

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: Let the buyer beware.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: That is right. That is the situation at the present time. I think we should bear it in mind that this can happen already. The land can be sold and the person who happens to be the owner at the time is the one who will have his land sold, even though the rates might have accumulated during the time of a previous owner. This may happen to some people.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: It would be a very small minority.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: It would be too bad if one happened to be in the small minority. I can see that Mr. Baxter is quite confident this will never happen to him.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: I will make sure of that.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: I merely draw attention to the fact that this situation already applies. It is the present position that land can be sold even though rates have been accumulated on it by previous owners. In other words, the water rates and the excess water rates already follow the land.

It is therefore a little difficult to amend some of the proposals contained in this Bill. I refer particularly to the *caveat* section. It occurred to me that it may be unfair to allow the Water Supply Department to lodge a *caveat* when excess water rates which were payable by a tenant are owing. When that *caveat* is put on the title it will do exactly what Mr. Baxter says the land agent does. It will notify everybody that rates and taxes are owing on that land. It may be advantageous for a *caveat* to be lodged in certain cases because, as a buyer, one would know rates were owing on the land.

For that reason, I decided it would be inadvisable to attempt to amend the section dealing with *caveats*. To a certain extent, what I have said applies to the provisions in relation to making owners liable for occupiers' rates. There is an argument that it is the owner who installs the occupier or the tenant, not the rate-payers, generally, and not the Water Supply Department. Therefore, one must also look at that side of the picture. But if the occupier does not pay the rates, who does pay them?

I think the best thing to do would be to cut the water off, and I daresay that happens in most cases. On the other hand, why should the general body of rate-payers pay the water rates of a tenant who leaves the taps turned on? There are definitely two sides to this argument and, although I have certain misgivings about parts of this Bill, I do not intend to move any amendments to it. I just make those few suggestions.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs (Minister for Local Government).

STATE HOUSING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by The Hon. W. F. Willesee (Leader of the House), read a first time.

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS BILL

Assembly's Message

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendment made by the Council.

PLANT DISEASES (REGISTRATION FEES) ACT REPEAL BILL

Order Discharged

THE HON. W. F. WILLESEE (North-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [9.58 p.m.]: I move—

That Order of the Day No. 23 be discharged from the notice paper.

Question put and passed.

Order discharged.

House adjourned at 9.59 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, the 9th May, 1972

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

BILLS (6): ASSENT

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

1. Western Australian Marine Act Amendment Bill.
2. Presbyterian Church of Australia Act Amendment Bill.
3. Education Act Amendment Bill.
4. Parks and Reserves Act Amendment Bill.
5. Beekeepers Act Amendment Bill.
6. Bee Industry Compensation Act Amendment Bill.

IRON ORE AGREEMENTS

Wittenoom: Tabling of Plan

MR. GRAHAM (Balcatta—Minister for Development and Decentralisation) [4.34 p.m.]: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Darling Range for drawing my attention to the fact that I omitted to table a plan in connection with the Wittenoom iron ore agreement Bill. I now present the plan for tabling.

The plan was tabled.

FUEL AND POWER BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr. Bickerton (Minister for Fuel), and read a first time.

PERTH REGIONAL RAILWAY BILL

Introduction and First Reading

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

Second Reading

MR. JAMIESON (Belmont—Minister for Works) [4.38 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Members are aware of the decision made by the Government to construct an underground railway through the city of Perth and to replace the existing rail passenger service between Perth and Fremantle with a bus service. However, before any planning can be put in hand, it is first necessary to present to Parliament for approval the legislation necessary for the construction of an underground railway and for discontinuance of portion of the Fremantle to Guildford railway.

This Bill provides first for the construction of approximately six miles two chains of electric railway—three miles 32 chains of it underground—linking West Leederville, East Perth, and Victoria Park. The second provision is for the closure of 10 miles seven chains of railway between Perth and a point near Leighton. This closure is to enable conversion of the right-of-way to a busway.

Details of the line to be constructed and the portion of line to be discontinued are shown on W.A.G.R. plans 64936 and 64937, and I will table a copy of each of these plans together with a copy of the report of the Director-General of Transport.

The Director-General of Transport is the chairman of the steering committee of the Perth Regional Transport Study Group and in his report he has covered the details of both these proposals, and I quote from the director-general's report for the information of members.

Both of these proposals are part of the Government's recently announced long-term commitment to a Perth regional transport plan, which incorporates a high capacity rail rapid transit system and an extensive bus system feeding into rail wherever practicable.

This decision was made following some very comprehensive research work undertaken in the form of the Perth Regional Transport Study during 1970, and the subsequent evaluation of additional alternatives specified as a matter of Government policy.

In the long term a high capacity electric rail network must form the backbone of the metropolitan passenger transport system, particularly for journeys which are oriented to, from, and within the central business district.

The Perth Regional Transport Study completed in 1971 supported this view, though it defined "long term" as from the 1990s onwards. For the interim period it recommended that the transit requirement should be met by a bus system with buses operating substantially on exclusive rights-of-way which would be provided on rail rights-of-way by discontinuing rail services.

Such interim arrangements are considered unjustified by the Government which decided that a start should be made now on the first component of a high capacity electric rail system. It is the intention that this system be completed in stages over many years and be programmed in such a way that the first stage, incorporating the city underground section, can be operated contiguously with the remaining suburban railways and complementary to the existing bus system.

The new railway as now proposed will eventually form the southern and eastern legs of a large ring system through the city, but initially it will be connected only to the two existing radiating lines to Midland and Armadale, both of which will be converted for electric traction. As I will explain later the existing railway between Perth and Leighton should be closed and the land reserved for use as an exclusive busway.

Major bus-rail interchanges and park-and-ride facilities will be located at the three extremities of the new railway so that the underground will become the main central business district distributor of both commuter and internally generated traffic.

As the majority of public transport passengers will continue either to commence or complete their journeys by bus, buses will feed into the major bus-rail interchanges and the two radiating railways wherever this can be done with advantage. In time other radiating lines will be built progressively and connected to the underground, and the northern leg of the city ring will be completed.

The precise alignment of the underground can only be determined after an engineering study of alternative routes and of the best location from the point of view of public convenience in the long term, with the need in mind that the total area eventually serviced by the underground ring should be sufficient to allow for unlimited central city expansion well into the next century.

One of the main problems in planning for future growth in our urban public transport system is that the three existing lines radiating from the city to Midland,

Armadale, and Fremantle are not located on alignments which best meet the regional passenger transport task. The major portion of this task is roughly north-south through the city, parallel to the coast. In all probability, therefore, the first new radiating line on which work could perhaps commence in 15 years' time will follow a north-south direction. Additional radiating lines in the longer term may well replace the Midland and Armadale lines on different alignments.

The requirements for the first stage of the high capacity electric rail system which it is estimated cannot be completed in less than 10 years from authorisation, can be summarised as follows:—

- (1) Construct about 6 miles 2 chains of electric railway, including 3 miles 32 chains of underground through Perth.
- (2) Provide underground and above-ground stations.
- (3) Electrify the remainder of the suburban system and connect it to the underground.
- (4) Provide bus-rail interchanges on the underground system outside of the city centre.
- (5) Provide new rail rolling stock and buses.

The total cost of these proposals cannot be determined precisely until they are planned in detail. However, an estimate based on existing knowledge, including information on several underground projects overseas, indicates that the cost of this first stage will be in the order of \$110,000,000; that is, in 1972 currency value.

It is estimated that investigation and design work will take at least four years and will cost approximately \$4,000,000, which amount is included in the estimated \$110,000,000 applying to the first stage of the transport plan.

Even with an immediate commencement on detailed design work it will be at least 10 years before the underground could be completed. It is therefore necessary to make interim arrangements which would allow for—

- (1) A badly needed improvement in the bus operation into the city from the north and in traffic circulation in the central city area.
- (2) Creation of substantial permanent open landscape areas in the heart of the city.
- (3) The removal of the existing barrier to development of the city northwards.

This requires the removal of the railway west of Barrack Street and substitution of a bus transit system on the vacated rail right-of-way between Perth and Leighton.

On part of the land released it is intended to provide a major centrally located bus station, which will significantly reduce the number of buses from the northern and western suburbs actually entering central business district streets, and will also improve the throughout running times of these bus services. It will facilitate the one-way operation of William and Barrack Streets and enable the Perth City Council to develop further its pedestrian precinct philosophy.

The proposed interim arrangements are compatible with the long-term transport plan, and involve the following work:—

- | | \$ |
|--|-----------|
| (a) Accelerate the building of the new W.A.G.R. administration offices adjacent to the East Perth terminal. Balance of funds required | 1,300,000 |
| (b) Provide a narrow gauge connection from Kenwick to Cockburn junction and arrange to service W.A.G.R. commercial customers located between Perth and Cottesloe by other means | 2,400,000 |
| (c) Terminate the existing Armadale and Midland lines at a new station immediately east of Barrack Street, and provide segregated pedestrian access to the south side of Wellington Street and the north side of Roe Street. This will allow demolition of the existing station. Including land resumption and pedestrian access, costs for this section | 1,800,000 |
| (d) Demolish the Perth Central Station, relocate the country parcels and passenger depot and W.A.G.R. District Office; provide narrow gauge passenger facilities at East Perth terminal and narrow gauge passenger train servicing facilities at Forrestfield | 2,300,000 |
| (e) Take up the W.A.G.R. lines between Barrack Street and a point between Cottesloe and Leighton and convert the vacated right-of-way to a busway; provide additional buses .. | 3,700,000 |

- \$
- (f) Provide a bus station north of Wellington Street for buses from Fremantle and the northern suburbs. Provide pedestrian access to the south side of Wellington Street. Including land resumption and pedestrian access, costs— 1,700,000
- (g) Landscape all vacated area, widen Wellington and Roe Streets, from the Freeway to Pier Street, and provide at-grade direct alignments for William Street and Barrack Street. Provide segregated east-west pedestrian access from the new railway station to west of William Street and to the central landscaped area from the cultural centre and Forrest Place— 1,400,000

This section totals \$14,600,000.

Whilst greatly improving in the short term the urban passenger transport flow, these proposals give expression to the public's concept of extensive open space in the centre of the city and satisfy the Perth Cultural Centre Planning Committee's thoughts on the layout and surroundings of the cultural centre. Restraints to northern expansion of the city are removed and the urgent requirement for a bus terminal adjacent to Wellington Street is met enabling a rearrangement and improvement of traffic circulation in the central business district.

In adding briefly to the notes, Mr. Speaker, I would like to indicate that it is the wish of the Government to pass this legislation during this session for the obvious reason that no planning can take place before authorisation is granted. When this session continues, later, the Government will be quite happy to confer with the Opposition regarding any delay it may desire.

Sir David Brand: When the Minister says later on, does he mean the July session?

Mr. JAMIESON: During this session; I hope it will not be in July.

Mr. O'Neill: We normally sit in July.

Mr. JAMIESON: I am referring to the delayed portion of the current sitting, which we hope to resume on the 30th of this month. It is desirable to proceed with the planning as from this point.

I have made plans available which can be perused by members. They cover the diagrammatic layout of the proposed

underground line, and also the diagrammatic impression of the design of the centre of Perth once the railway is removed.

No doubt some members would like to make a comparison with the proposed Nielsen busway plan. The total concept of that plan was estimated to cost \$435,000,000. The first stage of the present plan, including undergrounding, bus depots, etc., will mean an outlay of \$450,000,000 on the part of the State.

Dr. Nielsen looked at a number of schemes and settled on the one at the figure I mentioned because he thought it would be more acceptable. His plan would have covered a similar area, and it could have been financed as he suggested, if it was thought necessary. However, with the Commonwealth Government showing an interest in urban transportation development, it is hoped that within the next three, four, or five years some finance might be forthcoming from that source. If Commonwealth finance is not available we will be forced back onto our own resources and we will be no worse off than we were when the Nielsen busway plan was suggested. A return to a railway system was envisaged in that plan in the ultimate.

Mr. Gayfer: The Minister will not interfere with allocations for country areas water supplies?

Mr. JAMIESON: We certainly hope we would not do that; we would have to take the money from a different pocket as the Leader of the Opposition would be very hostile to think that any of the proposed water supply services in his territory were to be interfered with. I commend the Bill to the House.

The plans and the report were tabled.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. O'Connor.

QUESTIONS (20): ON NOTICE

1. EDUCATION

Parents and Citizens' Associations: Government Subsidies

Mr. MENSAROS, to the Minister for Education:

Referring to his reply to my question 12 on the 3rd May, 1972, could he please give information regarding—

- (a) how many primary school parents and citizens' associations have applied for subsidies;
- (b) what was the total amount represented in these applications;
- (c) how many applications as described in (a) have been approved;
- (d) what was the total amount represented in the approvals,

in each month (or each quarter if that information is easier to obtain) from July, 1970 to April, 1972?

Mr. JAMIESON (for Mr. T. D. Evans) replied:

The specific statistical information sought is not kept in the department and is therefore not available.

2. TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

Cambridge-Jersey Streets Intersection

Mr. MENSAROS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Police:

How many—

(a) fatal;

(b) non-fatal,

road accidents were reported having occurred on the corner of Cambridge and Jersey Streets, Wembley, during the years 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971 and to April, 1972?

Mr. BICKERTON replied:

		Fatal	Non-fatal
1967	....	Nil	25
1968	....	Nil	26
1969	....	Nil	28
1970	....	Nil	15
1971	....	Nil	12
To April 1972	....	Nil	1

3. TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

Cambridge-Harborne Streets Intersection

Mr. MENSAROS, to the Minister representing the Minister for Police:

How many—

(a) fatal;

(b) non-fatal,

road accidents were reported having occurred on the corner of Cambridge and Harborne Streets, Wembley, during the years 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971 and to April, 1972?

Mr. BICKERTON replied:

		Fatal	Non-fatal
1967	....	Nil	31
1968	....	Nil	30
1969	....	Nil	23
1970	....	Nil	26
1971	....	Nil	20
1972 (to April)...	....	Nil	4

4. SELBY STREET

Dual Carriageway

Mr. MENSAROS, to the Minister for Works:

Further to his reply to my question 40 on 16th March, 1972—

(1) What was the Main Roads Department's written advice to the Perth City Council regarding the latter's proposal

for a dual carriageway on Selby Street from Hay Street to The Boulevard and the intersection of Selby and Cambridge Streets?

(2) Was at any time tentative approval given to the city engineer of the proposed scheme and of paying half the cost by the Main Roads Department?

Mr. JAMIESON replied:

(1) While the department acknowledges that the plan provides for a suitable upgrading of Selby Street, any financial contribution would be limited. The department would be prepared to contribute 50% of the cost of improvements to the Underwood Avenue intersection, and would consider a contribution towards improvements to the intersections with The Boulevard, Cambridge Street and Salvado Road. This would be on the understanding that the council will obtain, at its own cost, the necessary land for the project as shown in your plans.

(2) The Main Roads Department's understanding of discussions which took place between their officers and council officers is that it was indicated that the department would meet half the cost of roadworks associated with the intersection improvements referred to in (1) and that in respect to any other works the council would need to make a formal application for financial assistance.

5.

EDUCATION

Driver Training

Mr. I. W. MANNING, to the Minister for Education:

(1) What schools in Western Australia are currently undertaking driver training?

(2) Are agricultural wings of high schools regarded as senior high schools for the purpose of driver training?

(3) If not, why not?

Mr. JAMIESON (for Mr. T. D. Evans) replied:

(1) 41 Senior high schools.
1 Agricultural high school.
1 Agricultural junior high school.
1 Technical school.
7 Independent schools.

(2) Not at present.

(3) The matter is at present under examination.

6.

RAILWAYS

Gnarining Siding: Closure

Mr. W. A. MANNING, to the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

- (1) Has a final decision been made to close Gnarining siding?
- (2) What amount and what are the details of freight handled over the last two years?
- (3) If Kulin is the alternate station has a new unloading line for bulk superphosphate been constructed?
- (4) If not, can Gnarining siding remain open until such provision is made?

Mr. MAY replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Forwarded—	1969/70		1970/71	
	Tons	\$	Tons	\$
Wool	11	\$13	30	577
Fertiliser	27	.....	.....	.....
Wheat	2,487	14,762	1,462	8,701
Grain .....	.....	.....	27	164
Other goods .....	.....	.....	.....	5
Livestock	66	770	.....	.....
	2,591	15,845	1,525	9,447
Received—				
Fertiliser	759	4,320	492	3,016
Grain	20	130	.....	.....
Other goods	1	0	.....	4
	780	4,450	492	3,020

- (3) Alternate delivery points would be either Kulin or Kondinin. No additional facilities have been provided at Kulin but this is currently being examined.
- (4) No undertaking can be given in this direction but Gnarining siding will not be closed before cessation of current superphosphate deliveries.

7.

STOCK

Numbers Available for Slaughter

Mr. I. W. MANNING, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Has a study been undertaken in Western Australia by either a Government department or a private organisation to assess the annual availability of stock for slaughter?
- (2) If so, what are the numbers of—
 - (a) cattle;
 - (b) sheep;
 - (c) lambs;
 - (d) pigs;
 - (e) goats,
 after making allowance for shipment of livestock?
- (3) If no study has been undertaken, will he have an assessment carried out at an early date?

Mr. H. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) and (3) No formal study is available of the annual availability of all stock for slaughter in Western Australia. Such a study would need to take account of factors such as price changes of the product and related forms of production, seasonal conditions, changes in the structure of flocks and herds, the availability of shipping and markets, capacity of abattoirs and industrial relations. Assessments are made for particular industries in relation to specified assumptions over a particular period.
- (2) Actual slaughterings in 1970-71 and estimates for 1971-72 in Western Australia are as follows:—

	1970/71	* 1971/72
(a) Cattle and calves	347,807	380,000
(b) Sheep	2,931,480	4,400,000
(c) Lambs	1,484,810	2,100,000
(d) Pigs	310,262	357,000
(e) Goats	15,938	Not available

*Based on projections of the percentage increase over the first 8 months to give full 12 months figures.

8.

MINING

Fitzgerald River Reserve: Environmental Protection

Mr. W. G. YOUNG, to the Minister for Environmental Protection:

- (1) Has the Environmental Protection Authority reported on the Fitzgerald River area reserve in regard to the mining of montan wax?
- (2) If not, what has caused the delay and when can the report be expected?

Mr. DAVIES replied:

- (1) No.
 - (2) It is considered that since the Environmental Protection Authority was established only on 15th December, 1971, and since it has submitted reports on the Alumina Refinery (Upper Swan) Agreement Act, 1971 and on a draft of the Mining Bill presently before Parliament, that lack of a report to date, should not be listed as a delay.
- The E.P.A. sought the advice of the Environmental Protection Council on this matter at its first meeting. Council and authority members made overflights and personal ground expeditions of the area. The council report to the E.P.A. is expected shortly, and the E.P.A. will report its recommendations promptly to me.

9.

