been said about the policy of Tasmania. During the argument I adduced on behalf of the miners' union last year, statements were made by Mr. Jukes and others concerning the decision of Tasmania to build oil-burning power stations. The report of the Hydro-Electric Commission, however, showed that in that State, due to seasonal conditions, the hydro-electric system could not be extended. I would like to quote from an article which appeared on the 23rd August, 1967. It is headed, "Tasmania Approves \$20m. Power Plan" and reads as follows:—

HOBART, Tuesday.—A Legislative Council select committee has approved the Hydro-Electric Commission's proposal to build a \$20 million oil-fired power station at Bell Bay in Tasmania.

The committee said the government and mining firms should begin an intensive exploration programme to try to find enough coal to fuel a power station.

The cost of oil-power would be higher than hydro-power. However, the committee approved the Bell Bay station because of the urgent need for more power.

This is the interesting point—

The committee, which investigated the possibility of firing the new station with coal instead of oil, said Tasmanian coal—at \$3.70 a ton—was the cheapest fuel available.

That price is much higher than the price of the coal which is available to this Government. Is it any wonder that people like myself, and others in Collie, become suspicious of the actions of the Government when it refuses to disclose the price it is paying for fuel oil? What is behind its refusal? Has BP applied pressure on the Government and said that it must not disclose the price of the fuel oil? The authority in Tasmania has said that if coal is available at \$3.70 a ton it will be cheaper than oil. Nobody can suggest, therefore, that the motion I have moved is not worth while.

Mr. Gayfer: How much coal is there?

Mr. JONES: The last survey conducted on behalf of the Government showed that there is at least 89,000,000 tons, and millions of tons have been found since and more coal is being discovered every day. I would say that conservatively there are at least 100,000,000 tons of extractable coal in the Muja depression, quite apart from the coal available in other mines.

A great deal was made of the fact that there was not sufficient water available. I think it was mentioned in the Press that Collie did not have sufficient water. The State Electricity Commission put a pipeline from the Neath Mine to within half a mile of the Muja power station, but no water was ever used from this source. Bores were put down in the Hebe mine, which was flooded, but not a single pint of water was used. So the argument put forward by Mr. Jukes does not hold water.

The Minister will know that a new technique has been developed in America which requires little water for the generation of electric power. I can assure the member for Avon that there is at least 1,000,000 tons of coal lying idle, so I would be glad to accommodate the honourable member if he wishes to place an order for 500,000 tons.

The calorific value of coal was mentioned, and it was said that the Eastern States' coal had certain qualities which were not apparent in the Collie coal. There are different types of coal in every basin, but when we consider the matter we find there is really not much between these different types of coal. For example, the Lithgow seam contains a lot of ash, and its calorific value is 11,360 B.T.U.s. I would

like to give a few comparative figures of three seams. I will tabulate them as follows:—

	Lithgow Seam per cent.	Great Northern per cent.	Liddell per cent.
Ash .....	14.7	15.6	10.3
Moisture .....	2.4	3.1	2.3
Volatiles .....	30.1	30.6	38.5
Fixed Carbon .....	52.7	50.7	30.8
Calorific Value .....	11,300 B.T.U.s.	11,950 B.T.U.s.	12,950 B.T.U.s.

If we are to analyse Collie coal we must look at the moisture content, particularly if we are to compare the two types of coal. I might mention here that the coal from the Eastern States must be washed. For the sake of the record, and by way of comparison, I give below the corresponding figures for the Hebe mine and the Western No. 2 mine—

	Hebe per cent.	Western No. 2 per cent.
Ash .....	2.5	4.5
Moisture .....	22.6	27.5
Volatiles .....	30.5	26.1
Fixed Carbon .....	44.5	41.9
Calorific Value .....	Between 9,500 and 9,600 B.T.U.s.	9,000 B.T.U.s.

The figures I have given provide a good comparison, and it will be seen that there is very little to choose between these types of coal, particularly when we consider their makeup and the districts from which they come.

The Joint Coal Board, which is an organisation under the control of the New South Wales Government, has also had a great deal to say as to how it sees the position of the coalmining industry. For the sake of the record I would like to quote from the Joint Coal Board's nineteenth annual report, 1965-66. Under petroleum it states—

On 8th September, 1965, the Government's decision on the 1965 Tariff Board inquiry relating to Crude Oil was announced by the Minister for Trade and Industry. In its annual report for 1964-65 the Board expressed the belief that in the light of the Government's decisions and the Minister's statement, Australian refineries would tend to produce a greater proportion of the lighter ends or in the Minister's words, "the more valuable products." However, this has not been the case. Between 1964-65 and 1965-66 the input of crude oil (all but two per cent. of which was imported) increased by 1,347,000 tons but the additional tonnage of gasoline produced was only 143,000 tons or 2.9 per cent. While there were higher out-turns of aviation turbine fuel, heating oil and refinery gases, there was at the same time an increase of 471,000 tons of furnace oil or 9.7 per cent. As a result there has been no easing of the marketing problems experienced by the coal industry at the hands of the marketers of furnace oil. The need for specific measures

to achieve a pattern of refinery production which would provide for the best utilisation of crude oil input has become more pressing since the Minister's statement of September, 1965, that further consideration would be given to measures to encourage production of a higher proportion of the more valuable products in Australian refineries.

It states further—

Recently in the United States of America, nuclear plants, based on the use of enriched uranium, have won a number of important contracts for power stations by tendering in open competition with coal or oil-fired conventional plants. In some instances, the nuclear plants have had a cost advantage even though the site for the proposed fossil fuel plant was in an area where fuel costs were relatively low. These plants were composed of very large units, two units of over 1000 MW each in the most significant case, as compared with 275 MW for the largest unit at Vales Point in New South Wales. Units of 500 MW are planned for the Liddell power station but a huge growth in local demand, with relatively sufficient emergency capacity, would be necessary to warrant construction of a 1,000 MW unit, still less a series of such units. It would also appear that in the United States there were factors which adversely affected the competitive position of coal-fired installations, involving not only the capital cost of the power station and of plant efficiency, but also the delivered cost of coal. This position, however, may prove to be of only temporary significance. In any case, factors which determine the relative economics of the two types of plant within the United States would not at all apply to the same degree in Australia. The Board believes that, as long as it is possible to mine large tonnages of low-cost steaming coal adjacent to an adequate water supply, New South Wales will continue to utilise coal-fired plants as its major source of electric power.

So it is obvious the Joint Coal Board considers the Australian coal industry will continue to hold its own. In mentioning this point, I would like to say that when conducting a survey of the reasons why fuel oil was making inroads into the orders from customers previously held by the coal industry, the *News Review* of last year said that the oil combines were making fuel oil available for the generation of electric power at a special price so that they could obtain the custom previously held by coal. This report queried whether the people generally, when buying lubricants and oils, were not paying in some manner for the

concessional price oil companies were prepared to grant to those using fuel oil as a source of generation.

The publication called *Australian Mining*, dated December, 1967, contains a heading, "Expansion of Black Coal Industry Maintained in Joint Coal Board Report." Part of it reads—

During 1965-66 and 1966-67, coal consumption in N.S.W. for power generation has been higher than expected, the annual figures being 5,675,000 and 5,856,000 tons respectively. The power stations at Lake Macquarie and Lake Munmorah used 3,214,000 tons of coal during 1966-67 as compared with 2,913,000 tons in 1965-66.

As the Munmorah units come to base load, the usage at most other stations will decline. By 1971-72, when the power generating industry could be using 7,570,000 tons of coal, the first units of the Liddell power station will be operating.

The report goes on to indicate that so far as the Joint Coal Board is concerned it considers that coal will hold its own and retain its position in the general energy field.

The question of coal research is a matter that has exercised my mind greatly. I raise this question now in order to deal with publications as they come to hand. A bulletin issued on the 15th January, 1968, called *Construction Civil Engineering & Mining Review*, contains an article headed, "Good Progress in Coal Research Reported."

I wonder in what way the State Government is assisting in the research and utilisation of coal. I know that certain work has been carried out by the C.S.I.R.O., and I will comment on that aspect later. I also know that we have the assistance of the Australian Coal Research Laboratory, but I would like to know whether the Government of the day is taking steps to see if it can further use Collie coal in Western Australia.

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

Mr. JONES: Before the tea suspension I was quoting from a number of references in relation to power generation in different parts of the world and Australia. I would like to inform the House why I consider this is necessary. If I were to take the whole of my available time in suggesting this and suggesting that, it could be said that my suggestions were those of a layman. I do not profess to be an engineer, although I have had a long association with the coalmining industry. It will be appreciated therefore that it is necessary for all of us on occasions to refer to authorities. It is my intention, when I complete my references, to give some of my opinions on the situation and suggestions as to how it

could be rectified. I trust members will realise why I find it necessary to make the quotations.

Another important reference is by a mining engineer, Mr. H. E. Collins, C.B.E. He is also a chartered engineer. The following appeared in the *Colliery Guardian* of July this year, and it is very revealing as it shows what he thinks of the situation:—

I have recently returned from Mexico where modernization of the country's coal industry is in progress in order to double its current output particularly to meet the needs of an expanding steel industry. Here is a country well supplied with indigenous oil and natural gas and yet more coal is required to maintain the satisfactory upward trend in the country's economy. The latter will be obvious from the growth of the Gross National Product which has shown an annual increase averaging some 6 per cent. over the last four or five years. This year—the year of the Olympic Games in Mexico—the GNP is expected to show a rise of about 10 per cent.

This visit engendered thoughts on the situation of energy production throughout the world. Having recently been to most of the coal-producing countries of the world, it seemed to me that a glance at the position of coal—even today the world's biggest single source of energy—might well be apposite in these days when one hears so much in this country of a fuel policy and rival claims for the various forms of available energy.

Advances in living standards consequent upon industrialization in developed and developing countries alike provide an insatiable demand for more and still more energy year by year. In the last ten years total world energy production has just about doubled to a figure approaching 6,000 million tons of coal equivalent. Of this total, coal contributed upwards of 2,500 million tons, or slightly over 40 per cent., the annual production having increased in the period by about 700 million tons.

The global figures of production of the various types of energy mask considerable variations from country to country, and this is particularly marked in respect of coal. Expansion of coal production is to be found in the USA, USSR, China, Australia, Poland, and other Eastern European countries.

The report goes on to mention the problems in Japan, mainly associated with the general development of the steel industry.

Recently the Senate appointed a Select Committee to inquire into offshore petroleum. It is not my wish tonight to weary

the House with long references from this submission, but it is necessary to quote some because a number of responsible people associated with the energy field generally made submissions to the committee as to how they saw the situation in relation to different energies. The following is to be found at page 1131 of the report:—

Even the Joint Coal Board itself was forced to be outspoken. Various it has pointed out that the Australian based refineries do not process the crudes to the extent that the same companies are compelled to process in their overseas refineries.

This is a very important aspect because in other parts of the world a higher level of refining is required. This is revealed in the submission of Sir Harold Raggatt who appeared before the inquiry into Australian petroleum resources which has just taken place. We know that in other parts of the world the level of refining is higher than is required in Australia, while at the same time there is an impost on oil to give some protection against the inroads into the coal industry generally.

I mentioned earlier that in South Australia 2,000,000-odd tons of coal are being used per year in the generation of electricity. This was mentioned in relation to the actual cost to the Government. The following is contained in the evidence submitted to the Senate Select Committee:—

There is also the prospective loss on enterprises such as Gas & Fuel Corporation, while interest will still have to be met on the funds sunk in such enterprises. What the Commonwealth can gain on the oil-gas swing it can lose on the coal roundabout. Freight on Leigh Creek coal provides most Government railways with a sizeable portion of revenue.

Members will recall that earlier in my speech I mentioned that the continued use of coal at East Perth and South Fremantle no doubt had an effect upon the available income to the Western Australian Government Railways.