KELMSCOTT SCHOOL*Additions and Staff Toilets*

Mr. RUSHTON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Have preliminary estimates been prepared for building alterations and additions to Kelmscott primary school for the next financial year?
- (2) If "Yes" what are they?
- (3) Is it intended to improve toilet facilities for staff?
- (4) What are the present numbers of male and female teachers at this school and the number of toilets available to each category separate from the children?

Mr. JAMIESON (for Mr. T. D. Evans) replied:

- (1) and (2) No.
- (3) Toilet facilities for staff at Kelmscott primary school will be considered in terms of priorities in other schools.
- (4) There are seven male and seven female teachers at the school. Separate staff toilets have not been provided.

10.

EDUCATION*Classrooms: Demountable and Cluster*

Mr. RUSHTON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Why has the Government adopted a policy of using, and filling with children, demountable classrooms at growth schools before proceeding with segments of cluster-type schools?
- (2) How is this policy working economically when one has regard for the high cost of installation and removal of demountables and the disruption to children's schooling when it could be avoided?
- (3) Is it intended to phase out this present policy?
- (4) Could not the present cluster-type school have classrooms added and removed more economically and with other obvious benefits in education, and so reduce the necessity of using the present type of demountable classroom?
- (5) Will he let me have a copy of the latest plan for cluster-type primary schools?
- (6) How many different size panels are used in the latest designed cluster school?

Mr. JAMIESON (for Mr. T. D. Evans) replied:

- (1) Planning of additions to cluster-type schools to meet growth requirements has to be undertaken twelve months in advance of the required completion in order that

sufficient time may be allowed for documentation, drawing and construction to be undertaken.

It is difficult to assess with complete accuracy the changing needs, generated by increasing enrolments, twelve months in advance. Furthermore, heavy demands on loan funds precludes the luxury of being able to overbuild in anticipation of enrolment increases over and above those predicted for the following year.

- (2) Demountable classrooms are used in cluster-type schools as a temporary measure until the need for an additional half-cluster becomes evident or to accommodate enrolments in excess of predictions. It is not possible to extend clusters by one or two teaching spaces at a time.
- (3) It is unlikely that this policy will be discontinued in view of the heavy demands all over the State which are required to be met within the limits of available resources.
- (4) At this stage the most economical way of adding or removing classrooms from cluster type schools is by the use of demountables which have been specially designed for easy transportability. The department hopes that in the future a form of construction will be developed which will enable rooms to be added or removed according to requirements.
- (5) Yes.
- (6) The latest design for cluster schools uses only one size panel.

The plans were tabled.

11.

PUBLIC SERVICE*Annual Leave Accumulation*

Mr. THOMPSON, to the Premier:

- (1) How many officers of the public service were granted permission from the permanent heads of their respective departments to accumulate two years' annual leave in the period 1st January, 1971, to 31st December, 1971?
- (2) How many, in the same period, were given permission to accumulate three years' annual leave?
- (3) Does he consider the number of cases in which leave is accumulated to be within reason bearing in mind the reason for annual recreation leave?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

- (1) 191 officers.
- (2) 58 officers.
- (3) Each case has been dealt with on its merits.

12. RAILWAYS

Darling Range Line: Bridge

Mr. THOMPSON, to the Minister for Lands:

Will he arrange to have demolished the wooden bridge which used to carry the Upper Darling River railway line over the Helena River adjacent to the Midland abattoir? (This bridge is on Crown land under the control of the Department of Lands and Surveys.)

Mr. H. D. EVANS replied:

The bridge approximates 160 feet long and 9 feet wide and varies in height from 15 feet to 20 feet. It has been inspected and although some fire and termite damage exists it is not a rotting timber structure and is in no danger of collapsing.

13. RESEARCH STATIONS

Pig Research Officers

Mr. LEWIS, to the Minister for Agriculture:

Is there any shortage of pig research officers, and if so, what steps are being taken to relieve the situation?

Mr. H. D. EVANS replied:

There is no immediate shortage of research officers in this field and the department is intensifying its research into pigs. The department's pig research and extension groups have recently been consolidated into one unit and this will be developed as the need arises.

14. HOSPITALS

Central Laundry: Sources of Finance

Mr. RUSHTON, to the Minister for Health:

- (1) What are the sources of finance to build the proposed \$4 million hospital central laundry?
- (2) How much does each hospital board or organisation contribute by way of borrowing power towards the borrowing programme for this laundry?
- (3) Have any of the hospital boards or organisations offering their borrowing powers had building programmes in the past two years or this year financed by Government funds?
- (4) If "Yes", which were the hospitals and the individual amounts?

Mr. DAVIES replied:

- (1) Each of the hospital boards is negotiating with its bankers for loans which will not affect the State's loan allocation.

- (2) Precise figures cannot be determined until negotiations are complete. The maximum contribution for any hospital would be \$300,000 for each of three years.

- (3) Yes.

- (4) Expenditure from State funds was as under in 1969-70 and 1970-71, and the figures for 1971-72 are a combination of actual expenditure to date and an estimate for the remainder of the year:—

	1969/70	1970/71	1971/72 (Estimated)
	\$	\$	\$
Royal Perth Hospital	724,393	2,130,908	431,002
Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital	522,707	381,757	535,756
Princess Margaret Hos- pital	353,119	432,266	108,201
Honies of Peace	766,290	56,917	2,700

15. THORNIE, ROCKINGHAM, AND KELMSCOTT HIGH SCHOOLS

Building Costs

Mr. RUSHTON, to the Minister for Education:

Referring to my question 5 on the 4th May regarding the cost of building Rockingham and Kelmescott high schools—

- (a) How can part of the answer "adjustment of cost of labour, material, profit and other sundry charges \$63,730" be correct when this figure should express a reason why the day labour total cost should be cheaper on adjusted figures?
- (b) Will he give the basis of the Public Works Department assessment of percentage of increase of 15.36% in costs of building which occurred in the period from the letting of the Rockingham high school contract, and the date on which a contract would have been let for Kelmescott high school?

Mr. JAMIESON (for Mr. T. D. Evans) replied:

- (a) The figure is a correct estimate and is not intended to "express a reason why day labour total cost should be cheaper".
- (b) (i) Percentage division of the material and labour content.
- (ii) Labour increases are obtained from the percentage rises agreed to by a rise and fall committee of representatives of the building industry.
- (iii) Material increases are obtained from the data supplied by the Bureau of Census and Statistics.

16. **WATER SUPPLIES**

Dams and Underground Sources: Capacity

Mr. HUTCHINSON, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) Having due regard for the difficulties of "long range forecasting" as described in the basic information he gave in his answer to question 14 on Wednesday, the 4th May, will he request his officers to make a special effort to provide appropriate detail, as requested in question 14, out of the research and investigations that have been conducted in the matter of planning for future water supplies, and where possible that research which is proposed?
- (2) If he cannot supply the detail as requested, does he not agree that this can be construed by the public that there is a lamentable lack of information in the department on the potential of the State's future water supplies?

Mr. JAMIESON replied:

- (1) and (2) A reply to this question is lengthy and I therefore, with permission, table a brief summary of the present situation regarding investigation of water resources. Also, with permission, I table a copy of a report dated October 1970 on *The Usable Surface Water Resources of Western Australia* compiled by officers of the Public Works Department.

The documents were tabled.

17. *This question was postponed.*

18. **CATTLE**

Brucellosis: Eradication Campaign

Mr. BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) When did the department campaign to eradicate brucellosis commence?
- (2) What number of—
 - (a) herds;
 - (b) cattle,
 have been tested to date, and what is the average percentage of reactors from—
 - (i) beef;
 - (ii) dairy,
 herds?
- (3) How many properties have been quarantined from—
 - (a) abattoir;
 - (b) property,
 examination, and in which shire areas?

- (4) Would he advise what is the period of time between initial property quarantine and re-examination period?
- (5) What is the total cost of compensation for brucellosis control to date?
- (6) Is the scheme progressing satisfactorily?

Mr. H. D. EVANS replied:

- (1) Commencement of survey work began in January, 1970, as part of the initial eradication plan, but quarantine restrictions did not commence until early 1971.
- (2) (a) 299.
(b) 46,617.
 - (i) 6.8%.
 - (ii) 5.7%.
- (3) (a) 119.
(b) 131.
 The shire areas in which quarantined properties have been situated are shown in a list which is submitted for tabling.
- (4) This varies depending on stock movements. In the past it has been from one week to two months.
- (5) \$626,694.
- (6) Yes.

The list was tabled.

19. **TRAFFIC CONTROL IN COUNTRY AREAS**

Cost of Takeover

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

- (1) What was the total cost of the takeover of traffic in each of the shires of—
 - (a) Esperance;
 - (b) Ravensthorpe;
 - (c) Lake Grace;
 - (d) Merredin?
- (2) What was the cost of—
 - (a) housing;
 - (b) vehicles;
 - (c) traffic control aids;
 - (d) extra staff,
 in each of the above shires?
- (3) How many traffic inspectors were—
 - (a) absorbed into the police traffic branch;
 - (b) not taken into the traffic branch?
- (4) For what reasons were inspectors rejected from the traffic branch?

Mr. BICKERTON replied:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------|
| | \$ |
| (1) (a) Esperance | 29,934 |
| (b) Ravensthorpe | 15,412 |
| (c) Lake Grace | 18,277 |
| (d) Merredin | 12,048 |
- (2) (a) Esperance—Nil.
Ravensthorpe—Nil.
Lake Grace—Nil.
Merredin—Nil.
- (b) Esperance—\$2,200.
Ravensthorpe—\$4,100.
Lake Grace—\$2,200.
Merredin—\$2,200.
- (c) Esperance—\$506.
Ravensthorpe—\$906.
Lake Grace—\$506.
Merredin—\$506.
- (d) Esperance—\$9,934.
Ravensthorpe—\$4,467.
Lake Grace—\$4,467.
Merredin—\$4,467.
- (3) (a) Nil.
(b) 4.
- (4) No inspectors were rejected from the traffic branch, as those taken in were attached to the general police force and not specifically to the traffic branch. In respect of the shires referred to, three inspectors were inducted into the police force and one found employment elsewhere.

20. IMPORTS AND EXPORTS

Interstate

Mr. W. A. MANNING, to the Minister for Development and Decentralisation:

- (1) To what does he attribute the rise of 10% and the fall of 26.4% in interstate imports and exports respectively in the quarter ended 31st December, 1971?
- (2) How does he intend to change the trend?

Mr. GRAHAM replied:

- (1) and (2) The comparison of figures for a period of less than one year presents special problems in interpretation in that the shorter periods are more susceptible to fluctuations due to special factors operating within that time and in the recording of these figures. For example interstate imports showed an increase of 28.1% for the quarter ended 31st December, 1969, and interstate exports showed an increase of 3.5% for the same quarter. In view of the above it would be misleading to refer to a "trend" based on quarterly figures. Rather they are an unavoidable fluctuation.

QUESTIONS (8): WITHOUT NOTICE

1. IRON ORE (GOLDSWORTHY-NIMINGARRA) AGREEMENT BILL *Royalties*

Mr. HUTCHINSON, to the Minister for Development and Decentralisation:

- (1) In regard to his comparison of royalties during the debate on the Iron Ore (Goldsworthy-Niminingarra) Agreement Bill when he stated that "The new royalty rate should mean an estimated return to the State of \$32,000,000 compared to \$21,000,000 under the earlier royalty provisions. In other words the increase is estimated at \$11,000,000," was he making the comparison with royalties under the Iron Ore (Niminingarra) Agreement Act, 1967?
- (2) If the answer is "Yes," was the \$21,000,000 arrived at by the use only of the 7½ per cent. and 3½ per cent. royalty figures thus excluding the figures of 11½ per cent. and 5½ per cent. together with the 50 per cent. additional lump sum royalty if the processing obligations were not entered into after the expiration of six years from the date of the agreement?
- (3) If the answer is "No" to (1), with what agreement was the comparison made?

Mr. GRAHAM replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The figure was arrived at by using the 7½ per cent. and 3½ per cent. royalty rates, as these were firm. The penalty royalty rates under the Iron Ore (Niminingarra) Agreement were not used as a basis of comparison as there were a number of doubts as to their application if an assignment had been approved.
- (3) See answer to (1).

Mr. Hutchinson: That is exactly what I said.

2. ARMADALE-KELMSCOTT SHIRE COUNCIL

Allegations of Mismanagement

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

Has the Minister received formal complaints from ratepayers in the Armadale-Kelmscott Shire concerning allegations of mismanagement of the affairs of the shire? If so, will he indicate—

- (1) The substance of the complaints?
- (2) Action which is proposed to follow up the complaints?

Mr. TAYLOR replied:

Yes. The complaints are—

- (1) (a) Is it true that three Holden Premier sedans are supplied to the shire clerk, treasurer, and engineer out of ratepayers' finance?
- (b) Is it a fact that the three Holden Premier sedans supplied by council to the treasurer, shire clerk, and engineer are fitted with V8 motors, power steering, power brakes, radios, tow bars, etc.?
- (c) Has one of these vehicles been fitted with a power take-off at council expense to allow the user to operate a boat winch?
- (d) If three Premiers are in fact council-owned vehicles, why aren't they displaying council markings like every other council vehicle within this shire?
- (e) Is it true that the shire clerk, treasurer, and engineer's vehicles when travelling outside the Armadale-Kelmscott Shire—e.g. to Esperance, Kalgoorlie, Albany—use fuel at council expense? How much, if any, do they contribute to the running costs of these council vehicles?
Why can't the three Holden Premiers be substituted for three smaller or more economical vehicles to save ratepayers' expense?
- (f) Also is it true that the treasurer took the council-owned vehicle on annual holidays recently to Canberra? Why did councillors allow this to occur?
Treasurer's vehicle (council-owned). What was the date purchased? What is the mileage travelled to date? What is the mileage on council business?
Is it true that the treasurer's vehicle is only three months old and has travelled nearly 10,000 miles?
- (g) Is it true that the medical officer of health made a formal complaint to the Public Health Department requesting an in-

vestigation of the activities of the shire council? What was the reason for this complaint? Is this investigation concluded or being conducted? What was the result of this investigation? What brought about the investigation?

- (h) How many members of this council's staff are at present receiving an over-award payment? If so, how much over the award does each staff member receive?
- (i) Is it true that there have been a considerable number of staff resignations over the past three years, and if so, why?
- (j) Is it true that the treasurer is dictating council policy to the shire council? If so, is this part of his duties?
- (k) Is it true that approximately \$100-worth of motorcar spare parts were bought and paid for by the council so the treasurer could take them when he travelled to Canberra in the council vehicle on his annual holidays?
- (l) Why did council allow the Armadale Square shopping centre to protrude into Gull Street and Third Road?
- (m) Why did council allow quarrying to take place at Wungong Gorge without a license?
- (2) The shire council has been requested to comment on these questions.

3.

ARMADALE-KELMSCOTT SHIRE COUNCIL

Complaint from Ratepayer

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

- (1) Is the preliminary investigation which the Minister has initiated into the Council of the Shire of Armadale-Kelmscott a routine which he follows on receiving a complaint from a ratepayer?
- (2) Has the Minister received a complaint from a ratepayer against any other local authority since holding his portfolio?
- (3) If "Yes" to (2)—
(a) please name the local authorities involved;

- (b) into which local authorities has the Minister initiated preliminary investigations?
- (4) Will the Minister complete his investigation into the Shire of Armadale-Kelmscott with the utmost urgency to ensure the cloud of doubt is removed from innocent ratepayers, councillors, and staff?
- (5) Will he release his findings to the media and table a report in Parliament?
- Mr. TAYLOR replied:
- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) The investigations have been numerous. Considerable research would be necessary to supply the details requested.
- (4) Yes.
- (5) The action taken will depend on the nature of the findings.

4. EDUCATION

"The Little Red School Book"

Mr. LEWIS, to the Premier:
I regret it has not been possible to give notice of this question because it arises out of a newspaper item in today's issue of *The West Australian*.

- (1) In the light of this news item, can the Premier indicate the possibility of taking any steps, and if so what steps, to prevent the further entry of *The Little Red School Book* into this State?
- (2) In the absence of the Minister for Education, can the Premier give an assurance that the book will not be used in State schools?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN replied:

I thank the member for Moore for some notice of this question. The answer is as follows:—

- (1) It is extremely doubtful that power exists to prevent the entry of anything at all into this State owing to section 92 of the Constitution. However, it may be possible once the book enters the State to take action to prevent its sale and distribution. This is being looked into at the present time.

Mr. O'Connor: I hope you can prevent it.

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: To continue—

- (2) Regulation 41 definitely gives the Minister power to prevent the use of any book which he may consider to be detrimental to the students. I know

that the Minister for Education has been in consultation with the Education Department concerning the book. Therefore, I feel the assurance should be left for him to give following his consideration of the matter. I suggest two courses to the honourable member: He may put a question to the Minister on the notice paper or he may leave it in my hands to refer the matter to the Minister and ask for a public statement as soon as possible.

Mr. Nalder: Will you take any action to legislate if necessary?

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: I do not consider legislation is necessary. Having looked at regulation 41, I am satisfied that the power already exists to prevent the use of the book in the schools.

Mr. Lewis: As the matter is urgent I would like you to take the second course.

Mr. J. T. TONKIN: I will do that.

5.

TRAFFIC

Vehicle Inspections: Country Areas

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

- (1) In question 33 of Wednesday, the 3rd May, 1972, the member for Fremantle referred to a Press comment as follows:—

... that of the first 150 vehicles the police inspected for relicensing only 28 were found to be roadworthy; the others being rejected mainly for defective lighting (particularly on trucks), bald tyres, faulty steering or other dangerous defects.

Will the Minister list the number of vehicles rejected for—

- (a) faulty lighting;
(b) bald tyres;
(c) faulty steering; and
(d) the types of dangerous defects and the numbers?

- (2) The second part of the question asked whether these figures could be related to any other country area, and if so would he name the other country shires or areas. Will the Minister name the other country shires or areas?

Mr. BICKERTON replied:

Firstly, I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The answer is—

- (1) This information is not recorded separately.

- (2) No. The honourable member is referred to the reply to part (3) of question 33 of the 3rd May, 1972.

6. **ARMADALE-KELMSCOTT SHIRE COUNCIL**

Complaint from Ratepayer

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

I wish to ask a further question: Will the Minister confirm that the information I requested will be forthcoming and, in fairness to the Shire of Armadale-Kelmscott, will it be tabled in this House?

The SPEAKER: A Minister in this House cannot give an assurance for a Minister in another place.

Mr. RUSHTON: May I place the question on the notice paper?

7. **IRON ORE (GOLDSWORTHY-NIMINGARRA) AGREEMENT BILL**

Royalties

Mr. HUTCHINSON, to the Minister for Development and Decentralisation:

I would like to ask a further question of the Minister arising out of his answer a few moments ago. The Minister said that the penalty royalty rates were not used as a basis of comparison under the Ludwig agreement as there were a number of doubts as to their application if an assignment had been approved. Will the Minister explain what the doubts are?

Mr. GRAHAM replied:

I would be delighted to oblige the member for Cottesloe. I am advised that there is some doubt that the penalty royalties could have been invoked because of the ambiguity between clause 9 (2) (j) (ix) which sets out that penalty royalties are payable at the end of the sixth year if a plant built in accordance with detailed proposals approved by the Minister pursuant to clause 11 is not in production, and clause 11 (3) which provides that the company has three years from the commencement date to submit proposals in respect of mining area "B." This indicates that Goldsworthy could have argued that the penalty royalty rates could not be invoked until it had had an opportunity to submit proposals, including those in respect of the plant referred to above as provided under the agreement.

Mr. COURT: That advice is cockeyed. We are talking about an agreement; not an assignment.

8.

CATTLE

Brucellosis: Eradication Campaign

Mr. BLAIKIE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

Further to the Minister's answer to question 18 in relation to the brucellosis campaign, the Minister replied that the period of re-examination was dependent on stock movements. I would now like to ask: Will the Minister check his answer further as I believe it may be incorrect? If the period of time between re-examination varies because of stock movements, in effect this is not a quarantine control.

Mr. H. D. EVANS replied:

I will be quite happy to check this point for the honourable member and I will advise him in due course.

MAIN ROADS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Council's Amendments

Amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mr. A. R. Tonkin) in the Chair; Mr. Jamieson (Minister for Works) in charge of the Bill.

The amendments made by the Council were as follows:—

No. 1.

Clause 1, page 1—The Clerk was authorised to correct the date "1971" appearing in line 8 and line 12 to read "1972".

No. 2.

Clause 4, page 2, line 35—Add after the word "Commissioner" the words "except when such action is taken to remove a hazard".

No. 3.

Clause 6, page 3, line 12—Delete the word "two".

No. 4.

Clause 6, page 3, line 21—Delete the words "or in the vicinity of".

No. 5.

Clause 6, page 3, line 25—Delete the words "or in the vicinity of".

No. 6.

Clause 6, page 3, lines 27 to 30—Delete subsection (2).

No. 7.

Clause 6, page 3—Insert after line 30 the following passage:—

(3) (a) Any person dissatisfied with any direction given by the Commissioner under a regulation made under the provisions of this section may, within fourteen days after the direction is communicated to him, appeal in writing to the Minister.

(b) The Minister shall hear and determine such appeal and may appoint a committee to investigate and report on any matters referred to such committee by the Minister in connection with such appeal.

(c) The decision of the Minister on any such appeal shall be final and shall be given effect to by the parties.

Mr. JAMIESON: I move—

That amendment No. 1 made by the Council be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Mr. JAMIESON: I move—

That amendment No. 2 made by the Council be agreed to.

Mr. GAYFER: I wish to support this amendment and I point out to the Committee that during the second reading debate the Minister and I had quite a session across the Chamber. He continually told me that the only reason I wanted to remove anything from the roadside was that there may be a rabbit under a log. Those were the Minister's words—I never used them during my speech. However, he admitted during the course of the debate that he appreciated my point of view that circumstances may arise where road verges had to be cleared by the farmers to remove trees or to destroy salvation Jane—I use that name although the Minister will come back with the Latin term.

During the course of his speech the Minister mentioned that he would refer this matter to the Commissioner of Main Roads. However, when the Bill was in another place there was no alteration but it subsequently came back with the addition of the words, "except when such action is taken to remove a hazard." I wholeheartedly support the amendment.

Mr. JAMIESON: I would just like to make this point: no well-meaning Commissioner of Main Roads or any other authority would take action against somebody who removed a hazard. However, I am glad the amendment pleases the honourable member.

Mr. O'Connor: I would not consider a rabbit a hazard.

Mr. JAMIESON: It makes us all happy to agree with the amendment.

Mr. Gayfer: The member for Boulder-Dundas will be happy too.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Mr. JAMIESON: I move —

That amendment No. 3 made by the Council be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Mr. JAMIESON: I move—

That amendment No. 4 made by the Council be agreed to, subject to the following further amendment:—

Add the passage "and to substitute for the words deleted the passage 'or within 300 feet of'".

In moving this amendment to the Council's amendment I would like to make a further explanation as we will find ourselves in an awkward and foolish position if we do not have some authority over signs which are fairly close to main roads. Where traffic is permitted to travel up to 65 miles per hour a car driver could be easily distracted by a sexy sign on the side of a road and an accident may result.

I point out to the Committee that the existing local authority model by-law No. 13 controls ordinary advertising signs within a distance of 100 feet of a road and all hoardings regardless of their distance from a road; which means that on any country road the local authority would have the right to remove a hazard at any distance if it considers it should not be there. The local authorities have this right if they have adopted the model by-laws; but the Main Roads Department would be in the ludicrous position of having no authority to do anything outside the verge of its own property.

The proposed local authority uniform by-law does not mention any specific distance but covers advertising signs and hoardings erected or maintained so as to be visible from a road, which is a much greater distance than 100 feet. In New South Wales the Commissioner of Main Roads has the power to control advertising signs on or adjacent to main roads—this was our suggestion and it meets with the approval of the commissioner. In practice hoardings are controlled within a distance of 600 feet of freeways.

As regards Victoria the information on my file reads—

In Victoria the State Road Authority controls advertising signs erected "in the vicinity" of State highways, tourist, forests and by-pass roads and also regulations administered under their Town and Country Planning Act, cover control of signs and hoardings within a distance of 660 feet of freeways or by-pass roads.

I think it would be very dangerous in the circumstances. It appears to me that it boils down to a question of whether we will be responsible for saving lives or providing a media for signposting. When it comes to deciding one way or the other we have to come down on the side of being reasonable. Members will have noticed that under another provision the right of appeal is given and if an aggrieved person wishes to appeal, subject to advice by the local committee, the appeal can be dealt with. There is justification for some further expansion of this proposal, and the deletion of the words suggested, without inserting other words in their place, would be unsatisfactory. That is the reason for my amendment on the amendment.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr. A. R. Tonkin): I point out to the Committee that the amendment on the amendment the Minister has moved is slightly different from that set out on page 7 of the notice paper.

Mr. O'CONNOR: I do not want to agree with the amendment on the amendment moved by the Minister; I would rather agree to the amendment moved by another place. Initially, we did argue in this Chamber on the original provision which forbids the erection of signs in the vicinity of main roads; the words, "in the vicinity," having the meaning of "visible from." At that time I said I did not agree with the provision, but we did not get to first base with the Minister.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: Do you think a local authority should have more power in this matter than the Main Roads Department?

Mr. O'CONNOR: I do not think it is reasonable to have the words "within the vicinity" in a Bill of this nature.

Mr. Jamieson: We have taken those out.

Mr. O'CONNOR: I know that, and the Legislative Council has brought this provision into line. The Minister is now prepared to make some reduction in the distance specified but he was not prepared to do so previously. I think it is unnecessary to return to a provision that sets out the distance as 300 feet. The Minister referred to some sexy sign that would catch our eyes, but there are other sexy signs which can be seen without requiring us to walk across the road to view them. I think the amendment by the Council is reasonable, and therefore I am prepared to support it.

Mr. McPHARLIN: As the Minister has said, we have a model by-law which specifies a distance of 100 feet on one side, but now he is suggesting a distance of 300 feet.

Mr. Jamieson: The distance of 100 feet refers to any sort of sign, but I am speaking of hoardings which are visible to the eye at a greater distance.

Mr. McPHARLIN: I will oppose the Minister's amendment on the amendment, because surely this can be a matter of co-operation between the Main Roads Department and the local authority.

Mr. Jamieson: It will have no authority, because we have taken it away from the department.

Mr. McPHARLIN: We must expect co-operation between the two parties.

Mr. Jamieson: But it does not have that authority.

Mr. McPHARLIN: Why a specific figure of 300 feet? Why should it not be some other figure?

Mr. Jamieson: We did not want it that way.

Mr. McPHARLIN: Why specify any figure?

Mr. Jamieson: That is exactly what we proposed but we were unsuccessful.

Mr. McPHARLIN: The amendment from another place leaves it open.

Mr. Jamieson: No, it confines it completely to the main roads alignment.

Mr. McPHARLIN: The amendment was agreed to in another place after lengthy debate, and after all that debate I thought this would be the answer. For that reason I support the Council's amendment.

Mr. NALDER: I do not know whether the point I am about to raise is applicable in this situation. I take it that this distance of 300 feet from a country road means from a certain point on the main road. This afternoon, whilst driving along the freeway, my attention was drawn to a painting contractor's sign hanging on one of the overpasses on the freeway. No doubt the department has accepted a tender for painting the overpasses on the freeway and the painting contractor has erected a sign with his name on it on the overpass.

Mr. Jamieson: We will have that removed in the morning, you can count on that.

Mr. NALDER: The point I am making is: does this provision apply to any sign that is above ground level? This painting contractor has shown some initiative in placing his sign on the overpass, and I was wondering whether any person would be prevented from erecting a sign such as that, apart altogether from one erected at ground level and parallel with the main road.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: If the Minister wishes to amend the Council's amendment, why does he seek to make his provision different from the regulation drafted by the local authority? Why not be consistent and have the same type of provision?

Mr. JAMIESON: This is a peculiar debate, because we had the member for Mt. Lawley suggesting that we should reintroduce to the Bill the provision it contained prior to the measure leaving this Chamber. I do not think this would meet with the approval of the Council. I point out again that most, if not all authorities, have the local authority model by-law No. 13 which controls all advertising signs. Those are the small signs on which a person advertises his occupation. A local authority has control over those sorts of signs within 100 feet of the road. It also has control over all hoardings—I am speaking now of the large signs—regardless of the distance they are erected from the road. They could be erected half a mile down the paddock.

Mr. O'Connor: The local authority has that power?

Mr. JAMIESON: Yes. If these words are deleted completely, as is desired by another place, it will mean that activities will be confined strictly to the alignment of the main road itself. If someone then wishes to erect a sign within the confines of the road alignment, and he is refused, he will still have a right of appeal to the Minister. So this means taking away the right of the authority within the main road alignments and placing it in the hands of someone else.

Mr. O'Connor: The Main Roads Department still has control within the main road's area.

Mr. JAMIESON: No, only subject to an appeal. A person can still erect a sign within a main road alignment under the provision as amended.

Mr. O'Connor: But the Minister would deal with such a matter very smartly.

Mr. JAMIESON: I hope the Committee can realise the difficulty. If someone at Wyndham applied under this provision for permission to erect a sign, the Minister would rely on the recommendation of a local committee. Different circumstances could exist in different areas, and some guidance on the matter in question would be necessary.

If we took away from a local authority its right to say where a sign was to be placed within the confines of its road reserves it would be hopping mad.

Mr. O'Connor: Under this Bill when it was previously before us we did propose to take that right away from the local authority and give it to the Main Roads Department—that is, in regard to hoardings.

Mr. JAMIESON: Under the local authority by-law the distance is unlimited. Previously, there was an arguable point as to whether it was within—

Mr. O'Connor: But this Bill seeks to give power to the Main Roads Department.

Mr. JAMIESON: Yes.

Mr. O'Connor: If the Bill went through as amended, the Main Roads Department would still have power over hoardings erected on main roads.

Mr. JAMIESON: Subject to an appeal, but there is not one local authority by-law that is subject to appeal. Every local authority has the absolute right to refuse an application to erect a sign within the confines of its road alignments. There may be good reason for this where the alignment of the road is changed. For example, an oil company sign at the end of the stretch of road when one is travelling towards Mandurah is desirable; because should a motorist become sleepy after driving along that long stretch of road, seeing the sign would make him realise that the road did not go on in a straight line. Therefore, there is an advantage in having signs in certain places, and we are not objecting to the situation where a person can appeal concerning the erection of a sign within the confines of the road verges. The local authority would not approve, but we have gone along with this, because we say that in certain circumstances it might be desirable to have such a sign erected.

However, we do not agree with the proposition that it should be confined exactly to the road. In replying to the point made by the member for Katanning, I think the words "within 300 feet of" would give the necessary authority and apply to a sign erected above the road. I think, therefore, the position would be fairly clear in regard to any sign erected above ground. If we are to have this power subject to the permission of the local authority, virtually we would be better off without control over the erection of any sign and merely rely on the local authority to make its appeals. Some members know how keen local authorities are about their objection to the erection of election signs. The local authorities wiped them right out. I can cite the Mundaring shire as one example. The local authorities used to object to the utmost and maintain that no election signs could be erected.

I was asked why the figure of 300 feet had been chosen. The distance in New South Wales is 600 feet and in Victoria it is 660. We have made it 300. It is a decision which had to be made and we consider 300 feet is not an unreasonable requirement, bearing in mind that those concerned do have the right of appeal. I am sure that if the appellant is not satisfied with the decision following an appeal, he will get in touch with his local member of Parliament and we will hear all about it.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to subject to the Assembly's further amendment.

Mr. JAMIESON: Amendment No. 5 made by the Council is a consequential amendment. It does exactly the same

as the previous amendment, only in another line, so I do not need to elaborate on it. I move—

That amendment No. 5 made by the Council be agreed to, subject to the following further amendment:—

Add the passage "and to substitute for the words deleted the passage 'or within 300 feet of'".

Mr. O'CONNOR: The same argument applies to this amendment as applied to the previous one and again I am not in agreement with the Main Roads Department having control over this area. I do not believe it is necessary and therefore I oppose the amendment.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to subject to the Assembly's further amendment.

Mr. JAMIESON: I move—

That amendment No. 6 made by the Council be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Mr. JAMIESON: I move—

That amendment No. 7 made by the Council be agreed to.

This amendment creates a new situation and gives a right of appeal. Under all the circumstances I think we should agree to it at this stage and see how it works.

Mr. O'CONNOR: I agree with the Minister agreeing to this amendment. It is not unreasonable that a right of appeal should be granted. The Main Roads Department is capable and surely the Minister should be capable of making the right decision. He has the last say.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Report

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

CONSTRUCTION SAFETY BILL

Council's Amendment

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mr. A. R. Tonkin) in the Chair; Mr. Taylor (Minister for Labour) in charge of the Bill.

The amendment made by the Council was as follows:—

Clause 19, page 18, line 31—Substitute for the words "Civil Engineering" the word "Construction".

Mr. TAYLOR: This is an amendment foreshadowed by the member for East Melville when the Bill was under consideration in this Chamber. He was alert

enough to detect an error in the name of a group to be represented on a committee established under the Bill. We consider the amendment quite in order. I therefore move—

That the amendment made by the Council be agreed to.

Mr. O'NEIL: The Opposition has no objection to this amendment.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Report

Resolution reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

STATE HOUSING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 3rd May.

MR. O'NEIL (East Melville) [5.52 p.m.]: This Bill proposes to make amendments to the Act in three important respects. The first deals with the eligibility of workers seeking assistance under the Act; the second increases the amount to be financed under mortgage conditions to \$9,000; and the third makes provision relating to the use of funds now that the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreements cease to exist. The methods for financing houses with funds made available under the workers' housing arrangements will come directly under the operations of the State. Incidentally, this provision will give some validity to actions already taken because the commission has been operating substantially under the new conditions since the agreement ceased on the 30th June last year. In addition, and consequent upon that, a provision is made to enable rental rebates to be made to tenants with limited means who have been unable to make the payments without financial hardship. This is also a carryover from the provisions existing under the old Commonwealth and State Housing Agreements.

I think it is as well to remind the House that prior to the beginning of this financial year the State Housing Commission erected houses financed essentially by two separate fund sources; namely, the funds provided under the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreements and the State Housing Act. Under the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement that part of the housing and loan fund allocation which was to be used for housing was advanced at 1 per cent. below the long-term bond rate and this concessional interest money was designed to provide improved accommodation for people on low and moderate incomes. On the other hand, houses erected under the State Housing Act itself, which also enables the

commission to undertake home building, were financed from funds made directly to the commission by the State at the normal long-term bond rate. Therefore, two separate operations existed.

During the last portion of the previous Government's regime, when I was Minister for Housing, the officers of the State and Commonwealth housing authorities, as well as the Minister for Housing in the various States, and the Commonwealth Minister in charge of housing, had been busy negotiating the terms and conditions upon which a new Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement would be acceptable to the State Ministers. Negotiations were proceeding along their merry way quite satisfactorily and a conference was arranged to be held in Hobart in 1971 in order that the State Ministers might make final submissions to the Commonwealth Minister regarding the form the new agreement would take. We objected to certain provisions in the old agreements and the Commonwealth seemed to be sympathetically disposed towards making some changes.

However, I did not attend the next conference. As a matter of fact, the conference in Hobart was cancelled because the then Federal Minister was appointed as Australian High Commissioner to New Zealand.

My successor, who is now the Minister for Labour, attended the following conference at which, much to the consternation of all concerned—except, perhaps, the Commonwealth Minister—a completely new proposal was submitted to the State Ministers. Neither they nor their officers had any inkling as to what the Commonwealth proposals would be.

In the Minister's speech notes he made what I think was an unintentionally amusing statement because he said that the State Ministers unanimously walked out of the conference. I do not know whether it is possible for people to walk unanimously; but it would have been a pretty sight to see a giggle of Ministers walking down the corridor unanimously.

Mr. Jamieson: A giggle or a gaggle?

Mr. Bickerton: A couple may have hung back for a little while.

Mr. O'NEIL: But they could not walk unanimously. However, that is by the way. I am certain that had I been present at that conference I would have attempted to walk unanimously, anyway.

Mr. Hutchinson: At least they were thinking unanimously.

Mr. O'NEIL: It was not for some time that the real impact and detail of the new arrangements became thoroughly known by either the Minister or his officers; and for this I do not blame them because even though I was provided with a comprehensive statement of the new arrangements I

am afraid that for many weeks the real issue evaded me. However, apparently someone has been able to work out the system—I hope that this is the case, anyway—and we are now able to operate reasonably well, as far as I can see, under the new conditions. Just whether we will be better or worse off remains to be seen.

Suffice to say that at least for this particular financial year the Commonwealth has agreed to some minor modifications and arrangements in order to cater for certain proposals of the State Housing Commission and the Minister, and probably to arrange for a transitional period.

I am concerned about one matter relating to the new policies being adopted—namely, what is now known as the State home builders' account—but I will deal with that a little later.

I should have said initially that we propose to support the principles in this Bill. One of them, as I have mentioned previously, is designed to alter the method of determining eligibility for State housing assistance. This matter has been one of major concern to the commission for some time, I feel sure, and certainly to Ministers from time to time.

Currently the State Housing Act contains a provision stipulating the maximum income which may be earned by an applicant to enable him to be eligible, with certain qualifications into which I need not go. They include such matters as variations according to basic wage adjustments, allowances in respect of dependent children, allowances in respect of the particular area of the State in which the applicant lives, and so on. However, the fact remains that the eligibility is set by Statute and the only way it can be varied is by an amendment to the Statute.

I think this is a rather rare move. One would need to ensure that matters were kept in reasonable perspective to amend the Statute year after year.