I do not think any member would deny that one of the foremost authorities on coal utilisation would be the C.S.I.R.O. Most people when considering the utilisation of different products look to this organisation to ascertain what new techniques are being developed on the Australian scene, generally. This organisation in its recent bulletin of August, 1968, vol. 35, supports my view in regard to the world scene, and the following is how it sees the situation in Australia:—

#### The Outlook for Coal

The steady decline in coal's share of the total energy market, indicated in the diagram opposite, prompts the question: What is the future for coal in Australia?

In the principal field of coal utilisation—the electricity supply industry—the outlook is good. The cost of coal for electricity generation continues to fall because of three major developments: increased mine mechanization, concentration of production in the more economic mines, and the siting of power stations on the coalfields. Partly as a consequence of this, reliance will continue to be placed upon coal for the economic generation of base load power until at least the mid 1970s. By then the consumption of black coal for steam-raising will probably have risen from the present figure of 11 million to 17 million tons. At this rate of consumption, Australian reserves of coal suitable for power stations are sufficient for the needs of the foreseeable future. However, bearing in mind the comparison with other coal-producing countries on the basis of coal reserves per head of population (Australia 1,200 metric tons, Britain 3,000, U.S.A. 6,000, and U.S.S.R. 21,000), it is clear that orderly development and careful husbanding of our coal resources are essential.

It goes on to deal with the future of the brown coal industry. However, it mentions in a special supplement on the utilisation of coal that due to new techniques being developed, partly in America and partly in Australia, the demand for coal will increase and this will make coal more competitive with other fuels.

I suggest that this is one of the foremost authorities in Australia, and it is advocating that coal will still hold its own for many years to come. This opinion is also expressed and supported in a bulletin issued by the Australian News and Information Bureau, Department of Interior, Canberra. At page 70 of this very recent publication is the following:—

#### Black Coal

Major features forecast for the next five years are:—In New South Wales—two new mines will be completed to supply the Munmorah power station; by late 1973, mines with a capacity of 5,000,000 tons of coal a year will be developed near the Liddell power station; there will be an increase of possibly 50 per cent. in the tonnage of coal to be exported overseas from Newcastle; a new high-capacity mine will be completed in the Burraborang Valley and at least one new mine and possibly more will eventuate on the South-Coast. In Queensland—increased supplies will be required for the Swanbank and Calcap power stations; the new railway linking Moura to Gladstone will open in March, 1968; large-scale development will take place at Moura and at Blackwater and, to a lesser extent, near Bowen to supply large export contracts; and new port

development at Broad Sound, near Rockhampton, is mooted. Additional power stations—the Liddell power station is due for completion during 1973-74, so that during the period the location and source of energy of the next addition to system capacity must be decided and, similarly, in Queensland.

The bureau makes its view very clear so far as the coalmining industry is concerned.

I now wish to refer to what was said by Sir Harold Raggatt, a very informed person on the power requirements and different energies available in Australia. He appeared before the Senate Select Committee inquiring into Australian petroleum resources; and whilst the evidence is very secret, I understand that he did make the following submissions:—

Wapet might have a great success with offshore in W.A. but the setup is very uncertain. I do not think national policies can be based on present assumption that the rate of discovery will be as good or better than it has been.

I think that our self-sufficiency could come close to 50% in the early 1970's but at that time we will have to find three Barrow Islands every year to beat the increase in demand. That is overlooked by many people. We have to find the equivalents of three Barrow Islands by 1972.

Self-sufficiency could be described as that part of the national over-all energy pattern that is supplied by oil and gas from domestic resources. If Australian oil continues to be high grade, we cannot be self-sufficient in the sense that we will have to import an equivalent amount of fuel oil which we cannot get out of Australian crude from Barrow at a reasonable price to provide the furnace oil that the community will require in 1970. Australian crude oil has the wrong constitution to fit the shape of our requirements.

We cannot get—and the refineries will not let you forget this—the product in the proportions in which we now consume them.

He then goes on to give an analysis of Middle East crude oil, which is—gas and motor spirit 27.5 per cent.; kerosene and diesel fuel 23.5 per cent.; and residue—fuel oils—49 per cent. The analysis of Barrow Island crude oil is—gas and motor spirit 42 per cent.; kerosene and diesel fuel 34 per cent.; and residue—fuel oils—24 per cent.; and there is no bitumen or lubricating oils.

He then goes on to assess the requirements of furnace oil and lubricants for Australia, and his assessment is that by 1971 we will require 22,500,000 tons. This

submission, of course, was made by Sir Harold Raggatt, and I do not think anyone, or very few, would challenge his authority in the energy field and in regard to different heating elements in Australia.

Coupled with this, Mr. Speaker, I reconsider the answer which the Minister for Electricity gave me. Members will recall that I asked a question following the information which I obtained in reference to the evidence submitted by Sir Harold Raggatt to the Senate Select Committee. The question was—

- (1) When the decision was made to double the size of the Kwinana oil burning generating station and when the recent decision to change the South Fremantle and East Perth stations over to oil was made, was he aware of the information submitted before the Senate inquiry into petroleum resources wherein it was held that all oil so far discovered in Australia was too light in quality to produce fuel oil and that fuel oil and other heavy products would still have to be imported when Australian oil is being refined?
- (2) If "Yes," would he comment on the submission made by Sir Harold Raggatt?

The Minister replied—

- (1) and (2) Australian oil is not too light to produce fuel oil. It is not known whether fuel oil and other heavy products will have to be imported.

So the position is quite clear. Here we have a situation where the S.E.C. had decided to double the Kwinana oil capacity, but at that point of time, according to the answer given to a question which I asked directly of the Minister for Electricity, the Government did not know for certain what the position of oil supplies would be in the future.

When I looked into the question of the Australian production of electricity my investigations revealed that there are certainly no base power stations burning oil in Australia. I have gone into the matter as it applies in every State. I indicated that our economic supplies of coal were equally as cheap as the coal which was available in the other States of the Commonwealth in order to return to the question: Why can't we burn more Collie coal? If our neighbouring State, South Australia, can burn over 2,000,000 tons of coal which is inferior in power generation, why cannot this State burn the equivalent tonnage of a better grade coal which is available here?

I return to the very important point that when the oil-burning station at Kwinana is completed the position will be that 635

MW will be available from oil generation in this State and the supply from the stations using coal will drop to 372.5 MW. This figure takes into consideration the Bunbury station which has a capacity of 120 MW. It will only be working on half load according to the information given to the House. The position is that the old Collie station will only be used on standby. I know of no other power authority in Australia which has the base load of the State dependent on oil.

When I mention oil as a fuel, I am not, of course, referring to local oil, because Sir Harold Raggatt, in a submission before the inquiry, made it quite clear that Australia will not be able to meet the demand for fuel oil for some years to come, due to the lightness of the Australian oil which has so far been discovered.

The Collie community, the miners' union, the people in the south-west, and even the Bunbury Shire—for the information of the member for Bunbury—are concerned about the situation generally. Why are they concerned? They are asking themselves a question which I have voiced in the House, "What will be the future policy for power generation in the State?" In answer to that question the Minister for Electricity said the matter is not yet under consideration.

I refer to an article which was published in the *Daily News* last year. The end of the article reads as follows—

The Kwinana site will be capable of ultimately developing more than 1,000,000 kilowatts.

Is it any wonder that I, as the member for Collie, am here tonight advocating that the Government should have a look at the position with a view to doing something for the State and something for the coal-mining industry rather than import foreign fuel for the production of power?

There is one point which I cannot really understand and I would like to be informed on it. Just recently the Collie Shire, the miners union, the Collie industries committee, and several businessmen in Collie, together with the Bunbury Shire waited on the Minister for Electricity in relation to a policy for the Bunbury power station, because the figures had revealed that by 1969 the coal required for the Bunbury power station would be reduced to 230,000 tons a year. The largest amount of coal burnt in the Bunbury station was 469,968 tons in 1965.

We have asked questions, attended south-west conferences, and taken deputations to the various Ministers requesting that the coalmining industry should receive some of the freight concessions which this Government has extended to other industries. Recently I asked whether the Minister would extend to the coalmining companies an agreement similar to the one it extended to the alumina

refinery whereby that company advanced certain moneys for rolling stock, and it was to be refunded to the company, with interest, over a period of 10 years. The Minister said that the Government would be prepared to consider it.

Why didn't the Government look at the situation in 1965 when it increased rail freights on coal from Collie to Bunbury by 25c per ton? The Minister for Railways would know the contents of the Wayne report which represented the results of an inquiry made into the different facets of transport which were under Government control in Western Australia. The Wayne report said that the sections of line from Collie to Bunbury, and from Bunbury to Pinjarra were two of the most profitable sections operated by the Western Australian Government railways. Yet at the same time we suffered an increase in freight costs from Collie to Bunbury.

The Government would have shown good enterprise, knowing that Collie was on the decline and battling to retain the level of employment in the town, if it had said to the companies, "The Government is prepared to do something for the coalmining industry and will retain the Bunbury power station at its full load."

It is not an old power station; it was built 16 years ago at a cost of \$26,000,000. If we look at the policy now adopted we find that both the East Perth and the South Fremantle power stations, which are old, have been retained; but the Bunbury power station, which is a much more efficient unit, is working only at half load. Together with representatives of the Bunbury Shire, we made representations to the Minister for the Bunbury power station to be worked at full load.

Let us take the matter a stage further. This is what I cannot understand. On the 11th September I asked the Minister for Electricity—

What is the line loss of power from—

- (a) Bunbury to metropolitan area;
- (b) Muja to metropolitan area?

The Minister replied—

- (a) and (b) Approximately 6 per cent. in both cases.

That indicates a 94 per cent. efficiency so far as the transfer of electric current is concerned. On the 31st July I asked the Minister—

- (1) What is the present cost of production per unit of electricity at the following power stations:—
  - (a) South Fremantle;
  - (b) East Perth;
  - (c) Bunbury;
  - (d) Collie;
  - (e) Muja?



The Minister replied—

(1) Operating costs per unit are—

- (a) South Fremantle, 1.06c per unit (coal and oil fuel).
- (b) East Perth, 2.96c per unit (coal fuel).
- (c) Bunbury, .65c per unit (coal fuel).
- (d) Collie, .71c per unit (coal fuel).
- (e) Muja, .33c per unit (coal fuel).

On the 11th September I asked yet another question, as follows:—

When the East Perth and South Fremantle power stations are converted to oil burning stations at Christmas, what is the anticipated production costs per unit of power from these stations?

The Minister replied—

East Perth generating station—estimate at 2.68c per kwh.

South Fremantle generating station—estimate at .96c per kwh.

We should refer to the history of the State Electricity Commission. In case there is trouble at the other end of the operation, we well know that the grid system will be retained for this purpose. The lines are there and they might as well be used. Let us look at the production costs in Bunbury, realising that they represent those of a station which is working at 50 per cent. efficiency. We find the cost per unit at the Bunbury power house is .65c. Yet for some unknown reason the State Electricity Commission is going to retain the East Perth oil-burning station where it costs 2.68c per unit and the South Fremantle power station where the cost is .96c. My calculations are that if .65c represents 94 per cent. efficiency, then .69c represents 100 per cent. efficiency.

In view of the age of the stations and the fact that they are not as economic as the Bunbury station, I ask the Government, and the Minister in particular, "As the transmission lines are available, why is it necessary to burn oil in the South Fremantle and East Perth power houses? Why is it necessary to keep those power houses going when an efficient unit at Bunbury is working at half load?"

This is the question I ask and which all people associated with the coalmining industry are asking. In fact, the Bunbury Shire was asking that same question when it supported me at the delegation. When we addressed the Bunbury Shire there was no doubt in the minds of its members that we were getting a raw deal.

Coupled with this inquiry, all fairminded members on the other side of the House should ask themselves, "Is it not time that the coalmining industry got a bit of a go

instead of the Government bending over backwards to promote the use of oil in power house generation?"

I should like to conclude by summarising a few of the points which I have made. Firstly, I wish to refer to the actual position of Collie. At the moment 82 per cent. of the land in the Collie district is not usable. Government members will know full well the Wellington catchment area and the decisions of the Water Purification Board. Land held by the Crown and land reserved for forests takes up 82 per cent. of the Collie Shire. I put the question to members: How can Collie expand?

The only way it could expand, in my opinion, is if it is given the opportunity. I remember that in the argument last year about the doubling of the Kwinana station, the Minister for Electricity said that if the coalmining industry is to compete it must be efficient. I ask the question: How can the coalmining industry or any other industry be efficient when it does not know what type of competition it has to meet?

How can anyone suggest this is a fair approach to the problem? I have tried to trace the position as it actually is. It may be that large countries overseas are going in for nuclear power, but they are able to do this. In the first place, they do not have the coal reserves; and, secondly, it is workable where there are very big demands for electric power because on such a scale nuclear power may be cheaper. However, that position cannot be seen in Australia.

I challenge anybody to show me an analysis of where Collie coal, on price and heating value, does not compare favourably with the cost of burning oil. The figures I quoted related to the South Australian scene where 2,000,000 tons of coal per year had been transported a distance of 160 miles.

It has been suggested by the Minister for Industrial Development that my approach and Collie's approach to this question has been wrong. However, I remind the Minister for Industrial Development that not long ago members of this Government were saying to the Collie community and the coalmining union, "Get rid of your communist leadership and Collie will go ahead." The Government said that in 1960 and in that very same year the position changed; I became the only full-time industrial officer for the union. That was eight years ago, and the coalmining industry has only had three days off in that time.

Where is the great new era we were promised when the union got rid of its communist leadership? We are still waiting for that era. This Government owes Collie something. We have natural resources of abundant supplies of coal, and it is time that members on the other side

of the House who are interested in the welfare of the State, and interested in the south-west in particular, supported me completely when I ask for the inquiry which I have sought by this motion.

Mr. Graham: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Nalder (Minister for Electricity).

## **ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION MAINS**

### *Crossing of River at East Fremantle: Motion*

**MR. FLETCHER** (Fremantle) [7.58 p.m.]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House electric transmission mains should not be permitted to be installed other than in the form of underground and under river cables in the proposed locality from East Fremantle to opposite foreshore.

I draw members' attention to the words of the motion. I trust the majority of members in this House will support me in a motion which is aimed at preventing the disfigurement of the river in the Fremantle-metropolitan area and contiguous areas.

Let us first of all interpret the motion, because my present suggestion goes further than my previous efforts in this matter, whereby I have asked questions and made suggestions in respect of the placing of cables under the river, including propositions related to high tension cables being installed, as an alternative, under the decking of the Fremantle Traffic Bridge or, again, alternatively under the decking of bridges soon to be built.

The object of my motion currently before the House is to ensure that the proposed high-tension cables from the South Fremantle power station shall be installed underground to the East Fremantle foreshore and then under the river to the opposite foreshore. From this point they should proceed underground to Swanbourne. I ask for this to be done in the light of Cabinet having overridden public and other opinion and of its having settled for the location which has recently been published in the Press for the erection of the pylons to support the overhead cables. In other words, Cabinet has accepted the recommendation of the State Electricity Commission that these high-tension cables should be carried across the river and supported by pylons situated on the East Fremantle foreshore and the one opposite.

My alternative suggestions for the cable crossing would be more expensive, admittedly, but would be more to the satisfaction of those whom I represent. My motion, I am sure, will also be to the satisfaction of those constituents who reside in the Cottesloe and Mosman districts; but I would point out that my motion is not an

exercise to embarrass their parliamentary representatives; it is merely an earnest desire to satisfy my constituents and, I believe, the majority of the general community of the Perth and Fremantle areas. That is the purpose of my motion.

I dealt with this subject as recently as during the 1968 Address-in-Reply debate—only a few weeks ago. I also dealt with the same subject during the 1967 Address-in-Reply debate, and I will make some reference to this later. I notice the Minister for Industrial Development is preoccupied at the moment, but I would like to ask him a question.

Mr. Court: You asked me to refrain from interjecting, so I thought I would remain silent for a change.

Mr. FLETCHER: I will remind the Minister of his comment later this evening. I would like to ask the Minister if he would care to have these pylons and airborne cables erected in his electorate. I am not attempting to provoke the Minister for Industrial Development; I am merely suggesting how out-of-character the pylons and cables would be if they were erected in the salubrious area the Minister represents. I could imagine the reaction of his constituents if this did occur. I therefore ask him to understand the position in which I am placed, because I know he would not accept such a situation in his electorate.

I find it an agreeable experience to find the Minister in agreement with what I am saying.

Mr. Court: If you will only stop for a moment, I will tell you that I adopted the attitude to which you refer, when the big controversy was around the edge of my electorate. I hope I always look at these things objectively in the community interest.

Mr. FLETCHER: I hope the Minister does, too, and that he will support me in this very desirable objective. I dislike unsightly pylons and cables in my electorate in just the same way as the Minister for Industrial Development does. Let me further remind the Minister of the remark he made when speaking in opposition to the very desirable motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition in which he outlined the need for the appointment of an ombudsman.

Mr. Lewis: Would he find the money to put the cables under the river?

Mr. FLETCHER: The Minister for Industrial Development adopted the attitude that the members of this Parliament had an opportunity to air their grievances and to seek redress. I am doing just that at this point and I hope the Minister will give me reason to believe it is desirable to bring such matters before this House as a consequence of the support we can expect from him rather than

opposition similar to that which he put up to the motion for the appointment for an ombudsman.

Mr. Court: I am not opposed to the honourable member bringing his motion before the House, but I would remind him that we will still vote in the way we so desire.

Mr. FLETCHER: I know the Minister is not opposed to my introducing this motion, but there is no harm in referring to his earlier comment. As I have stated, I have asked questions on this subject previously and these are recorded in *Hansard*. I could read them to the House, and I may do so presently. The questions I asked were not initiated by the member for Fremantle exclusively. They came about as a consequence of the opposition that was expressed by people within my electorate when they heard of the prospect of cables and pylons being erected in the East Fremantle area.

Having asked these questions in the House for the benefit of my constituents, as any good member should, I circulated copies of the questions I asked and the Minister's reply, not only among members of yacht clubs in my electorate, but also among those who belong to yacht clubs situated up the river. The questions and answers were covered by a letter of mine requesting the members of the yacht clubs to express their views.

I received replies from almost all of those yacht clubs expressing commendation of my action and condemnation of the policy of the Government and the State Electricity Commission in erecting these pylons and cables, which undoubtedly would mar the beauty of the river at this particular locality. I would repeat that such replies were received not only from yacht clubs situated in the East Fremantle area, but also from the members of fashionable clubs situated further up the river.

I should have retained that correspondence, but, as is the habit of most members, I disposed of it in an annual cleanup, in the assumption I would not have any further use for it. Nevertheless, I did retain the letter from the East Fremantle Yacht Club. For the edification of the members of this House I will read it, because it is typical of the replies I received from other clubs. It is addressed to myself and is dated the 29th May, 1967. It reads—

Dear Sir,

The flag officers and committee of the East Fremantle Yacht Club wish to protest vigorously against the proposed high powered cables crossing the Swan river at Blackwall Reach. They feel that the additional cost (if any) of laying submarine cables at this point would be justified.

To give a minimum clearance of 80 ft. as stated over this span would require very high unsightly (and costly) towers each side of the river.

We feel that once the overhead cables are allowed to become a reality, others will follow in rapid succession as the state grows.

Yours faithfully,

J. R. NOAKE,  
Hon. Secretary.

I acknowledged receipt of that letter on the 2nd June, 1967, advising the East Fremantle Yacht Club of my intention to approach the Minister on the subject. On the 2nd June, 1967, I wrote to the General Manager of the State Electricity Commission as follows:—

Please find attached a photostat copy of correspondence to the undersigned from a Yacht Club within my electorate.

Though not specifically requested, I forward same for the purpose of making the Commission aware of opposition to the mooted spanning of the river with tower borne electric cables.

You will be aware of the proximity of the Club to Blackwall Reach, the suggested point of cable crossing.

I am also aware that many Club members and the general community believe that towers and cables would not enhance the beauty of our river and surrounds.

Trusting that the Commission will take the above and attached into consideration prior to any decision relative to electric cable crossing of the Swan or Canning Rivers.

Yours sincerely,

Harry A. Fletcher.

Mr. Dunn: The honourable member for Fremantle.

Mr. FLETCHER: Thank you. On the 7th June, 1967, the General Manager of S.E.C. replied thanking me for my letter in the following terms:—

Thank you for your letter of 2nd June referring to the overhead crossing of the river at Blackwall Reach, and enclosing copy of a letter from the East Fremantle Yacht Club. We have also received a similar letter direct from them but I prefer to reply through you.

Will you kindly assure the Yacht Club and any others who approach you, that the crossing would be at such a height that it could cause no obstruction or damage to river traffic or river sports.

That was not the only issue I raised. I raised various issues in opposition to the cable crossing. Subsequently I received a letter from the Minister on the 26th October, 1967, and I am gratified, judging

from the letter, that he evidently noticed what members had to say during the debate on the Address-in-Reply of that year. His letter was as follows:—

During the debate on the Address-in-Reply, you made reference to the proposal that State Electricity Commission power mains be taken across the Swan River at Blackwall Reach.

I wish to advise that this matter is still being investigated. I would point out, however, that underwater crossings are extremely expensive and are the exception rather than the rule.

I can assure you that underwater crossings are being considered in the present investigations.

As I have stated, I am grateful that the Minister, or some of his officers, apparently did read in *Hansard* what members had to say in this House on the subject.

My present motion goes a little further than my original intention. I know the argument that will be put forward from the other side of the House should any member care to reply to the motion. The question will be asked: Where is the finance to come from? I could say that, firstly, it could come from the existing funds of the State Electricity Commission, but the Treasurer might say that such funds are non-existent. Secondly, the finance could be raised, for example, by imposing an extra cent per unit, perhaps, on power consumed. That is another suggestion. Thirdly, it could be raised by way of a loan. I would remind the House that S.E.C. loans are repeatedly being floated in this State. Not only are State Electricity Commission loans raised, but other loans are also floated for less worth-while purposes than to ensure that electric cables are placed out of sight under the river and underground. I therefore suggest that the money could be obtained through an S.E.C. loan, or even from more than one loan.

Mr. Brand: You are in favour of the principle of adding something to the cost of power to finance the undergrounding of these cables?

Mr. FLETCHER: I have put that forward as one suggestion, but I would prefer the alternative of raising the money by way of loan. The Treasurer is trying to catch me out so that he can take some political advantage of me.

Mr. Brand: You said it; I didn't.

Mr. FLETCHER: That was only a suggestion I made as an alternative to raising the money by way of loan. I feel sure the community, as an alternative to raising a loan, would accept the cost of electricity being increased by 1c per unit if they knew this would mean the electric cables could be placed underground.

Mr. Tonkin: What about taking the money out of the profits? The S.E.C. made \$4,000,000 profit last year.

Mr. FLETCHER: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that interjection, because that was my first suggestion to finance the placing of these cables underground. The Leader of the Opposition is probably listening more attentively than other members, because, firstly, I suggested that the money could come from existing funds.

My next suggestion was that the money could come from income obtained by increasing the cost of electricity by 1c per unit, and my third suggestion was that the finance could be raised by way of loan. I am now covering the Premier's argument, and as the cardinal rule of debate is to get in first, and defeat an opponent's argument before it is submitted, that is what I am trying to do.