It is proposed in the Bill before us that the salary limit, which at the moment is quoted in figures in the Act, will be variable from time to time. The provision is that the Minister may, from time to time, by notice published in the *Government Gazette*, fix the amount of salary, wages, or income which is to be the relevant amount for the purposes of paragraph (b) of the interpretation "worker." As I see it, this simply removes the fixed figure which is in the Act at the moment and replaces it with a figure to be gazetted by the Minister from time to time. Power is given to vary or revoke such a notice previously published.

To a degree a limitation is placed upon the Minister in that he shall not under the subsection fix any amount which is less than such amount as the commission certifies in writing to the Minister to be the

greatest amount of salary, wages, or income payable at that time to any tradesman within the metropolitan area of Perth. This will set a minimum figure of income which will be regarded as defining a "worker." The other provisions for variation may still be used, of course.

I can see a few problems associated with this and perhaps the Minister would be good enough to help me. Apparently it is his intention to ensure that all tradesmen who were previously eligible for commission assistance under the original concept governing this type of assistance will again become eligible. The Minister made the point that the commission must certify the income of a tradesman. I do not know whether the Minister can see the point I am making. The board of commissioners is a body of independent people who, in fact, have the responsibility of administering the department known as the State Housing Commission. They must certify in writing to the Minister the greatest amount of salary, wages, or income payable to any tradesman in the metropolitan area.

The definition of "worker" takes up 1½ pages in the principal Act and I feel there should be some definition of "tradesman." Will a tradesman be the highest paid man in the metal trades group or someone else? We are giving the commission power to state the salary applicable to that person, but I believe it is necessary more clearly to define the strange body known as a "tradesman." However, I agree with the principle and this is a technicality which the Minister or his officers may have considered. Perhaps it may be necessary to tighten it up a little further.

I would feel more satisfied if the commission, as a commission, had been given the responsibility of making a review of the eligibility figure each year and recommending that figure to the Minister rather than the system whereby the commission simply recommends a salary bar, if one likes, to the Minister and the Minister makes the determination from time to time as to which is the appropriate figure for eligibility having regard for other factors which the Minister mentioned in his speech, such as availability of finance, prices, etc. I feel it would be preferable to ask the commission to sit down once a year and, having regard for all the information which is available, to determine what will be the eligibility figure for the current year.

The commission could do this quite easily, because sources of information are available to it. Apart from having officers of the commission and other public servants, the commission has a representative of the building industry, a representative of trade unions, a representative of service interests, a women's representative, and so on. The commission itself is a body capable of gathering this information with the assistance of technical officers of the com-

mission and of making a recommendation as to the figure. This would still leave the Minister in the position of making the final determination. This is something which is fairly difficult for the Minister to do.

Mr. Bickerton: I think you would agree it is better that way.

Mr. O'NEIL: This is a start in the right direction and I am quite certain that when I take over from the Minister in a couple of years, we will sort it out and make it better.

Mr. Bickerton: There is no need for you to wait until then. Come down at any time and I will discuss matters with you. I will be happy to hear any suggestions from the honourable member.

Mr. O'NEIL: Thank you.

Mr. Bickerton: That statement applies to the honourable member or to the public.

Mr. O'NEIL: The Minister is saying, "My door is always open." I have heard that expression before.

Mr. Court: There was once a famous Minister who used that expression, "My door is always open."

Mr. O'NEIL: I have one comment to make which is far more important. One of the problems one finds in regard to setting a salary limit as the measure of eligibility is that, in recent times, wages have risen rather rapidly. This has applied not only to award wages, but to over-award payments and the like. Despite the fact that the commission in assessing the income of an applicant discounts certain things such as travelling allowances, tool allowances, overtime, and the like, it is still extremely difficult really to determine just what the income of an applicant is. In many instances it is a matter of taking the application on its face value. If an applicant indicates he is a carpenter, officers of the commission know what a carpenter's wage would be and they can determine whether or not the figure the applicant has included as his weekly income is correct. In fact, the commission can make some inquiries. I have heard these inquiries referred to in this Chamber as an inquisition, or as snooping on the applicant to check his income-earning capacity. I am sure any reasonable person would realise that unless some close check is made on statements given on application forms many other people could be disadvantaged because some are considered eligible for housing assistance when, in fact, they are not. However, that is by the way.

Something else has occurred and I wish to refer back to the time when the commission operated with two separate building accounts; namely, moneys from the State housing account and moneys from the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement. Under the old Commonwealth

and State Housing Agreement there was no fixed figure to indicate the eligibility level. The agreement simply stated that the money was to be used to provide improved accommodation for people of low and moderate income. Each State was left to its own devices to determine what eligibility it would establish. Some States used rather complicated systems and I have spoken about them on several occasions in the House. However, the State Housing Act did—and still does—lay down a salary bar for eligibility.

To make things perfectly uniform the commission, as a matter of policy, decided that the provisions of the State Housing Act would apply to the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement with minor differences. For example, eligibility for purchase accommodation was created at the time of application and the applicant retained his entitlement irrespective of the length of time he had to wait for accommodation. For rental accommodation the policy was different in that eligibility was determined at the time of allocation of the rental accommodation, which could have been a fairly long time after the application was made initially.

The position could arise where a man applied for rental accommodation and was told that he was duly listed. He would wait patiently—and in most cases impatiently—for his turn to be reached and when it was reached he was then asked what his income was. He could discover that because of salary and wage increases in the intervening period he was no longer eligible for rental accommodation. I do not know the views of other people but, in my view, this was patently unfair. In fact the reason he had become ineligible through an increased wage or salary was the lack of capacity of the State to meet the demand in time.

Mr. Bickerton: On the other hand, a person who was eligible and received accommodation shortly afterwards may not have been eligible had he not received accommodation at that time.

Mr. O'NEIL: This was rationalised to the point where eligibility for rental and purchase homes under any agreement was established at the time of application. I believe it was a valid consideration at the time because, with the great demand, waiting periods were sometimes four years and, in some cases, even longer in certain specific circumstances. If blame could be levelled at any quarter for a person becoming ineligible through a salary or wage increase, it was at the State itself because of its inability to meet demand within a reasonable time.

Under this new arrangement I suggest the Minister should have a good look at the possibility of restoring the situation to what it was previously; namely, each year when eligibility is established the

commission's lists should be reviewed for the purpose of cleansing the roll. This would not disadvantage a tradesman because, if the figure is set annually at the earnings of a tradesman, then the tradesmen who are on the list would remain on the list because the eligibility would have been lifted to meet any increases in income. However this would certainly obviate assistance being given to people who move from being a carpenter one day to becoming the general manager of a major departmental store the next. In these circumstances a man could suddenly receive an increase in income which is far greater than average.

Mr. Bickerton: There must be some basis of eligibility.

Mr. O'NEIL: I agree, but if the Minister and the commission do not do this there will be more and more applicants and less and less capacity to meet their demands. Despite what was said by the Premier at the election it is pertinent to note that the activities of the State Housing Commission are substantially less this year than they were last year.

Mr. Bickerton: What does the honourable member mean by "activities"?

Mr. O'NEIL: Home building activities.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: There is a very good explanation but it would take far too long to make it now.

Mr. Taylor: There was a substantial surplus of funds available to you in one year.

Mr. O'NEIL: Surely it is not the explanation that I overspent by \$2,000,000. After being accused of that by the Deputy Premier I asked the Minister for Housing of the day whether it was a fact and the answer was "No."

Mr. Taylor: That extra amount of money is normally not available to a Government.

Mr. O'NEIL: That is fair enough. I admit that had we become the Government there would have been the same downturn in building activity by the commission but this does not get away from the fact that the Premier made a promise that, if returned to office, he would substantially increase the funds available to the Housing Commission despite the fact that he was told on so many occasions in this Chamber during various debates that this would not be possible.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: It may be news for you to know that we actually provided additional funds from our own resources to the State Housing Commission because you had spent everything that was there.

Mr. O'NEIL: The present Premier asked me to do this at the time.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: Yes.

Mr. Court: You cannot have it both ways.

Mr. Bickerton: It is nice to think the honourable member always did as he was asked.

Mr. O'NEIL: I think the Minister should look at this. If the eligibility figure is reviewed and gazetted annually it will be on the basis of the most highly paid tradesman. If a tradesman is on the list he will not be disadvantaged but at least people who have received rapid increases in salary or income—perhaps by a change of job—would legitimately be removed from the list after a period of time.

Perhaps one qualification should be made to the effect that the policy should not commence to be operative until the new eligibility becomes operative; otherwise, once again, the situation could arise of people waiting patiently for assistance and finding after three or four years that they have been chopped off at the socks. Perhaps there should be a policy grandfather clause.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. O'NEIL: Before the tea suspension I was discussing some of the aspects of eligibility and some of the problems that may be associated with it in respect of the commission's waiting lists. I will leave whatever thoughts I may have implanted in the Minister's mind to germinate and I trust that something may come out of it.

Another matter to which this Bill relates is raising the amount which the commission may advance or lend to eligible applicants on mortgage security for the purchase of a home. The figure now proposed is \$9,000, which is in line with the advances available under the War Service Homes Act which is administered in this State by the State Housing Commission. I see no objection to this. As the Minister will be well aware, this is the amount available for sale under mortgage conditions, whereas I believe it probably still is the case that the majority of the commission sales are under contract of sale conditions.

This enables the commission to sell homes to eligible persons upon deposits as low as \$200. Under contract of sale conditions greater flexibility is provided to cater for the individual who may not, perhaps, have the ready cash normally required to raise this finance under other conditions. We raise no objection to this.

I mentioned that the bulk of the provisions in the Bill relate to the financial arrangements which are to obtain now under the conditions of finance being made available for housing in lieu of the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreements.

I was quite concerned, and I still am, because I am not satisfied with the explanation I have been given as to the commission's new policies in this field. Members will recall that under the Commonwealth and State agreements it was a

requirement that the States make available to approved institutions, such as building societies, 30 per cent. of the loan funds earmarked for housing. This was of course to enable applicants who may or may not be outside the commission's eligibility limits to elect to finance a home of their own choice in an area of their own choice with funds which are, in fact, much less costly than those available from normal sources.

In round terms, this year some \$5,000,000 has been allocated to building societies from what is now known as the State home builders' account. As I understand the position, and I think the Minister will verify this, under the new arrangements, provided the State uses the housing finance in the same way as it used the funds under the old agreement, the State will then be eligible to receive cash nonrepayable grants which replace the old interest rate concessions which appeared in the old agreements.

Also, as I understand it—and the Minister has provided this by way of information—there have been certain changes in the allocation of these funds. I was stimulated to ask a number of questions after I read an article which appeared in *The West Australian* of the 14th March, 1972. The article is headed, "T.L.C. loans for housing ready soon" and states, in effect, that the Trades and Labor Council has established a terminating building society and has certainly received an allocation of \$300,000 from housing funds from the home builders' account, in order to get this terminating society on the way.

I have read since that the T.L.C. has some \$600,000 available to lend, which implies it has been able to attract \$300,000 borrowings from lending institutions. At least that is what I have read.

Members will know that under normal circumstances this additional sum would be subject to the Housing Loan Guarantee Act. I presume that to be the case.

Mr. Bickerton: Half the money would be lent to people wanting to buy State Housing Commission homes.

Mr. O'NEIL: The original purpose of the home builders' account fund to building societies was, as I have mentioned, to enable people who may or may not be eligible for commission homes to elect to finance houses of their own choice or design in areas of their own choosing. This was essentially for those on low or moderate incomes, or those just above such incomes.

Mr. Taylor: Would you agree this was a requirement put on the State by the Commonwealth? It was not necessarily the State's choice.

Mr. O'NEIL: I agree that the requirement to pay 30 per cent. of the housing loan allocations to the building societies

was one to which some of the States objected. I must also admit that in respect of the fund there were certain requirements which the commission—at least when I was Minister—had placed upon these funds in an endeavour to direct those funds to areas where the normal availability of finance was not attracted.

Mr. Bickerton: You would not object to the money for houses from the societies being given to some of those who were buying State houses?

Mr. O'NEIL: I am getting to this point. There is another matter which has been brought to my notice—and it has been affirmed by the Minister—that the commission is not in fact allocating 30 per cent. to the building societies. It is retaining 15 per cent., or half of the 30 per cent., to cater for prospective applicants for these funds. This may be a good move on the part of the commission, because if there is any interest to be earned on that particular sum of money I gather it is being earned by either the commission or the State, instead of being earned by the building societies. I do not know whether this is a reasonable proposition; but that appears to me to be the only valid reason for retaining half the funds. Despite that fact I still think that only attracting half of the funds back to the commission is certainly in breach of the principles of the arrangement.

Mr. Bickerton: It would be an excusable breach if in fact it were a breach.

Mr. O'NEIL: The Minister has indicated in answer to questions that these arrangements have been discussed with the Federal Minister who has approved of them. The Minister has also indicated that some of the arrangements relative to the use of funds have certainly been modified for this year at least. I am not sure whether this condition will prevail. The Minister raised the point whether I would not agree to tenants of commission homes using this money to finance the purchase of a home.

I will say quite frankly and candidly that anyone who does so is a nut, because if a person is an applicant for a commission home and his turn is reached he may buy that home on the commission's terms and financial conditions. I have asked the Minister by way of question just what is the difference. I will come to that a little later, because there is a substantial difference. I asked the Minister—

- (1) Is it not a fact that tenants of State Housing Commission homes, except in some limited cases, may elect to purchase the homes they occupy at any time?

The Minister's answer was, "Yes." I then asked—

- (2) What interest rate is charged on the loan advanced and what is the term of repayment?

The Minister replied, "5½ per cent. on terms up to 45 years." I notice the Premier pricking up his ears because that is below the rate at which money is borrowed. I then asked the Minister—

- (3) How does this rate and term compare with loans made by terminating societies from funds made available by the State?

This refers to those who get half of the home builders' funds. The Minister replied—

- (3) Terminating Societies will be advancing State Homes Builders' Account funds at the long term bond rate for a term not exceeding 30 years.

So the purchaser of a commission home who is, in fact, eligible to obtain finance from the State at 5½ per cent. up to a period of 45 years is being persuaded or encouraged, or something else, to finance the same home with funds made available by the State through a building society at an interest rate of 6.7 per cent. over a term not exceeding 30 years. Accordingly he is certainly at a disadvantage in respect of the financing of that house. I notice, in qualification, that there is some reference among certain of the answers to the fact that he could in these circumstances possibly avail himself of the Commonwealth home savings grant which is a maximum of \$500, but to what extent that operates I do not know. That, however, certainly does have some limiting factors including the age of the applicant.

Mr. Brady: On what day was the previous question asked?

Mr. O'NEIL: On Thursday, the 16th March, 1972. It was question 22 on the notice paper. On Wednesday, the 22nd March, I followed up with another question which states—

Does the answer given to question 22—

this is the one to which I have just referred—

—on Thursday, the 16th March imply that a "mutually acceptable" State Housing Commission applicant will receive priority over existing applicants in the allocation of a new State Housing Commission home...

provided he undertakes this more expensive finance. The answer was "No."

So the applicant gets no advantage in respect of priority. If he did, that may well be a good enough reason to persuade him to finance his home by dearer means. But he earns no priority over existing applicants.

I then asked the Minister—

- (2) On a loan of \$10,000 what would be the difference between the monthly repayments on a home purchased with a S.H.C. loan and

that provided from funds allocated from the home builders account if such loans were at current rates and maximum repayment period?

Again, these are State funds. The Minister replied, "\$15.34 per month." In respect of low and moderate income workers, to my mind one of the most important aspects when financing a purchase home is out-of-pocket payments per month or per week. It is not so important that the term is extended over a longer period and, therefore, the total interest bill will be higher. The ordinary worker calculates whether he can afford the monthly or weekly outgoings from his take-home pay in order to buy himself a house, and if he buys a house with State funds through a building society it will cost him \$15.34 per month more for a \$10,000 loan than would be the case if he financed it under the present arrangements which are available to him. Again, I say that a person who is persuaded, cajoled, or directed towards a building society—

Mr. Bickerton: Where did you get this persuasion?

Mr. O'NEIL: I want to know what incentive is offered to such an applicant. He will not receive priority over existing applicants, because the Minister has said so.

Mr. Bickerton: Where is the persuasion in it?

Mr. O'NEIL: I do not know. I will go a little further and say that I asked the Minister how many people had, in fact, availed themselves of this doubtful privilege. The Minister replied—

Fifteen State Housing applicants have received approval to approach building societies and/or the Rural and Industries Bank to acquire loans from the Home Builders Account to purchase dwellings erected by the State Housing Commission. So far three have been granted loans.

So three out of 15 applicants have been granted loans when the commission is in fact, by the Minister's admission, holding \$2,500,000 to cater for all those applicants; and the end of the financial year is ever so close.

Mr. Bickerton: I would say that proves nothing but a lack of persuasion.

Mr. O'NEIL: Well, if that is so, and the commission has been withholding some of the \$5,000,000 to meet the requirements of these applicants, what does the Federal Minister for Housing think about that proposition? I then went further and asked the Minister to give me details of the three applicants who had been granted loans. I did not want to identify the applicants but since only three are involved I suppose we now know who they are, although their names are not stated. The Minister replied that financing arrangements for the loans, together with con-

ditions which would apply under the State Housing Act, are as follows: In the case of the first person the deposit required to be paid to the building society was \$870. In the case of the second and third applicants the amount was \$855 and \$805 respectively.

The Minister also said that the deposit required to be paid to the State Housing Commission is as offered by the applicant. The Minister knows that the deposit, by negotiation, could be as low as \$200. So the applicant is disadvantaged to the extent of \$600 or \$700 *ab initio*.

I also asked the Minister what is the interest rate charged by building societies for funds supplied out of the home builders' account, and that charged by the State Housing Commission. The Minister replied that in the first case it is 6.7 per cent. per annum, and in the second case 5.375 per cent. per annum. So, again, each of those three applicants is disadvantaged by virtue of having his loan approved. I asked the Minister the term of loans granted by building societies and the State Housing Commission. In the case of building societies the term is 30 years, and in the case of the commission it is 45 years.

Mr. Bickerton: Did you ask whether the applicants had requested to purchase direct through the commission?

Mr. O'NEIL: I have still to find out what advantage there is. If there is an advantage then perhaps the system is acceptable. It may well be that if an applicant knows he can get a house within a week or two by applying for the funds he would be prepared to pay the extra money; many would be. However, in answer to another question the Minister said that the applicant does not receive any additional priority if he elects to take the dearer money. Whilst on this matter, I would mention that my colleague, the member for Dale, recently asked a question which has not yet been answered. The Minister said he would make an investigation. This confirms part of what I have been saying; that people must be disadvantaged. I can only read the questions and surmise the answers because I am not sure; but at least if the answers to the questions are what I imagine they will be the Minister must admit that something is radically wrong with this system.

Mr. Bickerton: With which system?

Mr. O'NEIL: The system I have been discussing for quite some time.