I am also of the opinion that the flotation of such a loan would be beneficial to the people of this State. I hold some State Electricity Commission bonds on behalf of members of my family, but they do not total a great amount. Nevertheless it is a desirable investment and I may as well put in a commercial for the State Electricity Commission whilst I am moving the motion. Those people who would subscribe to such a loan would benefit from the interest rate they would receive in return for their money; and where could such people find a more desirable objective than that of having power cables placed under the river and underground?

Mr. Brand: There are plenty who agree with the desirable objective, but there are not so many who have the incentive to contribute to such a loan.

Mr. Jamieson: In view of what happened to the last loan, the Minister might ask the member for Fremantle to launch the next one.

Mr. Nalder: It sounds like a case of, "I've got my power, but as far as anyone else is concerned, blow you Joe!"

Mr. FLETCHER: I think I have made my point in that respect and I hope nobody attempts to argue to the contrary. I believe that the submissions I have made are to the advantage of the community as a whole. I am sure the public would not be averse to contributing to such a worth-while cause, despite the interjection made by the member for Avon.

Mr. Gayfer: If you went to the country you would have to subscribe 50 per cent. before you were supplied with power or light.

Mr. Jamieson: Every metropolitan consumer subsidises the country consumers.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FLETCHER: Irrespective of the interjections, the comment in the Press will reveal the attitude of the general public in this matter.

Mr. Gayfer: Not of the general public.

Mr. FLETCHER: I suggest it will reveal the attitude of the general public. I have seen comment from country areas which are Western Australian conscious rather than interested only in parochial matters. I wonder how many complimentary letters the Government has seen in respect of this issue. Most of the letters that have appeared in the Press have been of a derogatory nature. I have not seen any favourable correspondence published.

Mr. Nalder: None of the correspondents has put forward practical suggestions as to how it should be done.

Mr. FLETCHER: I have offered alternative suggestions, and the Minister replied to my correspondence on the subject. I have read only one letter tonight from the East Fremantle club—which is representative of the other clubs—and all of them, and the Press comments, without exception, have been critical since the Press announcement of the 2nd October, 1968, which I have before me.

I previously offered other suggestions which I felt had merit. I suggested that the existing bridges could carry the cables across the river. The cables could later be carried under the decking of the traffic bridge which is to be built further upstream from Point Brown to the East Fremantle foreshore. The span of the river is comparatively narrow at this point and the expense involved in conversion to the new bridge would be negligible in relation to the outlay which will be faced by the State Electricity Commission in its present venture.

There is nothing new about bridges carrying high voltage electric cables. Bridges have been known to carry water, power, and even telephone mains. There is nothing new about bridges carrying these various utilities. Why, when I was a child I can recall cables being carried under Canning Bridge. I have also seen a couple of cables under the Sydney Harbour Bridge, and I was fortunate enough to see cables being carried under the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco.

As I have said, there is nothing new about this aspect. For some reason, however, the Government wants to construct pylons to carry mains from the East Fremantle end, in particular, right through to the area of Cottesloe and Mosman, which is represented by the Minister for Works.

I have seen such cables carried under rivers in other States of Australia. I can recall having seen these cables under the Brisbane River, and if they can be carried under the Brisbane River, I see no reason

why they cannot be carried under the Swan River. The State of Queensland is no more affluent than is the State of Western Australia. I think I have also seen cables carried under the Yarra, though Victoria is a more wealthy State and can well afford this. The point is, however, that it is possible to take the cables under the river.

Mr. O'Neill: Isn't it the Yarra which flows upside down?

Mr. FLETCHER: The cables are out of sight, irrespective of the nature of the water on the Yarra. I would submit that there is another spot on the Swan River where these cables exist; and that is from the North to the South moles of our harbour. They exist in the form of a 6,000-volt ringmain.

It was argued that underwater cables would be vulnerable and affected by the anchors of ships and various other craft. If this were so, would they not be more vulnerable in the harbour where large ships occasionally drop anchor, and where more damage would be done than would be the case with small craft further up the river?

I am not advocating a delicate type of cable which will carry 132,000 volts. The type of cable I advocate is a lead sheathed cable; one which would not sit on the bottom of the river, but which would be submerged in mud on the bottom of the river. In support of my contention that this method would be safe and would require little maintenance, I would remind the House of the cost involved in the infrequent maintenance of the cables from Australia to South Africa, Singapore, and other places. I do admit that they do not carry as high a voltage as is envisaged here. But how often do these types of cables require maintenance?

I notice from the Press comment that Mr. Gillies of the State Electricity Commission remarked that cables underground would require to be oil-cooled, or oil-filled. I know that type of cable, because I have seen it laid. I would remind the House that when I came here in 1959 I came direct from the South Fremantle power station, where these cables exist.

It is possible that I do not know as much about power production as does Mr. Gillies, but I know enough about it to speak on the subject. I would like to say at this stage that I have a very high regard for Mr. Gillies personally; I have a high regard for his ability; and I know that he is trying to work within his budget. But I ask him and the Government to put the budget aside. Under the heading, "Power Lines Will Go Over River" we find the following:—

The State cabinet last night accepted a State Electricity Commission proposal to build three 32,000-volt

overhead power lines across the Swan River between Rocky Bay and Black-wall Reach.

Of all places! To continue—

Premier Brand said after the meeting that the 1,400ft. span would cost about \$50,000. It would cost \$300,000 to put the lines under the river.

I have defeated that argument by saying that finance could be found in the manner I have suggested. The Premier was really expansive when he said—

Graceful towers 125ft. high would support the lines which would be 100ft. to 120ft. above the water.

Mr. Brand: Is not that right?

Mr. FLETCHER: Possibly so, but at this point of time I would refer the House to a cartoon by Rigby which appeared in the *Daily News* of the 1st October. I think we have all seen it.

Mr. Brand: There are other cartoons to which we might refer from time to time.

Mr. FLETCHER: In this cartoon there are two surf skiers who were apparently being towed behind a launch and who became airborne to the extent that they were caught up in the cables. Among the cables is also a swan and a masthead with a pennant attached. It is noticeable that the swan looks terribly bedraggled.

Mr. Sewell: Is it a black and white swan?

Mr. FLETCHER: The expression on the swan's face seems to say, "Who was responsible for the so-and-so policy which has resulted in putting this impediment across the river so that a swan can become entangled?" The two types who were strung up in the cables are apparently saying, "But the poles are pretty aren't they?" I would say that those two gentlemen were in no position to make a full and balanced assessment at all. I do not believe the pylons could be as attractive as the Premier pretends. The Premier says further—

Criticism of the proposed span was based on the appearance of the cables over the river and of the towers on either side from which they would be slung.

While the government recognised the sincerity of this criticism, it believed the cables themselves would have little visual impact.

I also notice that a correspondent recently suggested that a couple of Chinese lanterns might be hung on the cables to beautify them. That is one Press comment which will give the House some idea of the criticism that has been expressed, with some justification.

I would like members to know what the Mayor of East Fremantle had to say. The Press article states—

East Fremantle mayor V. Ulrich said yesterday that the government, by approving power lines over the river, showed no concern for the feelings of East Fremantle residents.

The situation was similar to that when a high earth railway embankment was built at Fremantle. The government had ignored the interests of the local people.

For those who are unfamiliar with this area, I would point out that this is the ugly embankment under the railway on the north end of the existing railway bridge. It comes within the electorate of the Minister for Works. That is what the Mayor of East Fremantle was alluding to. His statement continues—

"I know I am talking for all the people who live in the area when I say we are hostile to it," Mr. Ulrich said.

"I believe the council will oppose the plan at its next meeting and doubtless we will also receive petitions from the residents."

Petitions opposing the S.E.C. plan had been circulated in the district when the scheme was proposed, he said.

They had lapsed when the Swan River Conservation Board rejected the scheme.

His council had suggested that the power line be run beneath the Fremantle traffic bridge or the proposed new bridge across the river at East Fremantle.

That suggestion arose as a consequence of questions I asked in the House, copies of which I forwarded to the East Fremantle Council. The Council thought it a jolly good idea. There is another passage which reads—

#### SHORT-SIGHTED

The Mosman Park Town Council has criticised the cabinet decision.

The council said yesterday that the cabinet was short-sighted in accepting the cheapest method as being the best.

All possible avenues should be examined before crossing the river and Mosman Park with the line.

The council would oppose construction of the line.

Not only am I looking after the interests of the people in my electorate, but I am in the fortunate position of being able to look after the interests of those represented by the Minister for works. I am looking after the interests of the local authority in his area as well as those of the local authority in mine.

As I said earlier, the criticisms in the Press and elsewhere have been nothing but condemnatory. I have here a leading article from *The West Australian* of June the 4th, 1968, which is headed, "Uncrossing the Wires." Another subleader headed "Second Try Ugly Still" deals with this matter. A leader as recent as the 2nd October, 1968, also deals with the matter under the heading "Cheap And Ugly Way." The opinion I am expressing is not my own; it is the opinion of the writer of the last-mentioned leading article to which I have referred, although I am not always in agreement with him.

Mr. Dunn: You agree in this instance, because it satisfies your line of argument.

Mr. FLETCHER: Not necessarily. The article shows that he has adopted the correct line of argument. The article goes on to state—

Cabinet's decision to allow the State Electricity Commission to string three 132,000-volt power lines across the Swan River between Rocky Bay and Blackwall Reach is a win for economy over aesthetics.

The government has chosen the cheapest way to cater for increasing power demands north of the river, though eyesores will be created in the process.

Mr. Burt: Are there not other obstacles to be removed to keep the river beautiful?

Mr. FLETCHER: Yes, and I would like to see them removed. One concerns the manufacturers of superphosphate, and this company has a 99-year lease which expires early in the next century.

Mr. Burt: What about the effect of the sugar refinery?

Mr. FLETCHER: That has not the same unattractive odour or appearance as the superphosphate works. Further on the article states—

It is understandable that in this predicament both the S.E.C. and the government are unwilling to spend about \$2.8 million to carry the lines out of sight from South Fremantle to Shenton Park when they have the alternative of an overhead system which could cost only \$200,000. Each body has a responsibility to keep power costs down.

But it would be false economy to permit these considerations to influence a decision in favour of an aerial river crossing if more desirable results could be achieved.

Mr. Gayfer: That is chicken feed.

Mr. FLETCHER: It is from my point of view, and I thank the honourable member for his interjection.

Mr. O'Neil: There is a reference to a cost of \$250,000, but the original proposition was \$50,000.

Mr. FLETCHER: I question the comment about the \$2,800,000 and the figure of \$250,000 mentioned for placing the cable under the river. Previously I have informed the House on matters of cost. I have asked the Chief Electrical Engineer of the Fremantle Port Authority what it cost to replace the 6,000-volt cable under the river at its entrance, and he told me the cost was \$5,000.

Mr. O'Neil: The two are not comparable.

Mr. FLETCHER: Why not? On a previous occasion the Minister interjected to say there was a difference between 6,000 volts and 132,000 volts. Even if we were to multiply the \$5,000 by two, three, or four, the cost would not be as much as has been mentioned. It is a question of dividing the 6,000 volts into the 132,000 volts, and this is a tenable argument.

Mr. O'Neil: Rubbish!

Mr. FLETCHER: As an ex-school teacher, would the Minister not agree that 132,000 volts is 22 times greater than 6,000 volts?

Mr. O'Neil: Is the 6,000-volt cable under the harbour oil cooled?

Mr. FLETCHER: No.

Mr. O'Neil: But the cable which you suggest should be placed under the river will have to be oil cooled.

Mr. FLETCHER: I know the reason why some cables which are placed underground have to be oil cooled. They are oil cooled to insulate against the heat generated underground; but a cable which is surrounded with water is a very different proposition to a cable which is surrounded by earth where there is no escape for the heat. Just as car radiators and condensers in power stations are cooled by water, a cable placed under the river will be cooled by the surrounding water.

To get back to the calculation of the cost for placing the cable under the river, if we multiply the \$5,000 by 22 we get the figure of \$110,000. Because the river at this point is slightly wider than it is at the harbour entrance the cost might be slightly greater than \$110,000, but the difference between that figure and the \$250,000 mentioned by the Minister for Housing is out of all proportion. I suggest the Minister speak on his own portfolio of housing rather than on this subject.

Mr. Graham: There is plenty of scope for him to do that.

Mr. FLETCHER: I believe the case submitted by the Government and the State Electricity Commission in putting obstacles in the way is tantamount to the wish being father to the thought. I think the Government and the S.E.C. have grasped at this situation and have presented an argument of exaggerated cost which I consider cannot be factually substantiated.

This is the cheap and easy way out, but there is the alternative which I have suggested.

There is another aspect of this matter: In *The West Australian* of the 2nd October there appeared a diagram showing the cables and the pylons going from Wauhop Park across to a position between the superphosphate works and the sugar works. This does not come anywhere near Blackwall Reach, which is about half a mile upstream.

Whilst I am on the theme of Blackwall Reach being the originally intended jump-off-point, in his comments which appeared in the Press, Mr. Gillies supported the crossing of the river at Preston Point to Blackwall Reach. He also, in mistake, made other references to Blackwall Reach, but that locality now is not where the pylons are to cross the river.

This gives me the opportunity to say it is a significant fact that Blackwall Reach was the original jumping-off point, but it no longer is. It is rather significant that a certain Minister of the Crown represented the area of Blackwall Reach, but now it is no longer within his electorate; but the present jumping-off point is within the electorate of Fremantle.

Mr. O'Neill: The Leader of the Opposition represented that area. I have never represented it.

Mr. FLETCHER: The Minister has not represented the Blackwall Reach area?

Mr. O'Neill: No. The Leader of the Opposition must have more influence than I have.

Mr. FLETCHER: I do not think so. The Blackwall Reach area was quite close to the boundaries of the electorates of the Leader of the Opposition and of the Minister.

Mr. O'Neill: The boundary of my electorate is Stock Road, east of Point Walter.

Mr. FLETCHER: Perhaps I should withdraw my implication, but it could happen.

Mr. Tonkin: The Minister knows that the line first proposed was to go through Melville, and that was why the Melville Town Council protested.

Mr. O'Neill: The member for Fremantle thought it was to go through my electorate.

Mr. Tonkin: The first proposal was that a line would go through a portion of the Minister's electorate.

Mr. FLETCHER: I thank both members for this byplay. I think that to some extent my argument is still tenable. Instead of the pylons going through the area of Melville they will go through the area of Fremantle. I submit that I have just as much right to take exception to the values of land and property in my area being disadvantaged, as the Minister has the right to take exception in respect

of land and property in his electorate. I suppose all members have the right to object to these pylons being placed behind the backyards, opposite the front doors, or even in the vicinity of their properties.

Mr. Lewis: There are many areas in this State which would welcome these pylons.

Mr. FLETCHER: No doubt the representatives of many country electorates would. I join those Country Party members in wishing for the pylons to be located in their electorates, rather than in my electorate!

Mr. O'Neill: There is a more unsightly power line running past my place.

Mr. FLETCHER: The difference is that the Minister has to put up with it. I am now talking about the amount of criticism which the Government has received in proposing to locate the pylons in my electorate.

Mr. Jamieson: The Minister lives in a 50-acre paddock on his own.

Mr. FLETCHER: I suggest this matter is now being treated in a frivolous manner. I am sure members agree that the siting of pylons in the vicinity of a property would have a deleterious effect on its value. If a person invests his life's savings in a home, or is in the process of acquiring one, he does not want any Government—irrespective of its political colour—to devalue the property. I am sure that no member of this Chamber would like to see pylons or cables over, or in the vicinity of, his home, if only because of the adverse effect on land values.

An argument has been put forward that if the cable was located close to the river or the sea, there would be a proportionately greater degree of corrosion. That would be the case if the cables were not insulated, or were not armoured against corrosion or damage.

Mr. O'Neill: This cable will be armoured against flash-over.

Mr. FLETCHER: The Minister is putting out his neck. I have previously informed the House that before I was elected to Parliament I worked at the South Fremantle power station. I have seen transformers established close to the beach—within a stone's throw of the beach. I have seen the insulators which carry high power lines, and I have heard the lines sizzling from the moisture in the night air. I admit that in the period I worked there a transformer blew up, but I have never seen—as has been suggested—fires or explosions occurring on the wires or insulators.

I was at the power station from 1949 until 1959, a period of 10 years. I admit these insulators and the equipment close to the beach needed maintenance. The insulators needed wiping as a consequence of deposits which formed and caused the



insulators to short circuit; but, if maintenance could be applied in the power station area, it could be applied in respect of cables in and around the bridge or harbour.

An argument has been submitted that the high power carried by these cables could have a detrimental effect on railway signalling equipment, telephones, and so on. However, if they are properly insulated and underground, they would have no detrimental effect unless they were in close proximity.

Originally I suggested the bridge as a point of crossing but the Government, despite the attitude of the Swan River Conservation Board and the opposition of the community in general, has committed the State to taking a line direct from the South Fremantle power station to Swanbourne through the route that has been announced.

If I have to accept that route, then I suggest the work be done in the manner I have requested—that it be underground from the South Fremantle power station to the river, thence under the river to the opposite foreshore and underground to Swanbourne. There are no other cables in the immediate vicinity to my knowledge, and no damage could occur in the manner suggested. I also suggest that finance be made available in the manner I have outlined. I have not made an impossible request and I have moved this motion in all sincerity.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Nalder (Minister for Electricity).

## MUTTON AND LAMB PRICES

### *Inquiry by Select Committee: Motion*

Debate resumed, from the 4th September, on the following motion by Mr. Jones:—

That a Select Committee be appointed to enquire into, and report on, the high price paid for mutton and lamb by the public in comparison with the price received by farmers for sheep and lambs at auctions.

**MR. NALDER** (Katanning—Minister for Agriculture) [8.48 p.m.]: This motion is similar to one we started debating last week. The only difference is that the present one asks that a Select Committee of this House be appointed to enquire into the price ruling for mutton and lamb—the price being paid to the producer and the difference in price the consumer is paying for the same product.

Quite a bit of the information dealing with practically the same subject was mentioned last week when comparisons of prices that have been ruling over several years were given to this House. The indication was that the price being paid for mutton and lamb on the hoof was lower than that ruling for many years previously. At a stage of the debate last Wednesday I indicated to the House that the

Government was opposing the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into a number of matters that the member for Warren suggested should be inquired into. Included in the list of things to be inquired into by the Royal Commission was the problem of the production and sale of lamb.

I indicated it was considered advisable that a committee—not a Select Committee—be appointed by the Government. I said we had agreed to this and that the chairman of the committee had been named. Tonight I intend to indicate to the House that I believe this committee will get down to work and give reasons why there is a difference in the price ruling for mutton and lamb on the hoof and the price that is being paid by the consumer.

The House will probably rise in about three to four weeks, and if a Select Committee were appointed it would not have sufficient opportunity to fully inquire into this matter and report back so as to give the information to those who require it. The Government has agreed to appoint a committee to inquire into the matters that have been the concern of a number of people throughout the State over recent months.

**Mr. Jones:** When will the committee be named?

**Mr. NALDER:** It will be named by me tonight in the course of this debate. The honourable member, in introducing the subject, covered a fairly wide range of matters outside of mutton and lamb, made quite an amount of comment, and read Press reports of a meeting that had been held at Boyup Brook. I think, Mr. Speaker, you will allow me to make some comments about the statements that were made. The honourable member read a report and some of the comments made need clarification. Although I have not all the answers, I think some of the comments made by the farmers who attended the meeting at Boyup Brook appear to be exaggerated.

The honourable member read a statement that was made by Mr. H. S. Rogers, President of the Upper Blackwood Shire Council, and Secretary of the Upper Blackwood Stock Owners' Association, which arranged the meeting. During the course of his speech, the honourable member said that Mr. Rogers considered rail freights had risen considerably. He did not say over what period; I think he gave the percentage. I have made a check on the increase in rail freights, and in 1958 they showed no increase over what they were in 1953, so the relevant period for discussion was between the years 1953 and 1968. The actual increase in rail freights between Boyup Brook and Midland was 43.7 per cent. for cattle and 15 per cent. for sheep. However, as the amount of livestock sent by rail from Boyup Brook

to Midland is relatively small, this increase in freight charges does not appear to be of great importance.

I am not in a position to give the figures for road charges, but the figure I have given indicates that as far as sheep are concerned there was no very great rise from the year 1953 to 1968.

Another point was made with reference to superphosphate. One comment was that quite a number of farmers had not been able to purchase superphosphate. I presume this reference was made in regard to farmers in that particular area. The figures for the Upper Blackwood Shire and the State, generally, show continued expansion up to the 1966-67 season in regard to the area of pasture over which superphosphate was applied. The figures for 1967-68 are not readily available, but it is hoped that within the next few days they will be available. I estimate that there was quite a substantial increase in 1967-68, as was the case for a number of years preceding that time.

Mr. Jones: Is not the reference made in *Hansard* that farmers could not afford to buy superphosphate? The honourable member did not say what you suggested a moment ago.

Mr. NALDER: I said a number of farmers were not able to purchase any superphosphate; and I am indicating that there has been no reduction in the demand for superphosphate in the Boyup Brook area. I am not in a position to indicate the number of farmers, because it was not given. It was just said that a number of farmers were not able to purchase superphosphate. I want to indicate that there was no reduction in the amount of superphosphate used in the Boyup Brook area. Mr. H. S. Rogers asserted that farmers could not afford to buy superphosphate, but I cannot make a complete check without reference to each individual. It would seem to apply—if at all—to a very small minority.

I have the figures in regard to superphosphate used in the Upper Blackwood Shire. In 1964-65, 27,100 tons of super were used for crops, while 251,300 tons were used for pasture, making a total of 278,400 tons. In 1965-66, 29,900 tons were used for cropping, and 273,700 tons were used for pastures, making a total of 303,600 tons.

In 1966-67 the tonnage for crops dropped slightly to 23,200, while the tonnage for pastures increased considerably to 312,500, making a total of 335,700 tons for that period. I will repeat the total tonnages for those three years: 278,400, 303,600, and 335,700. This superphosphate was used in the Boyup Brook area and the figures show a substantial increase each year.

Mr. O'Connor: A bigger percentage increase than the State average.

Mr. NALDER: I do not now whether a lot of farmers were unable to purchase superphosphate or whether some had to restrict purchases, so I have given the total tonnage for the years, which indicates there was a greater demand over the years 1964, 1965, and 1966 than there had been previously. The last tonnage I mentioned indicates a greater percentage increase. The statement was made that there was a drastic reduction in the use of superphosphate in this area, but the figures I have obtained show that this is not the case.

I want to make this point because we have a case being referred to and, as I said, the honourable member quoted a report. I think he also said he was at the meeting and, no doubt, he confirmed the report as being correct. The statements were used and, therefore, they should be looked at individually to make sure that the facts are correct.

Mr. Davies: Has any new land been opened up in that area?

Mr. NALDER: No doubt some land has been opened up.

Mr. Davies: Do you know the area?

Mr. NALDER: I do not have the figures; that point was not made. New development has taken place in most parts of the State so I would say that possibly there would be some increase in land development in that area. However, when we look at the tonnages of superphosphate used, a steady increase is indicated in this particular area. I presume the president of the shire referred to this area.

Mr. Bovell: New land in the Upper Blackwood Shire would not account for the increase in the amount of superphosphate used.

Mr. NALDER: The Minister for Lands would probably have as good a knowledge of this subject as anyone, and he has made that observation.