Mr. Graham: Well said.

Mr. O'NEIL: The member for Dale asked questions relating to how houses were to be financed. He asked—

How are State Housing Commission applicants selected to purchase homes with State Home Builders' Account funds?

The answer was—

All applicants on the commission's purchase list, with the exception of those whose turn is nearly reached, are being written to and invited to participate in a purchase scheme developed and operating in consultation with the building societies, using funds provided from the State Home Builders' Account.

That answer does not in any way align itself with what the Minister told me; that is, that no priority is gained by a person who elects to finance his home from home builders' account funds through a building society. Does the Minister agree?

Mr. Bickerton: If you were not happy with the answers, I cannot understand why you did not ask questions without notice, or put further questions on the notice paper. I thought you were completely satisfied. You gave the impression of being as happy as a sand boy.

Mr. O'NEIL: I thought my questions at least would have indicated to the Minister that I was concerned about what was happening. The answers were quite reasonable, but they contained conflict. I am not accusing the Minister of misleading the House. I will be perfectly happy if he can prove to me that there is some advantage to be gained by an applicant who uses the dearer finance.

Mr. Bickerton: Now that you have mentioned the matter I will find out.

Mr. O'NEIL: I do not believe this operation is warranted. I can see that provided the Federal Minister has agreed—or unless the State is prepared to forego cash non-repayable grants in lieu of the interest rate—the Government could instruct the commission to retain the bulk of the \$2,500,000 which it has not allocated to building societies but is holding against these applicants. It may well be that a couple more applicants have received approval but at the time of asking the question three weeks ago only three applicants had received approval.

Even though I have not the question asked by the member for Dale in front of me, I think I can recall the details. One applicant who was invited to finance a Housing Commission home through the home builders' account funds held by building societies had lodged his application in 1968, and his turn had been reached. He wished to acquire a home in the southern districts. He was sent a list of a number of properties which he was entitled to inspect and he was entitled to indicate to the commission his choice. He was invited to visit some building societies. He visited four, each of which had loan funds allocated to it from the home builders' account—half of which is being retained by the commission. Each of those societies offered

him terms and conditions he could not accept. The term of the loan was not 30 years but 13 in each case.

Mr. Bickerton: What was his age?

Mr. O'NEIL: He would have been 65 by the time the loan expired. That is fair enough; building societies will not normally make an advance if the term of repayment takes the applicant beyond his 65th year. But that does not apply to the State Housing Commission; it has no such limitation on its funds.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: You were a champion of the building societies, according to the way you were arguing a while ago.

Mr. O'NEIL: I am, but I am not a champion of what is being done at present with Government funds. This applicant cannot finance a house under those conditions with a term of 13 years. Four different societies each offered him the same term and conditions.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: Why did not they offer better terms; they had the money?

Mr. O'NEIL: In fact the commission holds the money for the financing of this operation, and half of it has not been allocated to building societies—or it has been allocated, but is being held in the coffers of the commission. However, when the applicant reported to the commission that he was unsuccessful in obtaining the finance which he was invited to enjoy, the commission withdrew the offer of houses in the area he requested and offered him a house, with commission finance, admittedly, to the north of the river.

Mr. Bickerton: Who was handling this fellow's case?

Mr. O'NEIL: I mentioned that the question was asked by my colleague, the member for Dale; but I watched it on the notice paper as a result of the questions I had asked and the answers I had received because I knew very well that in the not-too-distant future a case would occur which would prove my point—that is, that the commission, despite its good intentions, is not operating the home builders' account funds in the way it was meant to operate. I mentioned this much earlier, perhaps on the Address-in-Reply, or when speaking to the Supply Bill.

I even went so far as to suggest that the question of whether the commission is operating legally should be examined. In his second reading speech the Minister went a long way towards explaining that the commission is not operating illegally. I am prepared to accept that, but I would say the commission certainly is not operating in the best interests of the people for whom it was established. I suggest to the Minister that he undertake a thorough examination of this proposition because to me it just does not make sense that a man should be persuaded, cajoled, invited, or

approved to finance a house on far less advantageous conditions than the commission can offer, when he is entitled to a better deal.

I just do not know what is happening, and I cannot for the life of me see the fairness and equity in this. I suggest to the Minister that he have his officers thoroughly examine the situation to ensure that those people the commission was established to assist are not being disadvantaged.

Mr. Bickerton: A reasonable request.

Mr. O'NEIL: Having criticised the operation of the builders' account funds, I would hasten to say that, in general, we on this side support the Bill.

MR. RUSHTON (Dale) [7.59 p.m.]: Like the previous speaker, I would like to indicate to the Minister that I support the Bill in general; but I have a few brief comments to make in relation to it. I would also request the Minister to examine certain aspects in greater detail so that we may be assured that people will not be adversely affected as a result of this measure.

I would refer the Minister briefly to the clause of the Bill which relates to the maximum salary of applicants, which may be changed from time to time. The figure is related to the maximum income of a tradesman in the metropolitan area. I would assume that in the case of those situated outside the metropolitan area the present ratio of that figure would be maintained.

Mr. Bickerton: I cannot imagine that proportionately it will be less, compared to what it was before.

Mr. RUSHTON: There will be a need to maintain the relationship between the different figures. This is a matter which affects those in the country, and I am sure the people in general seek some assurance from the Minister on this matter. I put it to the Minister that we have not been supplied with the figure. I presume it is to be worked out on a year-to-year basis. This aspect could be the cause of concern to many. Could the figure not be determined on a definite basis, so that people will be given early information on this?

Mr. Bickerton: You start off under this Bill with a base figure. In view of the proportion that was adopted in the past you will have to leave some responsibility with the Minister, or at least take some gamble that he is a responsible person.

Mr. RUSHTON: I am not suggesting that he is irresponsible. All I am suggesting is that people who in the past had certain entitlements should not be disadvantaged under the change. I am not implying that the present Minister is, or any Minister who succeeds him will be irresponsible. All I want to do is ensure that

people who have waited for houses for a long period will not be disadvantaged by this change.

Firstly, I would like to obtain an assurance from the Minister that those who have been on the waiting list for a long period will not come under the new criterion, but their eligibility will be established on their previous priorities. I am sure it is not intended that a person who was eligible under the previous policy will be put aside as a result of the change.

Mr. Bickerton: I cannot understand the point you are making. Do you mean that if a person who in the past was on the waiting list and was an eligible applicant would not become eligible under the broader range?

Mr. RUSHTON: I am seeking an assurance that a person who has been eligible will not be put off the list under the new policy. As I understand the position, under the new policy an applicant will be excluded from the list if he becomes ineligible.

Mr. Bickerton: I am sure you are speaking on a different premise.

Mr. RUSHTON: All I am saying is that people who have been eligible in the last four years should not, because of changed circumstances such as income earned, etc., be precluded from participation in the allocation of houses. I would ask the Minister to give me an assurance that applicants who have been eligible for a period of time will still be eligible under the new policy.

Mr. Bickerton: The easy way out is to give you that assurance!

Mr. RUSHTON: I am very happy to be assured by the Minister on that point. There will be occasions in the future when a person who has made every effort to provide his own home, and been frugal and gone without, will be considered under the new criterion, and be excluded. I suppose such instances will always occur.

I now refer to one case which has come before me, and in this regard the member for East Melville has mentioned the principle involved. This case indicates to me that all is not well with the new policy the Government has introduced. In answer to a question asked by the member for East Melville the Minister told us that there has been no change in the priority of applicants. However, I know that is not the position. The Minister is now examining a case in respect of which I have made representations to him. I know he will look at it fairly and will do all he can to assist. This case highlights the fact that the family involved is disadvantaged. This family has waited four years and two months for a house, and it established a priority in February, 1968.

Then came the invitation to participate in the new scheme. The members of this family had an interview with the commission, and were told that they could qualify for a loan with a building society. They presented all the relevant facts, such as their financial position and how much they were able to pay, as well as their ages. Because of the age of the parents they were precluded from obtaining a loan; yet this family had waited four years and two months for a house. When the Minister examines this case he will realise that whereas a younger applicant might qualify for a loan through a building society, despite the fact that he might have to pay \$10 more a month to repay the loan, another person in a different category might have to wait another 12 months.

Mr. BICKERTON: In this case was the person concerned not made an offer of a house in a different area, in which he was not prepared to live?

Mr. RUSHTON: I think the Minister knows the case in question. The previous speaker in the debate said that this person had been waiting for a home south of the river since February, 1968; and according to the answer given to me the time had arrived when allocations of homes were being made. Then along came the new proposal showing applicants how they could obtain loans. This person was interviewed by an officer of the State Housing Commission, and was assured he could qualify. Now he has lost his priority. I understand that he has been offered a house in a suburb north of the river, in which he is not prepared to live because of his place of work and the inconvenience that would be caused to members of his family. It would be quite inhuman to force him to accept a house at the extreme end of a suburb north of the river.

Another person who meets the new qualifications can be placed ahead on the priority list of a person who has waited patiently for more than four years. This has resulted from the change of policy by the Government of making more funds available through the building societies.

Mr. Bickerton: I think I gave you an undertaking that I will examine the case, and I will inform you in due course.

Mr. RUSHTON: Another member of this family will be coming from England to stay with them. They are embarrassed, because at present they are living in a home which is not large enough to accommodate the present members plus the new arrivals.

Mr. Bickerton: I did hope that you would get a reply yesterday, but as it happens you will be getting one tomorrow.

Mr. RUSHTON: I appreciate that. I expected that I would get an answer expeditiously. Should this also be the experience of other applicants, then it indicates that the changed policy of the

Government is reacting detrimentally on some people. They have been so disadvantaged by the new policy of the Government that the Minister should look into the situation.

MR. BICKERTON (Pilbara—Minister for Housing) [8.12 p.m.]: I thank members for their support of the Bill. I congratulate the member for East Melville for his thoroughness in dealing with the measure. I realise that as an ex-Minister for Housing he is well acquainted with the operations of the State Housing Commission.

Mr. O'Neill: But not well acquainted with the new policy.

Mr. BICKERTON: He will find that as time goes on it will grow on him. I do not take lightly the points which have been raised by the member for East Melville or the member for Dale. I assure them that as a new Minister I am very grateful for the points they have brought forward. I am appreciative of the views expressed by people outside the commission, because they should influence a Minister as much as the views of the people within the commission. After all it is the function of the State Housing Commission to satisfy the housing needs of the people.

One point raised by the member for East Melville relates to the method of establishing eligibility. He mentioned it was the tradesman's rate of pay which determined eligibility. As I read the Bill I do not see there is any great difficulty. It is true that the commission has to advise the Minister in writing, because the provision in clause 3 states—

but the Minister shall not fix any amount under this subsection which is less than such amount as the Commission certifies in writing to the Minister to be the greatest amount of salary, wages, or income payable at that time to any tradesman within the metropolitan area of Perth.

In other words, it would be the highest tradesman's rate.

Mr. O'Neill: Why do you require the commission to let you know that when you could examine industrial awards and agreements to get the actual figure?

Mr. BICKERTON: I have a list of the tradesmen's rates which are payable. Initially we were thinking in terms of a tradesman's rate, but we found that the rates for different tradesmen varied. The purpose of the commission advising the Minister is to ensure that an investigation will be made to determine the highest tradesman's rate. There is nothing wrong with such a procedure.

Mr. O'Neill: I suppose that will provide the opportunity to the commission to check on the figures, especially the figures given by the newest member of the commission!

Mr. BICKERTON: I do not think the honourable member intended that remark. This procedure is fair enough. This is not the only matter in respect of which the commission advises the Minister. I think that at the present time the electrician is paid the highest rate for a tradesman. We know that from time to time the eligibility rate will be increased.

In connection with the matter raised by the member for Dale, I agree that the position in the country is left a little open, but we need not be greatly concerned about it. If it is left open it will be easier, perhaps, for the Minister to regulate eligibility in far-flung places. We have a big State.

Mr. O'Neil: Does the Minister believe the Bill gives him power to prescribe a different rate for different areas? Is he satisfied?

Mr. BICKERTON: Yes. The particular case referred to by the member for Dale is one about which I do not have the full facts. However, at this stage I give him an assurance, again, that we will certainly go into it. To my way of thinking it is an isolated case. That is reasonable to assume because it is the first one I have heard of.

Mr. O'Neil: Only three people availed themselves of the invitation anyway; that is 25 per cent.

Mr. BICKERTON: Given a little time I think we will sort this out. If there be any shortcomings we can do something to rectify them. I feel sure that if any shortcomings are not rectified the members concerned will remind the Government on that score. The House seems to sit fairly regularly.

I will certainly look into the matters raised by the member for East Melville, and I again thank him for his contribution.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Third Reading

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

BILLS (2): RECEIPT AND FIRST READING

1. Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Bill.
2. Aboriginal Heritage Bill.

Bills received from the Council; and, on motions by Mr. J. T. Tonkin (Premier), read a first time.

ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS BILL

Council's Amendment

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mr. A. R. Tonkin) in the Chair; Mr. H. D. Evans (Minister for Agriculture) in charge of the Bill.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The amendment made by the Council is as follows:—

Clause 6, page 3, lines 16 and 17—Delete the words "such number of members as the Governor thinks fit to appoint" and substitute the words "seven members appointed by the Governor".

Mr. H. D. EVANS: I move—

That the amendment made by the Council be agreed to.

The Minister in another place, in consultation with his colleagues, put forward the amendment as it appears on the notice paper. It is a simple amendment and merely serves to specify the number of which the Zoological Gardens Board shall consist. The number is fixed at seven whereas previously no number was specified.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Report

Resolution reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL

(No. 2)

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 4th May.

MR. GAYFER (Avon) [8.25 p.m.]: Over the years the Traffic Act has had quite a checkered history. On the 22nd August, 1918, at the opening of Parliament, His Excellency the Governor, Sir William Grey Ellison-Macartney, P.C., K.C.M.G., told those present—and it appears on page 4 of *Hansard* for that year—that it was intended to present to Parliament a Roads Bill and a Traffic Bill.

It appears that this was the third attempt to combine a number of Acts under the one heading of "Traffic." Each previous attempt had been frustrated, and the Bills did not see the light of day.

I find that subsequently, on the 10th September, 1918, a Traffic Bill was given a first reading in this House. If I might digress for a moment, I also came across a debate which took place on the 8th November of that year. I observed that at nine minutes to nine in the morning, after an all-night debate on an education

matter, a rumour had spread through the House that armistice had been declared. I was amazed then to read a most eloquent speech by The Hon. P. Collier. Those men must certainly have had tremendous energy to be able to sit up all night debating a Bill, and then make an eloquent speech at close to 10 o'clock in the morning. I assure members that the speech is well worth reading. The celebrations and singing which occurred on that occasion would not be allowed now under your control, Mr. Speaker.

Returning to the Traffic Bill, I found that a Bill was introduced on the 10th September, 1918, but it was again discharged from the notice paper on the 6th December following a torrid debate in both Houses. The principle contained in that Bill was the pooling of license moneys collected throughout the State.

The next Traffic Bill was introduced on the 28th August, 1919, by The Hon. W. J. George, the member for Murray-Wellington. He was the then Minister for Works and, once again, history was made in that year. In 1919 we had four Ministries, and Mr. George was in the third—the Mitchell Ministry. Perhaps it is significant—and I do not necessarily cast any aspersions on the name of Mr. George—that his name does not reappear in the fourth Ministry of that same year.

The import of that Bill was to give local authorities the power to license vehicles, and the pooling of fees collected—which provision appeared in the previous Bill—was omitted on this occasion. Another provision in that Bill was to give local authorities the power to appoint traffic inspectors, and the Commissioner of Police the power to grant drivers' licenses. Another provision of the Bill is worth mentioning because it removed the speed limit which operated throughout the State at that time. That limit was 12 miles per hour, and was considered to be the full speed of a sulky.

The Bill now before us has a particular significance, if not from the historical implications then from the changes now envisaged. The Bill will finally destroy one of the most solid planks of local government in Western Australia; that is, the right to collect license fees and control traffic. Those matters have been a prerogative of local government for the last 53 years.

In this centenary—plus one—year of local government the main strength of local government is to be whittled away by the provisions contained in this Bill. This gradual erosion and enticement has been taking place over many years under successive Governments and, I maintain, for no justifiable reason.

In 1958 I was a member of the Country Shire Councils' Association, and I was, likewise, a member of the Country Traffic

Advisory Committee which was continuing investigation into ideas of a statutory body which was never given official recognition.

I feel the blame for this rests on the shoulders of successive Governments, mainly because of the advice of the departments which have been traditionally opposed to the licensing and control of traffic in country areas by local government.

For several years I served as a director on the road division of the National Safety Council. I would like to put on record my great respect for the members with whom I worked and the members who are continuing the work of that council. After studying accident statistics for nine years, and discussing at length around the table the possible advantages of police takeover, I did not become convinced that such a police takeover would mean a reduction in accident rates, and I think statistics will bear that out.

According to Australian law, there are three types of liar in the world: there are the liar, the bloody liar, and then statistics. I am only quoting. If members wish to introduce statistics during the course of this debate, they should make sure they cover all angles and not only those they want to emphasise to prove a point.

In the opening remarks of his introductory speech in respect of this Bill, the Minister said—

This proposal for uniform traffic management by the Police Department is soundly based. Every Australian State, except Western Australia, has uniform traffic control under its Police Department. Despite suggestions by States of dissatisfaction with the existing system, inquiries have revealed that no general change in the set-up is contemplated by any State.

That just about describes the thinking I have come across in my investigations in the other States. Admittedly, by and large traffic is under the control of the Police Department in all the other States. I also agree with the Minister that there is dissatisfaction in some of the Eastern States about the control and general policing of traffic.

Mr. O'Connor: In Queensland.

Mr. GAYFER: The position in Queensland has been mentioned. The accident rate in the various States is one reason for the dissatisfaction, despite the fact that the Minister said Western Australia had the worst record. If the Minister looked at the figures he would find that Western Australia is far from having the worst fatality rate in Australia. Likewise, if he were to travel by road through Victoria and South Australia, he would probably not see the number of traffic inspectors he would expect to find over there. I

travelled 1,500 miles through the wheat-belts of both those States just prior to Christmas.

Mr. Bickerton: You are not supposed to see them. They are supposed to see you.

Mr. GAYFER: I thought their presence on the roads, with the lights on their cars, would deter people from committing crimes in country towns. If they are not being seen, what is the good of that argument?

Mr. Bickerton: It is when you do something wrong that you see them.

Mr. O'Connor: That is contrary to what you said in your speech.

Mr. Hartrey: They lie in wait.

Mr. GAYFER: However, in the 1,500 miles I travelled I noticed two or them. They were both in the one State, unfortunately, so I do not know whether the same types of vehicles are used in both States.