The honourable member referred to some figures quoted by Mr. H. S. Rogers which appear to me to be not altogether accurate. Mr. Rogers referred to the price of wool, wethers, and lambs, and stated that there had been a 27 per cent. fall in the price of wool over the last four years. Actually, this fall occurred over a period of five years. However, he ignores the fact that there was a 34 per cent. increase in the four-year period from 1960-61 to 1963-64. I repeat there was an increase of over 34 per cent. over that period.

The general point is that random comparisons of prices can prove anything and the years picked by Mr. Rogers do not reflect a completely accurate picture of the situation. As far as the decline in trade price of wethers and sucker lamb is concerned, it is impossible to check Mr. Rogers' figures. There is no mention of what periods of the relative years are involved, or of the exact quality of the animals concerned.

I mentioned last week that these factors can make a very big difference, and this would be appreciated and understood by those in the industry. Where prices are quoted for certain types of lambs, wethers, or ewes—and even with regard to cattle—very often the prices are not a true and accurate indication of the total sales which have occurred at any one market. So, when a statement is made, it is difficult to indicate a factual situation covering the points I have mentioned.

Mr. Tonkin: Are the farmers in difficulty, or are they not?

Mr. NALDER: If the Leader of the Opposition had been listening to my comments last week he would have heard me say that some farmers are in difficulty. However, if we had no other facts available, and listened to the situation presented, we would have considered the whole of the farming community of Western Australia was doomed. But this is not the position.

Mr. Tonkin: I wonder why so many farmers waste their time attending meetings if there is nothing wrong.

Mr. NALDER: Another statement made by Mr. A. Scott, of Bridgetown, referred to hundreds of farmers having to leave their properties unless things changed. I presume that this gentleman was speaking about the farmers in that area, because I think it was mentioned earlier that a meeting had been called by the secretary of the Stock Owners' Association, which indicated that there were problems in the area. The meetings were attended by farmers from other areas.

I presume that Mr. Scott's remark, that hundreds of farmers would leave their properties, referred to the farmers in the Blackwood and Bridgetown shires, and I would think this was a very exaggerated statement. In 1966-67 there was a total of 644 active rural holdings in these two shires with an average area of arable plus grazing land of 855 acres.

According to an authority with wide financial dealings in Western Australia, the "hundreds" figure is wildly exaggerated. This authority considers that a farm in these shires with an area of about 700 acres developed would be the minimum economic unit. The average farm is well above this minimum, though, undoubtedly, there are numbers of farmers—not hundreds—on the borderline.

So I feel that the gentlemen who make these statements are not doing their districts any service at all but are trying to depreciate the situation. I tried to explain the situation last week that the two areas concerned have been in the grip of a bad season.

Mr. Jones: Were you at the meeting when Mr. Scott gave his lengthy report?

Mr. NALDER: No.

Mr. Jones: Unfortunately I quoted a newspaper report. Mr. Scott's submission was not fully quoted by the Press. I think that members of your party would not deny this.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. Mitchell): Order!

Mr. NALDER: I am only able to go on the facts as they appear in *Hansard* and on the speech made by the honourable member. As I said last week, I still have not received any written communication from the secretary of that meeting. I will admit that last Thursday I received a letter from a Mr. J. Rogers who, I understand, was the organiser of the meeting held in Anzac House. Mr. Rogers requested an opportunity to meet me on the following day. I received the letter on the Thursday and he wanted to see me on the Friday, but I am afraid I was at Esperance on that day so I was not able to meet him. However, I have arranged to meet him and I understand he will see me tomorrow. That is the first communication I have received from any meeting.

Mr. Davies: You were invited to the meeting at Anzac House.

Mr. NALDER: Yes, but I was otherwise engaged and I wrote and explained the position.

Mr. Davies: The Minister said he had received no communication.

Mr. NALDER: I have received no communication as a result of the meeting. I have received no copy of any resolutions and I have received no requests whatsoever.

I would like to refer to the point raised by the member for Collie regarding backyard killing. This appears to need some clarification. The point raised by the honourable member is quite confusing. He also complained of the costs involved—and I think he was referring to Midland—where abattoir staff are required to make detailed inspections of carcasses of mutton while on the chain. I would like to mention that this inspection is being demanded by the importing countries. Unless we are prepared to carry out these inspections then the meat will not be accepted for export.

No men are employed at Midland just for the sake of being employed; they are there for special reasons. They have to check the carcasses of mutton on the chain to see that they pass the inspection requirements for the export market. This is the reason they are employed, and for no other reason whatsoever. I am sure the abattoir board is quite conscious of the increased charges involved. The honourable member would criticise the Government if it were not prepared to make available a proper inspection staff at any abattoir.

As I said earlier, the honourable member referred to the low standard of backyard killing. I do not know what he was referring to. If he was referring to farmers killing their own stock then I point out that farmers have always killed for their own requirements, and will continue to do so. I do not think anybody questions that right. The reference to backyard killing, in my opinion, could only refer to farmers killing their own stock. As I have said, there is no objection whatsoever to farmers slaughtering their own pigs, cattle, or sheep for their own requirements. If the honourable member refers to slaughterhouses in the country, then this is another matter altogether. Slaughterhouses in the country, except those licensed for primary industry, are not allowed to kill for export, so that has no influence whatever on the situation.

One point must be clearly understood. If we wish to sell our meat on an export market we must accept the buyers' standards of hygiene, even though a lot of people in the industry might think these standards go to the extreme.

The honourable member referred to the price of cattle, but I think that does not apply to this resolution. I think he has been fairly wide of the mark, and his comments indicate that he does not appreciate this point. I do not criticise him for that, but his informant must also have been very wide of the mark when he asked if there were too many farmers handling cattle, and whether, if the number were reduced, this would reduce the cost to the farmer. I will show quite clearly that farmers are receiving the same price—or have been over the last six months—as at any time previously.

I remember a record being made available in one of the agents' reports during the month of May or June showing that two dairy bulls were offered for sale and brought a record price for Western Australia and for Australia on the beef market. That is the situation, as I related last week, which also applies to cow meat. Should we suggest that farmers do not produce more cattle? I think I indicated last week that the cattle market is very lucrative at the present and I know many farmers wish that they had not got out of the cattle industry in the last few years.

The honourable member also mentioned centralised killing—a situation which apparently exists in Tasmania. I would hate to think that we encouraged the same situation in Western Australia. I suppose that Tasmania would fit into Western Australia 100 times—this might be slightly exaggerated—but it indicates that to contemplate a centralised killing set-up in Western Australia would be ridiculous.

Our situation is as good as any in Australia. Only a few years ago a member of another abattoir board came to Western

Australia and spent some weeks fully investigating the system which operates in this State. He complimented the Government on its system, and when he compared our system with that operating in his own State he felt that ours, from the farmers' point of view and from the consumers' point of view, and also from the exporters' point of view, was an ideal set-up.

Briefly, the situation in Western Australia is that we have the market at Midland. This market practically controls meat prices throughout Western Australia.

We have the abattoir at Robb Jetty, which members know only too well. Also, we have the country butchers and abattoirs at Harvey, Waroona, Bunbury, and Albany, and a number of other country abattoirs as well. The ones to which I have just referred have a license to slaughter for export and the hygiene conditions demanded for export meat are observed in those establishments.

So it will be seen we have a number of slaughtering places, quite apart from the abattoirs which are situated in the north. Those abattoirs slaughter for export. I should have mentioned Geraldton with the other towns. The abattoir there has a license to slaughter stock for export, but the other country abattoirs, in the main, slaughter for their own towns.

This system has operated for years and, to an extent, it has been satisfactory to the majority of people. Also, we have the system of weight-and-grades sales which operate at West Perth and O'Connor. This system gives the farmer, if he so wishes, an opportunity to have his stock slaughtered for his own use. The stock are brought down here, inspected, and are sold on a weight-and-grade basis. There is a wide range of competition among the wholesale and retail butchers and, in addition, private people can go to these sales, if they wish, and bid for any carcase, or part carcase of meat that is being sold.

The farmer can please himself how he sells, his stock, whether on a weight-and-grade basis, by auction, privately, or through an agent. There is a wide range of opportunities to enable people to sell their stock and, as I said before, when a member of an Eastern States abattoirs board was over here he complimented us on the wide range of opportunities for farmers to take full advantage of the prices that were offering for their stock. Therefore I say heaven forbid that we set up one central slaughtering place for all stock. It would be completely impracticable and uneconomic in every respect.

The motion requests that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report on the question of the low price being received by farmers for their stock, on the one hand, and the high price being paid by the consumer on the other hand.

I think I did mention last week that I felt that as time went by the market would improve. That is happening daily. As a matter of fact, a farmer from Kukerin told me today that at a sale held in his area only recently the price being paid for merino lambs on the store market had almost doubled the figure being paid three or four weeks ago.

So the situation, as I hoped it would, is improving and greater confidence is being felt by the farming community. The banks and the financial institutions generally indicate that the situation has improved and will continue to improve. However, in order to satisfy those who wish to have information made available to them, the Government is prepared to set up a committee which will commence operating immediately. The Chairman will be Mr. J. M. Clayton, who is the Co-ordinator of Agricultural Industries.

Mr. Jones: Mr. Clayton?

Mr. NALDER: Yes, Mr. J. M. Clayton. The other two members of the committee will be Mr. David Fisher, the senior Adviser of the Farmers' Advisory Service of the R. & I. Bank, and Mr. Halvorsen, who, prior to two years ago, was chairman of the abattoir board. He is an accountant. Those three gentlemen will be asked to inquire into the situation, and they will report back to me as early as possible.

Mr. Norton: What are the terms of reference?

Mr. NALDER: The terms of reference are as follows:—

- (1) The price received by producers in various areas for all types of mutton and lamb.
- (2) The price paid for such mutton and lamb by local consumers in various localities of the State.
- (3) The price paid for various grades of mutton and lamb by exporters.
- (4) All aspects pertaining to the purchase of live sheep for export.
- (5) The various costs incurred in conversion of sheep, mutton and lamb from producer to the consumer or exporter.
- (6) Any other aspects affecting the production and marketing of sheep, mutton and lamb for human consumption in Western Australia and export which the Committee considers relevant.

Those are the points the committee will be asked to investigate and, for that reason, I oppose the motion.

MR. H. D. EVANS (Warren) [9.22 p.m.]: We on this side of the House are pleased to see that some action is being taken regarding the matters mentioned in the motion. In taking this action I think the Government recognises, and is showing that it recognises, that something must be

done to placate the great unrest there is in the meat industry. The members of the committee—namely, Mr. Clayton, Mr. Halvorsen, and Mr. Fisher—seem to be eminently suited for the task they have in front of them, and the terms of reference, as just quoted by the Minister, are quite comprehensive. I cannot recall the terms of reference in detail, but they appear to be comprehensive and satisfactory.

However, the most important aspect of any committee, and particularly of this one, is the power it possesses. A committee of this kind would need to have substantial powers to enable it to operate effectively. If you will bear with me, Sir, I will ask you to reflect on the complexities of the price structure in the meat industry; and those complexities are increased by two other points—I refer to the variables which are to be found at all stages, and these make it difficult to generalise or to apply a fixed set of premises. The other point is the extreme difficulty of obtaining reliable figures and percentages for those who are involved in the meat industry.

A committee would need to have fairly extensive powers to enable it to overcome these obscure factors. With regard to the present situation in the metropolitan area—and I feel we should confine ourselves, at this stage, to the situation in the metropolitan area, because as the Minister has indicated it is the Midland market which to a large extent controls meat prices—there are a number of processes and a number of people involved in bringing animals from the truck at Midland to the housewife.

I shall ask members to think of the total price of meat as containing three component parts. Firstly, there is the price paid for the carcase; secondly the expenses and the margins added by the wholesale butcher; and, thirdly, there are the expenses and the margins added by the retail butcher. Those figures, in composite form, determine the price of the meat that is purchased at the shops of the retail butchers.