In his second reading speech the Minister also made reference to the report of the interdepartmental committee appointed to inquire into the control of traffic and motor vehicle licensing in country areas. The committee was appointed in 1965 and made its report in April, 1966. The report is a very interesting document, mainly because of the diversity of opinion contained therein. What else could we expect when we have on one side the Main Roads Department, the Police Department, and the Treasury Department, and on the other side the Secretary and Assistant Secretary of the Local Government Association. The two last-mentioned presented a minority report. The Minister based many of his arguments on the majority report, in which we find some very important statements. In paragraph 7.42 on page 30 of the report, the majority recommendations include the following statement:—

It is true that strong local government is of great importance to the proper working of the Australian federal system of government and no thoughtful person could view lightly a degradation of its powers and responsibilities.

In paragraph 7.49 on page 31 of the report, the minority recommendations contain this statement—

Because of the huge area of the State, strong local government is indispensable in the administrative organisation of country areas and any erosion of their powers may adversely affect their capacity to perform this role.

In fact, the Minister based half of his speech on this report and he dealt in sequence with matters arising from it. I would have preferred that he referred to a report arising from an investigation into the systems operating in the Eastern States and in Western Australia in regard to traffic control and the reduction of accidents arising from that traffic control.

The speech therefore tells us nothing about accident prevention, which has caused the newspapers to scream for the blood of local authorities, although part of paragraph 4.18 of the report reads—

However, on the evidence available, and particularly that indicating the high proportion of single vehicle accidents, it cannot be implied that improved enforcement on the open road would immediately bring about a reduction in accidents. . .

We get back to the basic argument that has been going on for 53 years. If we refer to the speeches recorded in the *Hansard* of 1919, we find the same argument was used—that 45 per cent. of the traffic was in the metropolitan area at that time. The question was whether the police or the local authorities could better look after it. We are still debating the same things that our forefathers debated. I think it is only because the Police Department and the Treasury have a niggling desire to take complete control of traffic and the resultant revenue that this matter keeps coming forward.

The matter goes deeper than anyone seems to realise. Virtually a whole institution—a positive and effective area of government, and, indeed, the very insides of local administration—is being attacked. Years ago, such an attack could have caused a civil war because of the taking away of the liberties of the local authorities.

In July, 1970, 190 delegates from local authorities throughout the State voted against the takeover of traffic control by the Police Department, and only three delegates voted in favour of it. If the Government had an honest desire to assist the well-being of country people, why could it not take over health, vermin, and other administrative burdens? I think it is not interested in doing so because there is no revenue to be derived from those functions.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: Are you advocating that.

Mr. GAYFER: We were told tonight by the Minister for Works that the powers of local government had been taken away by the introduction of a Bill concerning main roads. Those powers are being whittled away little by little.

Mr. J. T. Tonkin: You have not answered the question yet. I want to know whether you are advocating it.

Mr. GAYFER: The Government might as well take them over. Everything else is going.

Mr. Nalder: Except fruit fly.

Mr. GAYFER: The Government proposition is the complete opposite of decentralisation, as preached so often in this House by the Minister for Development and Decentralisation. I would say the employment of traffic inspectors will cause little change in numbers in the

country areas, but the council staff at present engaged on carding, indexing, and licensing, and the office accommodation, will clearly become superfluous. The issuing of licenses through a central system will cause bureaucratic holdups and will not give the personalised service that is at present given in country shires.

I had brought to my notice a case dealing with the transfer of licenses through the central authority in Perth. A utility was bought in Perth on the 19th November by the York Shire Council. It was not until the 16th February that the council had the transfer papers returned to it and the transfer was finally effected. That is not an isolated case.

In my electorate there are six shires, and each of them has, in writing, deplored the proposed takeover. I will not be permitted to read these letters in full but I will quote extracts from them and give the dates of the letters in order to show that they are of recent vintage. On the 1st May, 1972, the Corrigin Shire Council wrote—

... instructed ... to emphatically protest against the transfer of license fees to the Police Department. It is ... opposite to decentralization ... issuing, index carding and the compilation of renewal notices ... keeps at least one adult clerk fully employed. Should the licenses be taken we will have to dispense with the services of one adult male clerk, which is very detrimental to our small towns and already falling population.

The council goes on to say it feels police administration will be—

... to the detriment of our already precarious financial structure.

On the 1st May, 1972, the Brookton Shire Council wrote—

... I re-iterate Councils complete rejection of the proposed Legislation as it stands at present. Indeed, it even appears that the Minister has completely rejected the secondary suggestion which has been put forward ... the formation of a Statutory body to control traffic in Country Areas.

On the 1st May, 1972, the Shire of Beverley wrote—

My Council are opposed because the take over by the Police will result in loss of revenue by Local Authorities without achieving the desired result—

Mr. Graham: How would they know?

Mr. GAYFER: How does the Minister know it will?

Mr. Graham: It is the council that is making the statement.

Mr. GAYFER: How does the Minister know it will?

Mr. Graham: It is the council that is making the statement. I did not.

Mr. GAYFER: That is correct. The Minister made another statement and he cannot prove that, either.

Mr. Graham: I asked a question.

Mr. GAYFER: Fair enough.

Mr. Graham: They cannot make an assertion like that.

Mr. GAYFER: But the Minister is making an assertion.

Mr. Graham: I did not. I asked a question.

Mr. GAYFER: The Minister is standing behind this Bill. I should have obtained copies of the speeches he made when he returned from visiting Nero, or somebody, the year before last. He said the police takeover was the "greatest." Perhaps one of my colleagues will look that up.

Mr. Graham: I am still of that opinion, of course.

Mr. GAYFER: Of course, but how does the Minister know he will be right? He would not have a clue.

Mr. Graham: I will get up and make my own speech.

Mr. GAYFER: I will continue—

Local Authorities will lose the valuable statistical information which is of vital value when justifying claims for Commonwealth Aid Road Funds.

Will the Minister deny that one?

Mr. Graham: Of course I will.

Mr. GAYFER: To continue—

Local Authorities will have little or no knowledge of licensing revenue, fines or penalties or the expenditure of these funds.

I hope the Minister will keep interjecting as the shires are most interested in his interjections.

Mr. Graham: I am interested in traffic control.

Mr. GAYFER: The next paragraph I wish to refer to is headed "Centralised licensing," and reads as follows:—

This is not only contrary to the Government's stated decentralisation policy—

Mr. Graham: Of course it is not.

Mr. GAYFER: To continue—

—but can also result in a delay of two or three days in getting the names of registered owners. Most Traffic Inspectors have access to Shire records at all times.

Mr. Graham: You will want a Beverley police force next, I suppose.

Mr. GAYFER: I also have a letter from the Qualtrading Shire Council dated the 2nd May. I would like to quote portions of this as follows:—

Inspection of Vehicles: At present the Inspector co-operates with Farmers and often inspects vehicles on their

property. For the vehicle to be taken to a central Inspection Depot, which could be located at Cunderdin or Kellerberrin etc., will cause hardships to many.

Administration and Licensing: Many Councils have staff and Office space especially for Licensing of vehicles and administration of Traffic Control. These Councils will either have to reduce staff or be burdened financially.

Bruce Rock Shire Council, on the 29th April, made the following comment:—

Shires have records of the number of vehicles registered within the shire and the value of their licenses. If licensing was administered by the Police, councils would lose track of this and not know what C.A.R. Funds would be received from the Main Roads Department.

Mr. O'Connor: The Government would not know. We have been given no indication of what the shires will receive.

Mr. GAYFER: I realise that. Other points made by the Bruce Rock Shire Council are as follows:—

A shire can offer a more personalised service to the numerous questions that arise in connection with vehicle licensing. I imagine that eventually, if the police take over, licensing will be computerised and render an impersonalised service from Perth.

A Traffic Inspector is under the notice of the Shire Clerk, Councillors and all Ratepayers whereas Police Officers are only answerable to a senior officer based at a district office (i.e. Bruce Rock for instance is controlled from Narrogin).

Mr. Graham: What a lot of tripe!

Mr. GAYFER: I hope *Hansard* got that. To continue—

We consider a Traffic Inspector's job is a full time specialist one and he should not be called out to other duties that a policeman is required to attend to. Therefore a separate traffic authority would be better than having it incorporated as one of the Police Department's numerous duties.

Shires' Superannuation Schemes, which include Traffic Inspectors, is superior to the Police Superannuation Scheme. Shires contribute on a \$ for \$ basis whereas the Police contribute the full premium of the policy.

Did I hear the Minister say something?

Finally, there is a 10-page submission from York. I will not go through this in detail, except to quote one paragraph as follows:—

It is important to note that this Council favours only control by individual Councils which can act if a T/I is no good. It is opposed to any

centralised Country Traffic Authority which would be in the same category as the police force if ever any unsatisfactory inspectors were appointed.

I will close on this note: We have heard at length of the great saving which will be effected by installing a computer in the central area. However, it has been my experience that computers do not save labour costs, and I am sure members with experience of computers will agree with me. It is necessary to employ skilled staff to dictate to the computer and to set it up and work it. More personnel are required to feed the necessary information to the machine, and certainly it needs skilled staff employed at a high rate of pay. This staff would need to have the know-how to dictate programmes to the computer.

I am very intrigued with the whole set-up, because it is quite apparent to the local authorities—and this is one of their main worries—that the amount of money presently available to shire councils will be lost. It will not be lost to other shire councils nor will it be split up in the very way that they did not wish it to be back in 1919, but it will be lost by the over-cumbersome and costly administration necessary to run what mainly is hoped to be an effective means of reducing road fatalities. It has been proved in the Eastern States that this is not the case. I am completely opposed to the Bill, and I know I speak for thousands of people in the country areas of Western Australia.

Mr. Graham: Very, very parochial.

MR. LEWIS (Moore) [8.52 p.m.]: Lest the Minister may be under any misapprehension as to my attitude to this Bill—

Mr. Graham: That would not be very hard to guess.

Mr. LEWIS: —let me say at the outset I am totally and utterly opposed to it.

Mr. Graham: Naturally.

Mr. LEWIS: I listened to the Minister's second reading speech and I have taken the trouble to read it through twice since.

Mr. O'Connor: It was not worth reading twice.

Mr. LEWIS: I could not find much of any substance in the first reading so I read it again.

Mr. Bickerton: I think you are very rude.

Mr. LEWIS: I am not criticising the Minister for this, because I suspect the notes were put together by the Police Department, and it could be fairly said that it has a vested interest.

Mr. Bickerton: I think your notes have been put together by the local authorities.

Mr. LEWIS: Not any of my notes have been put together by local authorities.

Mr. Bickerton: Was it not from information you have gleaned from local authorities?

Mr. LEWIS: Some of it, but they certainly did not put my speech together. Furthermore, I would like to add that the police authorities have conducted something like an essay competition and they have gleaned the best of all the arguments.

It is quite apparent from the Minister's second reading speech that he scraped the bottom of the barrel. In support of that statement, may I say he said such things as who would control the crowds at Royal visits, processions, protest marches, sporting fixtures, football finals, speedways, and even visiting warships. Who would control the traffic if we did not have the police?

My question is: Who has controlled the traffic up to date in the country areas? All country towns have their own functions—certainly not functions with an attendance of 40,000 or 50,000 as at a football grand final, but they do have a set number of people to control the traffic. I realise, of course, that the crowds are very much smaller than those experienced in the metropolitan area, but I feel they are handled just as efficiently.

Mr. Bickerton: They usually borrow some policemen do they not?

Mr. LEWIS: This is only a small Bill. It contains two clauses and the first clause is the usual preamble. We are left with one clause which seeks to amend one section of the Act. However, as has already been stated, the implications of this provision are very far reaching—that is, it hopes to achieve greater efficiency in the control of traffic. In order to achieve that greater efficiency, it is proposed to hand over country traffic control to the Police Department. I am by no means satisfied that the handing over of the control of all traffic to the Police Force will make for any greater efficiency in the handling of traffic in the country.

The West Australian has for many years advocated the handing over of traffic control to the Police Force.

Mr. Graham: But that was the attitude of the majority as reported by the departmental committee when your party was the Government.

Mr. LEWIS: I am not speaking of the committee but of this Bill.

Mr. Graham: Everyone is in agreement except you and a few parish pumps.

Mr. Nalder: Thank goodness for them!

Mr. Graham: The honourable member is more interested in them than in traffic control.

Mr. Nalder: Rubbish! What interest have you in traffic control?

Mr. Graham: I was the Minister in charge of this for a number of years, if you remember.

Mr. LEWIS: We cannot deny that there are more fatalities on country roads than in the metropolitan area. It is also true that approximately one-third of the vehicles in this State are registered in the country and two-thirds in the metropolitan area. However, we have to examine more than the cold statistics of the number of people who died as a result of accidents on country roads. There are far more accidents in the metropolitan area than in the country and this is understandable because the traffic is heavier and there are many blind street corners.

Mr. Graham: Some of the drivers are blind too.

Mr. LEWIS: That may be so. Nevertheless, it is a fact that there are more accidents in the metropolitan area. However, in the metropolitan area a speed limit of 35 miles an hour applies, although many people travel at 40 miles per hour, and some of course go over that speed. However, the result is that there is a far smaller chance of a fatal accident resulting when cars are travelling at slower speeds.

In the country areas the speed limits are much higher with the open roads. However, the road surfaces are often not as good as they could be. I realise the Main Roads Department is doing the job as well as it can with its limited resources but there is still plenty to do.

I drove over 2,500 miles in New Zealand this year, and I believe their roads are better than ours.

Mr. Hartrey: They are.

Mr. LEWIS: A white line is painted on each side of the road, as the Main Roads Department has done with some of our roads. As well as this there is a gravel surface on the verge of the road, or what is called in New Zealand a shingle surface. This provides a good solid surface and is wide enough for a vehicle to pull completely off the road without getting bogged. I feel this is a good safety factor.

The high speed and long distances travelled in the country result in fatigue and inattention, which are major contributors to accidents.

I feel we should remember another factor which contributes to the higher number of fatalities on country roads, and this is the much greater time lag between the accident and the patient's arrival at a hospital. This time lag is quite unavoidable because of the distances involved. In the metropolitan area an ambulance can arrive at the scene of an accident within a very short time, whereas in the country areas an ambulance may have to travel 20, 30, or more miles to get to the accident and then there is often another long trip to get the patient to hospital. This extra time can be very critical to a patient and I feel this contributes to the greater number of fatalities on country roads.

I realise only too well that we will not have a majority on this side of the House to prevent this legislation being passed. I would like to add, Mr. Speaker, that I realise you carry out your duties quite impartially. May I say it is just bad luck that you have seen fit so far to exercise your impartiality by casting your vote in favour of the Government.

I am not casting any reflection at all, Mr. Speaker, but may I say that we on this side of the House will be very pleased if, at some point in time, you can exercise your casting vote in favour of this side of the House. We hope that you will hold the scales of justice with equal poise, as the saying goes.

Some mention has been made of the shires' experience, and I was twitted a few moments ago on my comments about shires. In my electorate there are eight shires, including the Shire of Wanneroo. In 1966-67, the Shire of Wanneroo decided to hand over the control of traffic within its boundaries to the police on a trial basis. This lasted for six months and at the end of that time the shire had received many complaints from its ratepayers that they never saw a patrolman. I have been informed personally by one of the policemen who used to patrol that area when the police temporarily had control of the traffic, that they were instructed to patrol the West Coast Highway and Wanneroo Road. They did this twice a day; they travelled along the road and then returned. That was the extent of their patrol. No wonder the ratepayers of the area complained that they never saw a patrolman on the by-roads. As a consequence, the Wanneroo Shire has resumed control of traffic in its area.

The shire has four traffic patrolmen, four cars, and one motor cycle engaged on traffic duty. It does not use the motor cycle for chasing speedsters but for controlling traffic on busy days, such as at weekends, when there is heavy traffic travelling to Yanchep, to the Lions Park, and to the car racing track. The motor cycle can slip in and out between streams of traffic and direct the course of vehicles where necessary to avoid traffic jams.

As I have said, there are eight shires in my electorate and those shires employ a total of 11 inspectors. All the shires have cars equipped with two-way radio. In all cases they have assured me that they have good liaison with the Police Department. I particularly asked what methods the inspectors used when patrolling the roads and when attending accidents. Every shire described its methods to me. At all times they use radio communication to get in touch with headquarters. They also use various other means to contact somebody who can immediately get in touch with an ambulance. This applies to those instances where they

do not have a telephone near at hand. I was told that they prefer the telephone to the radio in view of the distances over which they have to operate.

All the inspectors work seven days a week but they do not work the whole seven days in any one week. They sometimes take a day off during the week. Their range of hours is from 6.00 a.m. one day to 2.00 a.m. the following morning. I am not implying that there is a continuous patrol during those hours. The inspectors work in accordance with the density of the traffic at any particular time. For example, they may be engaged on patrol duty in the morning to deal with certain types of traffic, such as a number of limestone trucks travelling along a particular road. Following this line of duty they may then have a lull and work again according to their various functions up to 2.00 a.m. With one exception they all possess a first-aid certificate and they carry a first-aid kit.

Mention was made of inspections of vehicles. I have here a report made by the Chief Traffic Inspector of the Wanneroo Shire for the month of March, 1972. He reported that 164 second-hand vehicles were inspected for that month, plus 23 new vehicles, and also six vehicles that were carrying yellow stickers. These were defective vehicles. He went on to say that 24 vehicles were rejected on the first inspection and had to be reinspected later in the month.

This brings me back to the comment made by *The West Australian* in regard to Lake Grace. A paragraph of the article in question was quoted by no less an authority than the member for Fremantle on the 29th March, 1972—that is, if there is a lesser authority than the member for Fremantle. This quotation about Lake Grace reads as follows:—

Of the first 150 vehicles the police inspected for relicensing, only 28 were found to be roadworthy; the others were rejected mainly for defective lighting (particularly on trucks), bald tyres, faulty steering or other dangerous defects.

It all depends on how these inspections are conducted—whether by the police or the local authority. I was assured by the Wanneroo Shire that many of the vehicles brought to the shire for registration with no indicator light working, no tail light, faulty tail light, or some other minor defect, are not registered at that time, but the owners of those vehicles are told to get the necessary repairs done and return to the shire to have the vehicles registered. If the owners return the vehicles to the shire with the necessary repairs effected they are then registered.

However, if a shire wished to make out a big case in respect of the number of vehicles it rejected, it would reject all

vehicles with minor faults. So I mention this to point out that we have to take a little deeper into the statistics that are supplied for the purpose of seeing exactly what they mean.

In the Wanneroo Shire, for the month of April, 1972, 92 secondhand and 22 new vehicles were registered, together with 30 vehicles reinspected. Also, for the month of March, 11 accidents were reported. I am quoting these figures from the Wanneroo Shire's chief inspector's report. Seven of these accidents were attended by the traffic department's officers. Two persons received fatal injuries, and there were one serious and six minor injuries. The chief inspector then went on to speak of the condition of the vehicles used for patrol work.