The price of the animal in the pen at the saleyard represents the return to the farmer, and from this return he has to meet commission charges, transport charges, and other incidental charges. I will return to that aspect in a moment when we discuss the differential between the retail and wholesale prices.

To the wholesale butchers' costs are added a certain margin. In the charges against the wholesale butcher there may, or may not, be agents' fees; there may perhaps be cooling or refrigeration fees if the meat has to be kept over 24 hours; and there are also abattoir charges which are set by the board. The minimum charge for the killing of a sheep is 70.3c, and for a lamb the minimum is 60.2c. The heavier animals, of course, cost more, as

the charge is determined on a weight basis. There is also a cooling charge, as I have said, if the meat has to be kept for any longer than 24 hours.

The charges of the wholesale butcher, plus the margin, and plus the cost of the animal, represents the amount the retail butcher has to pay, and the retail butcher receives his meat in the form of carcasses delivered to his shop. He pays so much a pound for his meat and he has a number of expenses, some of which are fixed and some of which are variable. He has many fixed expenses, such as holiday pay, sick pay, long-service leave, rent, insurance, rates, water rates, land tax, payroll tax, interest, accountancy costs, motor vehicle registration fees, subscriptions, service contracts for refrigeration motors and that type of thing, telephone costs and sundries such as registration fees, donations, etc.

His variable expenses are occasioned by wages, travelling costs, electricity, wrapping, cleaning, advertising, printing, stationery, repairs and renovations, and sundries such as casings, salt, brine, compound, elastic bands, papers, skewers, and so on. These costs are not static, but they can be calculated on a weekly basis and he adds them to the cost of his meat and then he adds his margin of profit.

Many of these costs, of course, will apply equally to the wholesale butcher. As I have just said, the retailer adds his margin of profit to his costs, and that margin is fixed by the individual butcher. How does he do it? He is a businessman and he adds the maximum which he feels he can charge without offending his clientele and harming his trade. So, with due regard to expenses, which includes the price of the animal, to the area he serves, the particular tastes of his clientele—and this varies with each suburb—the quantity of meat he sells—because the amount sold in one week has an important bearing on the position—he charges what he feels he can get away with.

We must not forget that every situation differs to some extent. The practical method suggested by the Meat and Allied Trades Federation to fix prices is fairly easily determined. The butcher takes the wholesale price of his meat and after allowing that he will sell only 90 per cent. of the lamb he buys and 80 per cent. of the sheep—those are the figures laid down by the Meat and Allied Trades Federation—and using this as a basis of calculation, the operating costs are determined at so much per pound over the amount of meat which is handled each week, and then so much per pound in the way of net profit. This, as I have mentioned, is on a weekly basis.

To clarify that point we will say that from this illustration the wholesale cost, dealing with 100 lb. of lamb at, say, 20c

a lb., and adding the margin required which is 10c, would be 30c per lb. That must be the return to the retail butcher in order that he might survive in his business. One hundred pounds of carcass meat must return him \$30. As I have already said, only 80 per cent. of mutton and 90 per cent. of lamb is used as a basis of calculation. As a consequence the butcher will have to sell at about 34c to maintain that level of margin and he calculates this out. If he is to be returned \$30 he will then have to charge an average of 33.3c per lb.

Then of course there is a variation in the different cuts. This presents no difficulty because once he knows the average price per pound he must charge for the carcass, he can then turn to a ready reckoner and the prices will be laid out for him for the various cuts. This is a fairly ready method for the practical butcher.

However, as I have said, it is an individual matter, as is also the determination of margins. Having regard to this point, I now come back to what I said at the outset with reference to the variations which occur at each stage. If we start with the sale price of the animals, every farmer here knows that sales fluctuate quite violently. A variation can be occasioned by the numbers at a sale; seasonal conditions; and the time of the year. All these things must be taken into account.

Surprisingly enough if we query a retail butcher on the fact that the sale prices fluctuate violently, but his retail prices do not move very much at all, he will then tell us that he must take into consideration the situation which will exist over the whole year, and the fact that his clientele will not stand violent fluctuations. He will say he must rely on his own judgment and allow for both lean and flush periods. This is the explanation the retail butcher will give.

There has been much criticism about the current sale method for the disposal of stock, and I have many articles on my file on this subject. However, I think the best is one which was published in the paper and it was by S. J. Walter of Narrikup. He made a very neatly documented submission which could be quite valid if the animals he quoted could be identified. His letter appeared under the heading, "Letters to the Editor" on the 8th August this year. He indicated one aspect about which there has been a great deal of criticism.

There is also a further aspect, and I think perhaps I should now refer to the meetings currently held. At most of the ones I have attended there has been an almost unanimous demand to abolish the present sale method and substitute a weight-and-grade basis.

'One of the main grounds for discontent is the quotations which appear in the paper. The Minister knows full well that these are just the estimate of the person writing the article; and probably other experts at the sale, equally qualified, would not agree with him. By his experience of the years and his feel of the sale he estimates what the average will be. It is certainly not precise. This probably occasions more comment from farmers than anything else.

The original comment from the livestock agent was to the effect that the buyer said that fat lambs were being sold at an average of \$5.20 to \$5.50 a head, or 70c to \$1 less than the lowest price last year. This comment was taken up very quickly by a farmer from Mt. Barker, by the name of Mr. C. Holden. He stated—

I do not dispute that there is more lamb on the market and that the export market is poor, but the estimate of the average price for fat lambs is not correct.

This is one of the main grievances of farmers—that the average quoted in the paper is not what they are getting. Mr. Holden went on to say—

I am a fat-lamb breeder, who this year has produced more than 1,000 fat lambs for market, none of which has come within \$2 of "a livestock buyer's" quoted average of \$5.35 and these lambs were good—averaging 30 to 35 lb. dressed.

Fellow farmers and I have been selling lambs such as these for as little as \$1.80 and my average has reached only \$2.40, or 8c per lb. dressed.

As members can see there is some occlusion with regard to the only information we really have, which is through the newspaper reports. I would just mention that point to the Minister.

I would now like to quote a letter from the President of the Meat and Allied Trades Federation. Referring to Mr. Waddell's statement which appeared in *The West Australian* on the 3rd September, the state executive committee of the federation reaffirmed it; and in reply to the criticism and other misleading assertions made by grower correspondents to the Press, the following points are made by the federation in order that the public may learn the true position:—

Some livestock producers overlook the fact that even if carcase meat was given to butchers for nothing, a charge would still have to be made to the consumer to cover overhead expenses and the butcher is faced with these expenses each week even if his sales are low.

I think as an observation of economics it is pretty well axiomatic. To continue—

Moreover, carcase meat contains a large percentage of unsaleable portions—

And he has quoted 10 per cent. in the case of lamb and 20 per cent. in the case of mutton in his documented brochures; which is not as great as he implies here. To continue the quote—

—such as fat and bones which the butcher must absorb in his overall costing.

Rubbish! He has already shown how this is worked out on the amount of net meat after allowing for this waste and disregarding the bones and fat completely. That comes in the way of a small bonus. To continue—

He has no monopoly protection or security of tenure, he must compete effectively on the open market to survive.

I would agree with Mr. Waddell that certainly the butcher has his expenses. He makes this point clear; but the point he does not make clear is what amount of margin is charged in each case. This is the point, and it is the one which is rather difficult to ascertain.

This same theme was taken up by another butcher from Bunbury, and he replied to the comment of Mr. C. Holden. He said—

I appreciate that some sheep farmers are having a bad time, but I must contradict misleading statements and figures quoted by farmers to the newspapers.

C. Holden claims he has averaged \$2.40 a head for 1,000 30-35lb. sucker lambs of good quality at an average of 8c per lb. dressed. He says that he and other farmers have sometimes got \$1.80 for lambs such as these.

He blames the writer of the article to which he is replying for the poor quality of the animals that have been sold, but not having seen the animals it is hard for him to determine the quality. I suggest that C. Holden, and other producers in the same plight as he is in, have been turning out the same quality lambs for many years, and this year was no exception.

To illustrate the difference of opinion between the views of Mr. Waddell, Mr. Pike, who is a butcher, and a number of others, the following appears in a letter Mr. H. E. Cook of Merredin wrote to the Press—

With reference to the comments of Mr. W. H. Waddell, president of the Meat and Allied Trades Federation, would he publish details of the complete price structure through the Midland salesyard, the abattoirs, the wholesale butcher and the retail

butcher of a prime wether from Narrogin dressed out at 49lb. and purchased for 34c per lb. and a good dorset-horn sucker from Meckering dressed at 39lb. and purchased for 12c?

These quotations are not the bottom of the market by any means.

He went on to give other illustrations, but Mr. Waddell does not follow through the theme. Mr. Waddell could only give a long list of expenses, and that is only half of the picture. I think that highlights the difficulties with which we are faced.

The first thing a Select Committee has to do is to establish clearly what is the actual position. We know that the costs in each situation of the meat industry are highly individualised. No two shops are the same, and no two rents are the same; but in discussion with a considerable number of people involved in the meat industry over the past months one thing has been made very clear; that is, no matter to whom one is speaking nobody appears to be doing very well.

However, in seeking some sort of indication of margins in the case of the wholesale butcher and the retail butcher the figures are very difficult to obtain. I find that expenses are very readily quoted, but I also observe that no two people have the same figure for expenses. For the wholesaler the estimated expenses are quoted at 3c to 6c per lb. of meat handled. I cannot dispute these figures; all I can say is that a retail butcher who does away with the wholesaler charges himself 1c per pound for dealing with Midland.

We know that the expenses do vary, and that is obvious; but we do not know what the expenses actually are. I have been given the figures of expenses of the retailers at from 8c to 11c per lb., and Mr. Pike from Bunbury states that his expenses are 11c to 13c per lb.

Just what is the position? As I said previously, nobody in the trade is prepared to discuss margins, nor is it proper for an individual to press for such information. I certainly was not prepared to do that. This becomes an issue for a properly constituted body, such as a committee. The only area of agreement was that no-one along the line was doing very well.

My simple faith in the members of the meat trade crumbled when, after I had spoken to one butcher for a considerable length of time and listened to his list of expenses, I learned conclusively later on that not only had his gross percentage of profit increased, but so had his net percentage of profit. My faith in the members of the meat trade was well nigh obliterated.

There are two other aspects to which I would draw attention. I was confining my remarks in a general way to the metropolitan meat trade. When inquiries are made we find there is a considerable

amount of country buying of animals, but what impact the purchase of animals in large numbers in the country and the bringing of them to Perth to be sold has is beyond my power to estimate.

One further point is that the number of large buyers in the saleyards has dwindled in recent years. The number which has been mentioned to me is reduced to about one-quarter of the number which previously operated. This suggests that with the diminution of large buyers in this way it becomes possible to manipulate markets to control the prices in various ways.

The Minister tonight named a committee of inquiry to go into this matter, but he did not indicate the powers which such a committee would have. It is not to be a Select Committee, as the member for Collie sought. Unless the proposed committee is given specific powers to overcome the difficulties that will be encountered in the various sections of the meat trade, I hesitate to say what its effectiveness will be. I suggest to the Minister that as cold, hard dollars and cents are involved in this issue, the committee could not depend on the goodwill and friendliness of businessmen involved. I appreciate the fact that the Government has seen fit to recognise that a difficult situation does exist, but I cannot agree with the proposed method of resolving it.

**MR. NORTON (Gascoyne) [9.48 p.m.]:** I want to say a few words in respect of the motion; that is, in respect of mutton and lamb prices as they affect the producer and the housewife. First of all, I want to comment on a remark made by the Minister in respect of the appointment of a Select Committee. He stated that a Select Committee would not have time to report back to Parliament during this session.

I would point out to him—I think I am correct in saying this—that this session of Parliament will end in approximately April next. That virtually gives a Select Committee six months in which to arrive at its findings.

The second point to which I make reference is this: Should Parliament be prorogued before the Select Committee makes its findings then the Government has the power to turn it into an Honorary Royal Commission. I think the Minister was a bit misleading in this respect.

Mr. Nalder: I beg your pardon: I did not try to mislead the House one bit.

Mr. NORTON: The Minister said the Select Committee would have to inquire and report back.

Mr. Nalder: And report back by the end of this month—during this part of the session.

Mr. NORTON: It does not have to do that.



Mr. Nalder: Farmers do not want to wait six months, they want a report now. That is why the Government decided to appoint a committee. I did not try to mislead the House at all.

Mr. NORTON: I took it as misleading; and I think other members not familiar with the working of Parliament would have taken it the same way.

Mr. Bovell: You are admitting you are not familiar with the working of Parliament.

Mr. NORTON: I base my argument on reports from *The West Australian*. The reports to which I will refer were written by Mr. M. McLennan, who is probably quite well known to a number of farmers in the country. I met him many years ago in the Bruce Rock area when he was working with a stock firm. At the present time he is a buyer and seller at the Midland markets. He also buys lambs, sheep, and I believe cattle. He sells the carcasses on the market in O'Connor. So members will see he is well and truly mixed up with the meat trade and knows what is going on. As far as I am concerned the reports he writes for *The West Australian* each week are the best that one could get.

When one follows these reports through, one can see the complete prices for wethers, ewes, sucker lambs, baby beef, cow beef, and so on; and when dealing with mutton and lamb he gives the value of the pelt, the total value of the beast on the hoof, and the value per pound. He does this every week; and if any member has been following his reports over the past six months he will have seen that the prices have shown very little variation.

I have two reports here, one from *The West Australian* of the 19th September and the other from *The West Australian* of the 25th September. On the 19th September, 26,986 sheep and lambs were placed on the market at Midland, while in the following week there were 17,417, or 9,569 fewer. However, the price did not vary at all.

Prime wether mutton killing at about 44 lb. brought a price of 6½c per pound, but the skin was worth only 2c, so it must have been newly shorn. If one goes into a shop in Perth or the suburbs, one has great difficulty in obtaining a side of mutton. One often sees stewing chops, braising chops, or grilling chops put out as a 4 lb. special. This seems to be cheap, but it is very low quality mutton. As for hogget, one cannot buy it, although occasionally it can be bought at Nelsons markets. We find that on the 25th September the top price for lamb was 13½c per lb. while sucker lamb was a little higher at 15½c per lb.

Let us look at the other side and see what the housewife is paying. I have taken cuttings from the same paper dated

the 25th September. In this paper there is an advertisement by Mastercut Butchers—a group that advertises under one heading. They are high-class butchers and sell the best meat. We find that on that particular date this group was offering lamb which could be bought for 13c or 14c per lb. as a special at 28c per lb. for the side. In the same advertisement this group of butchers advertised that one could win \$1,000. I am wondering if this was a lottery and whether permission had been given to the group by the Lotteries Commission. That \$1,000 had to come from somewhere, so the housewife would be paying for it in the form of the higher price of 28c per lb.

On the same day Woolworths advertised genuine spring lamb loin chops at 40c per lb. The firm also advertised genuine spring lamb hindquarters for \$2.45, but did not say what the weight was. I would say a hindquarter could weigh about 3 pounds.

We come to another advertisement for mutton at 13c per lb. which was more or less a special, yet it was being purchased for 4½c to 5c per lb. The last advertisement I wish to quote is for spring lamb fores at 24c and lamb loin chops for 38c, which proves the margin between the purchase price and the price to the housewife is beyond all reason.

When one looks at the chart produced by Wesfarmers, which was quoted the other night, one can see the discrepancies in the prices for last year and this year; and, generally speaking, the price paid to producers for mutton and lamb has gone down by half.

I believe a Select Committee from this House would be the ideal committee to carry out this type of inquiry. In this House we have producers who would know all about the sale of stock, and other members could represent the consumers or the housewives. So from the two sides of the House five men could be chosen who would be able to go into this matter very thoroughly as both aspects would be represented. They would be able to produce a true and factual report; and I do not think it would take them long to get to the bottom of the discrepancy between the wholesale price, or the price on the hoof, and the price which the consumer is paying.

This problem is not a new one. As a matter of fact, it dates back to before World War I. I understand from reading old records that this question was a bone of contention in 1912. At that time we had in Western Australia an Act which was called the Government Trading Concerns Act. It was a very loose Act and one that simply allowed the Government to run trading concerns. However, it did not require any reports to be made by

the Minister to the House—it simply allowed trading concerns to operate. In 1916, that Act was repealed and our present State Trading Concerns Act took its place.

I would point out that in 1912 and 1913 the Government established three butcher shops: one in Perth, one in Kalgoorlie, and one in Collie. Beef in those days was selling on the hoof at 2½d. per lb.

Mr. Bovell: That was not the most successful Government enterprise.

Mr. NORTON: No, but the Government did have foresight. It later repealed the Act and brought down the State Trading Concerns Act, which, with the exception of one minor amendment, is still the same. It had attached to it a schedule which covered all the trading concerns on which the Government could embark.

At that time there were the State Saw Mills, which have since been sold. The other concerns were the State Brickworks, and the State Implement and Engineering Works, which are still included in the schedule, although there was an amendment to the schedule in 1935 which was afterwards repealed. There were also the State Quarry at Boya, the State Shipping Service, and the State Hotels. Then we come to Meat Distribution, and the nature of the operations of this concern were—

retailing meat, and all acts necessary and incidental thereto for the purpose of controlling the retail price thereof.

I think it would be quite a good idea if the Government were to set up a controlled butcher shop. The Government would then know the prices being charged by the abattoirs and the price which the housewives should pay. I might also mention that the State has the rights with respect to fish.

I support, wholeheartedly, the appointment of a Select Committee, even though it might take a week or so longer to carry out its investigations. I believe a Select Committee would be able to bring down an excellent report. I have nothing against the men mentioned by the Minister, but I do believe we could appoint a very good Select Committee from the personnel of this Chamber. I support the appointment of a Select Committee.

MR. JONES (Collie) [10.2 p.m.]: I would like to comment briefly on a couple of points raised by the Minister when he referred to the case I submitted requesting the appointment of a Select Committee. I would like to clear up any misunderstanding regarding a reference I made when introducing the motion to the House when I referred to a statement attributed to Mr. Rogers.

I indicated to the House the plight of the industry, and that a number of farmers in the district were get-

ting together for the purpose of drawing the attention of the Government to the conditions within various sections of the primary industry. I quoted a statement made by Mr. Rogers, which appears in *Hansard*, and it will be appreciated that they were not my words. The remarks were read from the Press statement of the meeting which was held at Boyup Brook. Mr. Scott gave a lengthy report which had been prepared by one of the Bridgetown consultants, indicating the state of the industry.

Mr. Nalder: Do I understand that Mr. Scott actually read a report submitted by an adviser? It was not his own opinion?

Mr. JONES: That is so. I want to correct the situation so that it is not misunderstood.

Mr. Nalder: I understood it was his report.

Mr. JONES: No, it was the report of the advisory committee. The Minister did not give me a case to answer because, in my opinion, he did not make out a case. It was interesting to note that the Minister did not refer to meat prices generally, or the Government Statistician's report. I went to great lengths to show the movement of meat prices as compared with the statistician's figures. This matter was not referred to by the Minister, and no mention was made of the price of meat in the metropolitan area.

When dealing with the question of backyard killing, I was referring to the new procedure adopted by the Department of Primary Industry regarding the exercise of control so far as health inspectors are concerned.

Whilst I would rather see a Select Committee appointed, I appreciate the position in which the Government finds itself. No doubt the Government realises that there is concern amongst the farmers. It will be interesting to read the findings of the special committee. I would have liked to see the terms of reference give more power to make recommendations. However, such is not the case and the matter will be left in the hands of the Government.

Whilst the decision of the Minister, or the Government, does not fully meet the request in the motion which I have submitted to the House, at least it does indicate that the Government is concerned with the situation and has been prompted, from this side of the House, to look into the question. I hope some good will come from the inquiry by the committee.

Question put and negatived.

Motion defeated.

House adjourned at 10.7 p.m.

# Legislative Council

Thursday, the 10th October, 1968

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver) took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

## QUESTION ON NOTICE

### ELECTRICITY CHARGES

#### *Reduction in Northern Areas*

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Minister for Mines:

In view of the 1967-68 profitable trading results of electricity undertakings conducted by the Public Works Department at—

Roebourne, 48 per cent. surplus;

Kununurra, 57 per cent. surplus;

Halls Creek, 86 per cent. surplus;

will the Government consider reducing the existing high charges to consumers in these towns?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

The financial results in 1967-68 for the following electricity undertakings conducted by the Public Works Department are:—

<b>Roebourne</b>	
Surplus on working expenses .....	\$8,872
Percentage of surplus to working expenses .....	29.77
	per cent.
Interest on capital and depreciation .....	\$14,900
Loss after providing for interest and depreciation .....	\$6,118
<b>Kununurra—</b>	
Surplus on working expenses .....	\$61,077
Percentage of surplus to working expenses .....	34.00
	per cent.
Interest on capital and depreciation .....	\$82,013
Loss after providing for interest and depreciation .....	\$20,936
<b>Halls Creek—</b>	
Surplus on working expenses .....	\$13,742
Percentage of surplus to working expenses .....	75.70
	per cent.
Interest on capital and depreciation .....	\$7,006
Profit after providing for interest and depreciation .....	\$6,646

Charges to consumers are currently under review.

## BILLS (3): THIRD READING

### 1. Scientology Bill.

Bill read a third time, on motion by The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (Minister for Health), and transmitted to the Assembly.

### 2. Police Act Amendment Bill.

Bill read a third time, on motion by The Hon. A. F. Griffith (Minister for Mines), and passed.

### 3. Fisheries Act Amendment Bill.

Bill read a third time, on motion by The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (Minister for Fisheries and Fauna), and transmitted to the Assembly.

## WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MARINE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

### *Second Reading*

**THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH** (North Metropolitan—Minister for Mines) [2.39 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill proposes some amendments to the Western Australian Marine Act. Section 17 of that Act provides for the making of regulations generally. Paragraph (v) of that section covers regulations which, at present, may be made prescribing the number and description of persons to be carried as crew of any class or kind of coast-trade ship or harbour and river ship, and it provides also for the granting of exemptions from any such regulations.

International Labour Conference Convention No. 58 requires that children under the age of 15 years shall not be employed or work on vessels, other than vessels upon which only members of the same family are employed. To enable the State to ratify this, it is proposed to insert a new paragraph in this section for prescribing the records to be kept of persons under the age of 16 years, employed in any capacity on harbour and river ships.

Other relevant paragraphs in clause 3 of the Bill amend penalties under section 17 and provide for an increase in the penalty for a breach of any regulation applicable to requirements of coast-trade and harbour and river vessels. Existing penalties, set in 1948, are considered to be an inadequate deterrent now. The proviso to section 21 (3) of the Act, states that engineers' certificates are not necessary on vessels used north of the 27th parallel of south latitude. There was little marine activity in the north-west in 1948 when the parent Act was proclaimed and employers encountered considerable difficulty in meeting the requirements of the subsection which relates to engine room manning. With current north-west development and the availability of certified personnel, this situation no longer holds and it is proposed to delete the proviso to this subsection. Furthermore, an amendment to subsection (5) will increase penalties for uncertified persons acting in the capacity of masters, mates, and engineers on coast-trade and harbour and river vessels and also appropriate penalties applying to persons employing uncertificated personnel in these capacities.

It is further proposed by the addition of new subsections (7) and (8), to enable the Harbour and Light Department to ensure that certificated personnel are at their duty stations on harbour and river vessels when this is considered most necessary. A need for statutory requirements of this nature has become apparent through cases where personnel with suspended certificates have continued to