He then gave an analysis of the number of motorists who were apprehended; that is, those motorists who had broken the law. The convictions that resulted were as follows:—

Drunk driving	1
Driving under suspension	1
Reckless driving	1
Dangerous driving	2
Refuse name and address	1
Unlawful assault	2
Speeding	157
Double white line	50
Stop signs	7
Cutting corner	1
No signal	1
Inefficient headlights	3
Improper overtaking	1
Tail lights	2
Seat belts	2
Unlicensed vehicle	1
No "P" plates	2
Failing to yield right of way	1
No M.D.L.	1
Parking	1

That is a total of 238 offences. In addition, 109 cautions were issued for various offences such as those already listed.

So at the risk of wearying the House I have quoted these figures to show that the inefficiency of country traffic inspectors is not nearly as great as it is made out to be. I have been present when local authorities have been visited by Ministers of the Crown and those Ministers have extolled local government as being the indispensable third arm of government. Yet, here we are falling over backwards to take away some of the powers the shires are now exercising very efficiently. What will this mean? Will it mean there will be less speeding on country roads? All these shires have cars that are equipped with radar, and some of them have ammopheters. Many accidents have been caused by a driver going to sleep and hitting a tree. If such a driver had had a policeman following him would the accident have been avoided? I have yet to be convinced, and the Minister has certainly not done this.

Mr. Bickerton: I have yet to have another go.

Mr. LEWIS: The Minister will have to do a lot better than he did the first time.

Mr. Bickerton: I will be only too happy to oblige.

Mr. LEWIS: Perhaps the Minister will deliver his own speech next time and not that of the Commissioner of Police. However, I have yet to be convinced that the police should take over the control of traffic that is now very efficiently carried out by country local authorities.

The SPEAKER: There is too much talking.

Mr. LEWIS: So I repeat: I oppose the Bill.

MR. McPHARLIN (Mt. Marshall) [9.12 p.m.]: Unfortunately I was not present on the day the Minister delivered his second reading speech; I was attending a meeting of the Great Eastern Shire Councils at Merredin. Having read the Minister's speech one or two points are plainly indicated, and reference has been made to them by the two previous speakers—the member for Avon and the member for Moore. The Minister made the statement that Western Australia has the worst road toll of all the States in the Commonwealth, and he went on to quote some statistics. However, he qualified those statistics in one respect by saying—

Although statistics may not tell a completely reliable story the following are worth recording. The average number of vehicles licensed for 1966-71 in the metropolitan area was 267,181. That figure represents 66.8 per cent. of the State total. The average number of vehicles licensed for 1966-70—the 1971 figures are not available—in country areas was 132,689. That represents 33.2 per cent. of the State total.

A little further on the Minister quoted some fatality figures as follows:—

The fatalities which occurred in the period from 1966 to the 14th September, 1971, number 826 in the metropolitan area and 967 in the country areas. The figure for the metropolitan area represents 46.1 per cent. of the State total, and the figure for the country areas represents 53.9 per cent. of the State total.

One of the claims made by the Minister during his second reading speech—and this claim has been made by various other people, and I think has been supported by members of the Police Department—was that police control in the country areas would reduce the death toll.

This is one point which I think is open to challenge, because it cannot be proved and has not been proved in other parts of the Commonwealth. This, I think, will

be illustrated later in the debate with some figures which my leader has in his possession, and therefore I will not deal with them further.

During the 1969 calendar year there were in this State 4,809 traffic accidents involving casualties, of which 78 per cent. were in the metropolitan area and the remaining 22 per cent. in country local government districts. Of the vehicles in this State, 70 per cent. are registered in the metropolitan area.

When talking about statistics the Minister did say that they do not always tell the true story and can, in fact, prove what it is desired to prove at the time. However, these figures will be clarified and dealt with later when, as I just mentioned, another member will enter the debate.

We should probably refer to this Government as a give-and-take Government, because recently during the debate on a Bill in this Chamber it was stated that the Government wanted to give certain extra responsibilities to local authorities; that is in regard to fruit-fly control. On the other hand, we now find the Government wanting to take away responsibility and erode part of the functions of the local authorities, which functions they have over the years proved quite capable of handling.

The SPEAKER: Order! Put that down! (To the Gallery.)

Mr. McPHARLIN: One feature mentioned by previous speakers, and the word is used frequently in other debates and outside this House, is decentralisation. We hear much talk of decentralisation of industry, of control, of population, and so on, in an attempt to maintain the population of country towns so that they and the people generally might obtain the amenities required and retain the population to warrant the amenities being supplied.

This topic is somehow banded about a great deal at election time, but, not long afterwards, it appears to be forgotten and the policy of decentralisation is not followed as much as the people would like and expect it to be after having heard so much about it in election policy speeches.

We know that the rural economy these days is a little less buoyant than in the past, and consequently we do not desire the country population to be decreased. We want it to remain as it is so that the shires can carry out their responsibilities which, under the Act, they have so capably done in the past.

Some criticism has been expressed of the efficiency of the country shires and their office staff, and their costs of traffic control. In this respect, I have been able to ascertain the average cost per vehicle in country areas and the average cost per vehicle in the Police Department. In the Police Department it is \$5.70 per vehicle while the cost for a vehicle under the control of a local authority is \$3.50. This

indicates the efficiency of the local authorities. If they can reduce the Police Department's figure by \$2.20 a vehicle this is indeed a great saving and reflects the efficiency of their present administration.

A few days ago I obtained some figures from one of the shires in my electorate. I might add that every shire in my electorate, of which there are 10, is opposed to the police takeover of traffic.

Mr. Graham: Do you mean the shire councils?

Mr. McPHARLIN: Yes.

Mr. Graham: That would number in total about how many people?

Mr. McPHARLIN: They represent the whole of the area.

Mr. Graham: Have they authority to speak one way or the other on this matter?

Mr. McPHARLIN: Surely if they are democratically elected representatives—and they come up for election every three years—

Mr. Graham: Not on that issue. That could be the opinion of some 70 or 80 people.

Mr. McPHARLIN: It is the opinion of the shire councils in my electorate.

Mr. Graham: Of perhaps 70 or 80 out of thousands.

Mr. McPHARLIN: I have a responsibility to these people and I am accepting their decisions.

Mr. Graham: They have never consulted the people at large on this issue.

Mr. Court: They are the elected people though.

Mr. Graham: On this issue?

Mr. Jamieson: What sort of franchise?

Mr. Court: They are elected.

Mr. Jamieson: Be reasonable.

Mr. Court: And quite a few of those elected are Labor people but they support the views of the member for Mt. Marshall.

Mr. Graham: It is a change to hear the Deputy Leader of the Opposition talking about support for Labor thought.

Mr. Court: I am telling you that some of these elected councillors are, in fact, Labor supporters.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. Brown): Order!

Mr. McPHARLIN: I was referring to figures given to me by one of the bigger shires in my electorate—that is, Dalwallinu—concerning the cost of administering traffic control in its area. The amount is approximately \$8,500 a year, which includes a \$200 replacement cost of the motor vehicle. The local authority recoups some of this by hiring its vehicle out to other shires, but it must change its vehicle about once every nine months because of the large mileage it covers. It also recoups a considerable amount from court fines and as a result of traffic infringement notices.

The SPEAKER: Order! If there are any more demonstrations I will clear the gallery. It is not a laughing matter either.

[Noise from the gallery.]

The SPEAKER: Clear the gallery!

[The gallery was cleared.]

The SPEAKER: The member for Mt. Marshall may continue.

Mr. McPHARLIN: Prior to that diversion I was referring to figures supplied to me by one of the shires in my electorate. I was indicating that the shire obtains a certain amount of income from fines and as a result of traffic infringement notices.

I was interested a short while ago to hear the comments of the member for Fremantle in this House, and my colleague, the member for Moore, has also referred to this. The member for Fremantle said that shire councils were highway robbers, Ned Kellys, or something of that nature, and that they were using traffic infringement as a source of revenue. My contention is that whether the local authorities control the traffic or the Police Department controls it, it will still be a source of revenue; only under this Bill, the revenue will be diverted from the shires. Therefore, I cannot see any point in claiming that the shires are doing less than their duty by imposing the fines and catching up with the lawbreakers, which is their duty anyway.

The cost to this particular shire involves it in a loss each year, but it is not a great amount. I think this could apply to other shires as well, according to circumstances. In those shires through which highways have been constructed more traffic will be involved and the consequent income will be greater than in the shire to which I am referring and in others where the traffic is not so great. Consequently, of course, the amount gained from traffic fines and other penalties would also be far less.

To substantiate my remark that the shires in my area are against the police takeover of traffic I will read a letter from the Koorda Shire. I do not intend to read many letters, but I will read this one which is dated the 20th May, 1971. It is as follows:—

Re Traffic Control.

I have been instructed by my Council to request you to take whatever steps are necessary to defeat any legislation, which may be brought before the Houses, dealing with the transfer of country traffic control to the Police Department.

My Council is in full agreement with the formation of a central body, but is definitely opposed to police takeover.

That is the attitude of all the shire councils in my electorate, as I mentioned in my previous remarks.

I was interested in the salaries paid to traffic inspectors and I was able to obtain the Federal award for traffic inspectors employed by local authorities. It was supplied to me by the Western Australian Employers Federation.

A traffic inspector has his salary increased year by year and therefore has an incentive to improve himself. In the first year his salary per annum is \$4,112, and by the third year he gets \$4,318. A traffic inspector, capable of conducting his own case, commences at \$4,239, and by his third year is earning \$4,445. A senior traffic inspector starts at \$4,580 and by the third year is earning \$4,786. It can be seen that the inspectors have an incentive to work to a higher grade and this is desirable. If a man has ambition he can progress.

The hours which a traffic inspector may work are also stipulated. He shall not exceed 38 hours per week and he must not work over any more than six days with a spread of 11 hours, with a provision of one hour for a meal. In addition, if he is required to do extra work he can qualify for overtime, and for work done outside the ordinary hours of duty prescribed in clause 12 of the award, he shall be paid at the rate of time and a half for the first three hours, and double time thereafter.

It must be realised from this information that if traffic inspectors are required to work extra time they are paid more and this gives them quite a good income. It is at least sufficient to allow them to maintain a favourable standard of living. However, if this Bill is passed many of the traffic inspectors will not be employed by their local authorities. Some will not be absorbed in other work because they are not qualified to do clerical duties, and will therefore be required to find an occupation elsewhere.

This has happened, I understand, in one or two of the shires which have handed over to police control; the traffic inspectors have not been able to be employed.

From what we have been told by the Government the purpose, apparently, in police takeover is to reduce the death toll—the carnage—on the roads. Many other causes of road deaths need to be looked at, and we know the Road Safety Council and many others are interested in making all sorts of recommendations to reduce the road toll. Safety devices, such as seat belts, are being placed in cars. All of these contribute in some way, we hope, to lowering the death toll. These devices are playing their part, but I still think it comes back to the individual driver. We will never get away from the human element and I am sure the greatest impact will be felt through education of drivers.

Something else which has been neglected somewhat over the years is the matter of extremely high-powered vehicles on the roads. Any person who is able to afford

a high-powered vehicle is in the position of buying one. Consequently there are vehicles on the roads capable of travelling at twice the speed limit of 65 miles per hour if the driver so desires. I do not think anybody denies that one of the causes of fatal accidents very definitely is high speed. Of course we know there are other factors associated with this. I do not think any consideration has ever been given to limiting cars to a certain horsepower. In this way perhaps some contribution could be made to lowering the risk factor in high-powered, fast motor-cars.

Before the debate closes I would be interested indeed to hear comments from members on the Government side of the House, particularly those who represent country areas where local authorities are still controlling traffic. Do not let us complete this debate without members on the Government side telling us their views. Surely it should not be left to the Opposition to do all the talking. I know that some members on the Government side represent country areas where shire councils are opposed to a police takeover.

I suggest that perhaps we should hear some of those members contribute to the debate. It would be most interesting to hear what they have to say. I do not wish to prolong the debate and I close on that note. I oppose the Bill.

MR. REID (Blackwood) [9.33 p.m.]: I would like to add my comments to those which have already been made to the measure and to join members in opposing it. We have heard many of the arguments against the legislation and, accordingly, I will make my remarks fairly brief. I would like to pose one question: Why is this legislation being introduced? To this day I do not think that question has been answered effectively.

Is it being introduced purely to reduce the road toll? Is it being introduced purely to provide job opportunities for police officers who have nothing else to do?

Mr. Bickerton: That is a terrible suggestion.

Mr. REID: Is it being introduced to establish a more efficient system which will return more money to the State through fines and prosecutions? Perhaps it is merely another step taken by the Labor Party to honour an election promise to centralise an organisation, after setting up a decentralisation portfolio.

Let us look briefly at each of these points to see what we can ascertain. Will the system save lives? From what we have heard in the debate so far and the reasons given for the introduction of the legislation I do not believe it will. I am certain nobody can prove it will save lives. All research which has been undertaken indicates that it is impossible to prove that

police control of traffic will save lives. Why, then, has the Government introduced the measure?

Mr. Jamieson: Do you not believe in uniform control?

Mr. REID: Yes, I believe in uniform control.

Mr. Jamieson: It is not possible while there is the hotch-potch which exists now.

Mr. REID: I believe in uniform control of law in all respects, but I think there are certain ways—

Mr. Jamieson: And a lot harder than this way.

Mr. REID: Perhaps, but this is a matter of opinion.

Mr. Jamieson: It is not a matter of opinion, but of human beings.

Mr. REID: I am sure the Minister would be well aware that the organisation proposed by the authorities would cost as low as 1 per cent. of the revenue to run. The Minister would be on shaky ground and could not substantiate statements in relation to the cost of running this scheme.

Let us return to the safety aspect. If the Minister could prove that the step would save lives, every member on this side of the House would vote for it unanimously. I say that in all sincerity. I do not believe any member of the Government can prove that it will save lives.

Mr. Bickerton: What about the shires that have voluntarily handed it over? If it was as good as you say they would want to keep it. Every shire in my electorate has handed it over voluntarily.

Mr. REID: Some were misled and some were sorry immediately afterwards.

Mr. Bickerton: Would you say that Bus-selton was misled?

Mr. Blakie: The Minister should ask that question afterwards.

Mr. Bickerton: Too many people are being picked up.

Mr. REID: We will come back to that point in a moment, because the Minister has raised an interesting aspect. I was speaking on the question of safety and asking whether the scheme would save lives. We have heard statements to the effect that Western Australia has the worst road toll, including accidents, in Australia. This may be so, but it is only half the story. We must look at the mileage per person per vehicle in Western Australia. If we do this I think we will find that our record of safety is one of the best.

Surely it was incumbent upon the Government to prove conclusively that there would be some benefits before introducing police takeover of traffic control. I say it will fail dismally on the grounds of saving lives which surely must rank as the No. 1 criterion.

Mr. Bickerton: It remains to be seen.

Mr. REID: Has the legislation been introduced purely to provide jobs for the Police Force? It will not take long to discuss this question because we know how short the Police Department is of trained officers to carry out police duties. We also know that the Police Force is a law enforcement body which the whole community looks up to and respects. I personally believe that the police would lose esteem and, in some cases, the affection which is bestowed upon them by the public if they were set up as speed demons. Nothing would arouse the hostility of the people more quickly than jack-booted speed cops on motorcycles or in police cars. The purpose of the police is to protect the individual citizen. Why encourage the police to take over traffic control when there is already an organisation to do the job?

Would the proposed system be more efficient? Figures quoted by the member for Mt. Lawley in his address, relating to control by local authorities, were clearly lower per mile than those relating to control by the police. The member for Mt. Marshall has given further proof that local authorities can administer these duties more economically than the police. Men are employed by local authorities for the sole purpose of traffic control. Why cloud the issue and involve an already understaffed Police Force in a field where they may have great difficulty in carrying out the duties?

Much has been said about the opinion of local authorities on this matter and it would be most unwise not to heed their viewpoints. Surely local authorities throughout Western Australia do a tremendous job in a voluntary effort. Indeed the shires are a third arm of government. If we do not heed their requests we will not be giving the shires a fair go.

The Government has already asked local authorities to take over fruit-fly control and now we are legislating to take over something which they wish to retain. They are well justified in saying that they have a case to be heard.

I would like to read a portion of a letter from a shire in my electorate which shows clearly its feelings in the matter.

Mr. Graham: You mean: A letter from a shire council?

Mr. REID: Yes, from a shire council.

Mr. Graham: There is a difference between a shire and a shire council.

Mr. REID: It is from the Shire Council of Bridgetown and Greenbushes.

Mr. Graham: Would that consist of 10 people?

Mr. W. G. Young: They are elected representatives of the whole district.

Mr. REID: I think the member for Roe has answered the Minister's interjection.

Mr. Graham: But do they have a mandate to express themselves one way or the other.

Mr. W. G. Young: They have been fighting this for 15 years and still are.

Mr. Graham: This Government has a mandate. Do representatives of local government have a mandate to express themselves in opposition to it?

Mr. Court: This has been an issue for years and the same men have been re-elected.

Mr. Graham: I seem to remember that a Liberal Party conference decided in favour of police control of traffic.

Mr. REID: I am quite certain they have a right to say what they want to say.

Mr. Graham: As individuals they have that right, but they have no mandate to speak on behalf of several thousand people.

Mr. Court: Of course they have.

Mr. Bickerton: They have not gone to the polls on that issue.

Mr. Blaikie: If the Deputy Premier went out looking for a mandate he would be out of office.

Mr. Graham: We have a mandate for this and the Opposition cannot deny it.

Mr. Rushton: Not after Ascot.

Mr. REID: The Government has a mandate to introduce this control, but probably a group of individuals designed the policy. There is not much difference between that and a group of shire councils which oppose it. In fact, it is exactly the same thing. I wish to return to the letter I mentioned, which is dated the 14th June, 1971. It says in part—

This Council is opposed to Police control.

In the event of compulsory take-over the Senior Traffic Inspector will lose:—

- (a) \$2000 per annum in salary.
- (b) Six years superannuation.
- (c) Accrued sick leave.
- (d) Long service leave entitlement (6 years).

He also owns his home and orchard property which he could find difficulty in renting should he be transferred by the Police. Again he stands to lose.

The Traffic Inspector will lose (a), (c) and (d) above to the same values. He occupies a Council house at Boyup Brook at a concession rent of \$8.50 per week.

Clerical assistance of approximately one third of a person is made available by the Bridgetown-Greenbushes Shire Council, as is office accommodation.

This is the feeling of the local authority. The people concerned are closely allied with nearly every other country local authority. I shall read another paragraph which explains some of the reasons for the opposition, and the disabilities and inconvenience which will be caused to the people in the area. It says—

The registration of unusual type of vehicles will take longer. A recent instance of this was brought to notice when a contractor was advised by Manjimup Police to go to Bridgetown to register—

I interpolate to say that it might be worth while to comment that Manjimup has police control of traffic. To continue—

—as it would take about six weeks to process his licences through Perth. The contractor now registers his machinery and vehicles at Bridgetown although he operates from and works in the Manjimup Shire.

Many inspectors who are specialists with years of experience may not be accepted by the Police Department and their experience will be wasted if replaced by a young constable fresh from training.

Mr. Cook: The contractor you mentioned operates from the Manjimup Shire?

Mr. REID: Yes, the Manjimup Shire. To continue—

Many inspectors are permanent local residents who go out of their way to assist ratepayers by checking vehicles out of normal hours and on farming properties. Many shire officers will co-operate with local residents who for various reasons need attention outside usual office hours. The local touch will be lost and traffic take-over will be another inroad into local government affairs.

This clearly illustrates the feeling of the local authorities. It is a fairly simple issue here—either we listen to the local authority's advice or we do not. If we do not listen to its advice, what happens when it asks for something else? Do we say "Yea" or "Nay," or do we say, "We will make up our own minds and ride roughshod over your feelings."

There is another point: Is this simply a move towards centralisation? At a time when decentralisation is probably one of the most burning issues in Western Australia we see the provisions of this Bill directed purely and simply towards centralisation. Surely this is an area where we can act?

Mr. Bickerton: The police deal with crime in country towns. Do you call that centralisation?

Mr. REID: I cannot see the Minister's argument.

Mr. Bickerton: If the police already handle everything except the control of traffic in towns, how can you say it is centralisation when they take over controlling traffic?

Mr. REID: One of the points made is that the traffic inspectors will be inducted into the Police Force.

Mr. O'Connor: A few of them.

Mr. REID: That is right, a few of them. We do not know how many, so there is uncertainty of job opportunity. Also those inspectors inducted into the Police Force will obviously be required to take on police duties. How well trained are they? We cannot have it both ways.

Mr. Bickerton: Surely an officer in charge, who is experienced enough to run a police station will not allocate jobs to people who cannot carry them out. I would hardly think a traffic inspector would be placed in a job he is not trained for.

Mr. REID: This is not much compensation to the traffic inspector who owns a house and has his roots down in a particular area.

Mr. Bickerton: What do you think happened to many of the S.B.S. workers when the previous Government took over Hawker Siddeley?

Mr. Taylor: Or when it took over Bunbury or the bus companies? What happened to those employees?

Mr. REID: This is a move to supplant what we have already and introduce someone else. Would somebody kindly prove conclusively that it is better? We cannot prove it will save lives. We cannot prove it will be more efficient, and we cannot see why it is here before the House.

Mr. Graham: It is a sensible arrangement to have State-wide control of traffic and crime.

Mr. REID: I agree with the Deputy Premier—it is desirable to have uniform law enforcement whether it is of crime or traffic. I do not think anyone disputes this, but the very same arguments which can be put up against traffic control by local authorities can be applied to the Police Force. Police officers can live too long in a town and they become indoctrinated, and they can make special friends. There are some shocking illustrations of police officers becoming parochial in country areas.

Mr. Bickerton: That does not make this legislation wrong.

Mr. REID: But it is part and parcel of it. One of the arguments put forward is that the control will be uniform. We want uniform police enforcement now throughout Western Australia, but whatever book of rules is used uniform control cannot be achieved. This comes back to the individual and the individual's interpretation

of the rules. One policeman may issue a warning and look the other way for a first offence and another policeman will book every first offender. This is an individual reaction to a situation. Therefore, I cannot see how this great, wonderful, shining principle of uniform law enforcement will be brought about.

Mr. Bickerton: It will be worth a try.

Mr. REID: Is it worth a try to uproot many people and destroy their inbuilt security?

Mr. Bickerton: I would not even like to see the member for Blackwood uprooted.

Mr. REID: There is no valid reason to contemplate this move at all.

I would like to go back to the other aspect raised by the member for Fremantle some weeks ago when he accused the local authorities and the local traffic enforcement officers of being Ned Kellys and adopting bushranger techniques. This is probably one of the most deplorable statements ever made concerning the members of local government authorities who give so much voluntary time to their ratepayers.

Mr. Fletcher: Do you think you will get votes out of that?

Mr. REID: I am not worrying about votes at the present time.

One point I would like clarified, Mr. Speaker: Does the member for Fremantle measure the efficiency of the system by the amount of revenue it brings in?

Mr. Fletcher: I do; I know very well you do.

Mr. REID: If the police managed to collect more revenue than the local authorities, would the member for Fremantle say they were bigger bushrangers?

Mr. Fletcher: They would be collecting it on more reasonable grounds.

Mr. REID: The member for Fremantle has me baffled: He has accused the traffic inspectors of being Ned Kellys and bushrangers and raising revenue for the local authorities, but I would like to refer to answers to questions which show that the Manjimup local authority raised \$4,453 in the last year that it controlled traffic and yet the Police Department raised \$5,417 in the first year it controlled traffic. Now, who are the bushrangers? I would like to ask that question of the member for Fremantle.

Mr. Fletcher: I do not know what you have done on that side in the past years to improve traffic safety.

Mr. REID: The member for Fremantle is rapidly becoming very famous on this issue.

Mr. Fletcher: I am not afraid to repeat it because there were many bushrangers on that side when they occupied the Treasury benches.

Mr. REID: I would like to qualify my remark—it should be infamous, not famous.

I can see no proof that the measures before us will reduce the road toll, increase the efficiency of control, or do anything except erode the powers of local government. I oppose the Bill wholeheartedly.

MR. THOMPSON (Darling Range) [9.54 p.m.]: I would like to make a few comments on this Bill.

Mr. Fletcher: Leave Fremantle out of it.

Mr. THOMPSON: Yes, I will do that. From my point of view the Government does not have a mandate to effect this changeover in my electorate. I believe the people of the Kalamunda Shire are completely satisfied with the control of traffic they have at the present time. Indeed, a great many of them are most concerned that there is to be a takeover of traffic control in this area by the Police Department, as the Police Department does not appear to be giving sufficient protection to the Kalamunda district.

I would like to quote a few figures. When the new police station was built in Kalamunda a few years ago there were 7,500 people living in the police district which nearly coincides with the boundaries of the Kalamunda Shire. When the population rose to 8,500 a second policeman was provided. There are now 18,000 people living in this area and still we have only two policemen.

I would like to contrast this situation with that of the Kalamunda Shire Council traffic officers. Four officers are employed full-time on supervision and traffic control in the Shire of Kalamunda. Three of these men are out on patrol and one man in the office carries out the duties of inspecting vehicles, issuing licenses, and work of this nature. The Kalamunda Shire has fairly recently installed a very modern facility for inspecting vehicles and the inspection is as good as that provided in the metropolitan area, and probably better than it would be if the control of traffic is handed over to the police.

A number of shires can be blamed for creating the situation where the Government can say traffic is not effectively controlled. It is true to say that some shire councils do not accept their responsibilities regarding the control of traffic.

Many shires for some reason have been unable to provide effective control and they wish to see traffic handled by one overall authority. However, I do not consider this should be the Police Department, nor do I consider that the shire councils who are providing an effective organisation for the control of traffic in their respective shires should be taken over by the police. Quite clearly this would

downgrade the service provided by these shires as far as traffic control is concerned.

Mr. Graham: Can you enlighten me as to what the Liberal Party policy is on traffic control?

Mr. O'Connor: I would hope somebody could enlighten you.

Mr. Graham: I have never obtained any light from the member for Mt. Lawley, and I was hoping the member for Darling Range could enlighten me.

Mr. THOMPSON: The Liberal Party did in fact carry the resolution that it wanted an overall traffic control authority. We would have gone along with this because the Liberal Party believes there should be one authority to control traffic, but this authority should not be the Police Department. Also, it does not believe control should be taken from the efficient shire councils.

Mr. Jamieson: Say that again?

Mr. Graham: That is two bob each way.

Mr. THOMPSON: Where a shire council is doing a good job and providing a good service, it should retain the control of traffic. However, where a local authority is not accepting its responsibility, then an overall authority should come in and make sure that it does. This would provide a very effective control of traffic. I cannot see that the takeover of traffic by police will produce a desirable level of service to the people of the community, and I have already referred to the situation in Kalamunda. However, I would like to repeat there are two policemen in an area which nearly coincides with the Kalamunda Shire Council boundaries. In this area there are four full-time traffic control officers and I venture to suggest that the Police Department would not provide six policemen if the control of traffic is taken over by the police.

Another aspect which concerns me is the absorption of the traffic officers into the Police Force. It has been stated that these men will be absorbed, but from a letter written to the General Secretary of the Western Australian Police Union by the Commissioner of Police this does not appear to be the case.

The letter indicates that a person must meet certain requirements and qualifications. For instance, a person may not be over the age of 45 years. Many good officers now employed in the control of traffic will not be offered a position in the Police Force because they do not meet that requirement. Many others will not wish to be subjected to transfers all over the State as are policemen at the present time; for that reason probably they will not join the Police Force. So I would like to know from where will all the officers come to replace those presently employed by the

shires? I say again that I cannot see six policemen being stationed at Kalamunda, four of them being sent there to replace the existing full-time shire traffic inspectors.

MR. W. G. YOUNG (Roe) [10.01 p.m.]: I rise to make a few remarks on the Bill before the House. Like some of my colleagues, I would like at the outset to point out—and this is probably well known from my interjections—that I am opposed to the measure. I would like to preface my remarks by answering some of the interjections that have been made.

Mr. May: What is the policy of the Country Party?

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: One interjection made by the Deputy Premier on numerous occasions is: What mandate have shire councillors to speak for their respective areas? I have been connected with shire councils and country traffic control. I was the president of a shire for a number of years, and I was the representative of the great eastern ward at various conferences of the Country Shire Councils' Association. Country traffic control was discussed on many occasions. This has been going on for over 15 years. It is utterly ridiculous to say that the point of view of the great eastern ward was not represented, when that ward includes 17 councils which would represent about 17,000 people. The same applies to the great southern ward.

Mr. Graham: When did the people ever express themselves in a vote?

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: At ratepayers' meetings and at meetings called—

Mr. Graham: That would be only a sprinkling of the total people. There was never a vote taken in a country area, and this was never an issue at any election.

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: It has been an issue in many local government elections. I think the member for Merredin-Yilgarn could tell the Minister that this has been an issue in elections at Merredin. Probably he will stand up a little later and tell the Minister that this is the case. A question thrown into the ring by the Minister was: Why did some country shires hand over traffic control? If the Minister does not know the answer I can tell him.

In 1969 an alteration was made to the C.A.R. funds, and license fees which previously had been collected and retained by local authorities were required to be forwarded to the central authority. The local authorities were allowed to retain \$4 for the first 1,000 vehicles registered, and then \$3 thereafter. I would like to quote from the remarks of the President of the Esperance Shire (councillor Paterson). That shire handed over the control of traffic to the police. At the last Country

Shire Councils' Association conference in Perth councillor Paterson was asked why his shire had handed over control. He said that when Esperance was receiving \$120,000 in license fees the council was happy to spend \$24,000 on traffic; but when this was reduced to \$14,000, with a consequent loss of \$10,000, the shire decided it could not afford to saddle ratepayers with the burden and so it handed control over to the police.

Mr. Graham: Do you think that when it is profitable the local authority should handle traffic control, and when it is unprofitable it should hand the control over to the police?

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: The reason the Esperance Shire handed control over to the police is that it was an unfair burden on the ratepayers because the changed system made it unprofitable.

Mr. Graham: That is a very poor basis on which to handle traffic control—in dollars and cents.

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: It is not a poor basis. From questions asked today we find that although by handing over control the shire will save money which the ratepayers had to pay—and it is another tax if the police take over—the burden on the ratepayers will not decrease.

Notes which were supplied to me by the Roe Regional Traffic Council state that although Lake Grace handed control over to the police, it has not been able to reduce staff and the portion of salaries previously attributed to licensing is now paid from other sources. In his answer to my question today the Minister indicated that the police takeover of Lake Grace traffic has cost the Government \$2,200, presumably for a new vehicle; \$506 for traffic control aids; and \$4,467 which, I presume, is the salary of the policeman who was sent there to take over the duties of the previous traffic inspector.

However, the shire has made no saving in staff, who still must be paid out of the same rate collection.

Mr. Bickerton: They said they would save \$10,000.

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: That is purely related to the license fees received at Esperance and Lake Grace; it has nothing to do with the staff. All that happened at Esperance was that the two traffic inspectors who were previously employed by the shire were taken over by the police.

Mr. May: How many additional policemen were sent there?

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: The previous traffic inspectors were simply taken into the Police Force, and they carry out the same duties as before. However, with regard to the mileage they cover as traffic inspectors,

I would like to quote from the *Sunday Independent* of the 7th May, 1972, in which it is stated—

Two traffic inspectors who were incorporated into the Esperance Police staff have covered about 850 miles in June, last year.

That was the first month of their operation under the Police Force. The article continues—

During a normal month as shire traffic inspectors, each with their own cars, they covered about 2,800 miles on traffic control work.

So it would appear that since those traffic inspectors have been employed by the Police Force—and I have heard this said in Esperance on numerous occasions—a large proportion of their time is spent on paper work in the traffic office, whereas under the control of the shire the work was done by the office staff and the traffic inspectors were able to spend their time on patrol. I think that difference of some 1,950 miles in one month of patrolling indicates the extent of traffic patrols under the Police Force.

Mr. Bickerton: In the first three months of 1972 under the control of the police the monthly mileage was 2,012. What was the mileage you mentioned?

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: My information is that in June last year—the first month in which these men worked under the control of the police—they covered only 850 miles.

Mr. Bickerton: Well, you check yours and I will check mine.

Mr. May: What is your source?

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: That is fair enough. The Minister can check his and I will check mine, and then we will check each other's figures.

Mr. Bickerton: Under the shire prosecutions and charges totalled 25, including five drunken drivers. Under the police prosecutions and charges totalled 49, including 12 drunken drivers.

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: Well, there must have been a large Christmas party.

Mr. May: What is your source of information?

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: It is the statement of a traffic inspector, as reported in the *Sunday Independent*.

Mr. May: That is an unbiased newspaper!

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: I am glad the Minister said that and not I. It is interesting to note from a further question I asked the Minister today that in respect of the Shires of Esperance, Ravensthorpe, Lake Grace, and Merredin, three traffic inspectors were inducted into the Police Force and one was found employment elsewhere.

Although the member for Fremantle has asked to be left alone for a while, I am afraid I must mention his name in this debate because he made some rather cutting remarks about traffic inspectors. He did not make them out of hand, because at page 390 of the current *Hansard* he is reported as saying—

I am reasonably well informed on the subject of traffic control as I happen to be convener of the traffic committee within my own party.

He then went on to say—

I will offend my friends opposite even further by saying that the country traffic inspectors are nothing more than Ned Kellys and bushrangers, and they look upon the motorist merely as a source of revenue for their local shire.

In his second reading speech the Minister said—

But good police work goes further than merely detecting offences, for the presence on the road of an adequate number of well-signed and well-driven police cars manned by men (and women) of smart and alert bearing does act as an excellent deterrent and hence reduces the number of breaches of the law and encourages civilian drivers to drive more carefully and not too fast.

How do we reconcile these two statements? One member of the Government says that country traffic inspectors are nothing more than Ned Kellys and bushrangers, and then the Minister says that we want alert and intelligent people to operate the patrol vehicles. If this is the mandate the Labor Government has for introducing a system to take over the control of traffic from the shires, it should have another think.

Whilst the member for Fremantle was speaking on Wednesday, the 29th March, he said—

I say this on behalf of the people of the State, feeling quite sure that in those areas where traffic is controlled now by the local authority the number of accidents would be reduced.

What the member for Fremantle is saying is that if the police took over the control of traffic, accidents would be reduced. I have quoted only portion of his remarks. I interjected, by asking, "Is there any proof of that or is it only guesswork?" and the member for Fremantle replied, "No, it is not guesswork. I am often subjected to criticism because I quote from the Press, but from what other source can I obtain statistics?" I might mention that I got some from the *Sunday Independent* this evening.

The member for Fremantle went on to refer to an article that was published in *The West Australian* regarding inspections

of vehicles in the Lake Grace Shire area. This had relation to the number of vehicles that had been inspected and rejected for registration when the police took over control of traffic in the Lake Grace district. On the 3rd May, 1972, the member for Fremantle asked the Minister representing the Minister for Police the following question:—

Did the Press correctly state the situation in regard to Lake Grace after the Police takeover of traffic on 1st July 1971, "that of the first 150 vehicles the Police inspected for relicensing only 28 were found to be roadworthy; the other being rejected mainly for defective lighting (particularly on trucks), bald tyres, faulty steering or other dangerous defects"?

The Minister replied, "Yes." The Minister must have had some reason for making that reply, because he said that was the reason, and yet when I asked a question today I was told that the information is not recorded separately. I asked the Minister: If the information was not recorded separately how did he know that 122 vehicles had been rejected and 28 had been passed? All those vehicles could have been rejected for one specific fault.

Mr. Fletcher: You are cribbing now.

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: No, I am not. I know a number of people who took their vehicles in for inspection and, in the majority of cases, they were rejected for rust spots. Lake Grace is an area bounded by salt lakes and as a result cars in that district, which are now made out of two kerosene tins instead of only one, as was the position a few years ago, show rust very quickly. A farmer has to be a good handyman and he maintains his vehicle in fairly good condition himself. He does not rely on the man in the garage to tell him something is wrong with his vehicle.

The vehicles that did not pass the inspection were rejected mainly on the ground that they had rust spots. The inspector probably went around the vehicles and pointed to the rust spots with his pencil and then rejected the vehicles. One contractor I know brought his semi-trailer in for inspection. I think a semi-trailer is required to have five lights across the top of the vehicle to indicate its width. This contractor had six on his vehicle, and so the inspector sent it away for the contractor to remove the additional light. These are the cases listed in the report I have.

The Minister will not give us the figures, despite the fact that he must know them, because he told the member for Fremantle it was not guesswork. He knows the figures and yet the Minister told me they are not recorded separately. Either somebody's guesswork is wrong, or the answer I received today is wrong.

Mr. Fletcher: Perhaps there is a conspiracy between the member for Fremantle and the members of the Opposition.

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: No, I do not think there is.

Mr. Bickerton: Did the Minister say in his answer today that these items were kept separately or was the answer: "No, they are not kept separately"?

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: I will quote again the question asked by the member for Fremantle. It reads, in part, "Did the Press correctly state the situation . . . ?"—that is, that these were the reasons for the high rejection of vehicles—and the Minister replied, "Yes." If these figures were not kept separately—

Mr. Bickerton: They were the reasons.

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: How did the Minister know?

Mr. Bickerton: When that was printed in the Press I did not know you were going to ask the question. If you look at that answer you will find there is no conflict between the two.

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: If the Minister knows the reasons—

Mr. Bickerton: The overall reasons would be known without having these specific totals.

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: If the Minister knows the overall reasons, why did he not tell the member for Fremantle the other reasons as well? The member for Fremantle asked a question and the Minister replied in the affirmative. Therefore, those are the only reasons the vehicles were rejected. The Minister cannot be right both ways.

Mr. Bickerton: You are confusing the issue.

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: No, I do not think I am confusing the issue.

Mr. O'Connor: You are confusing the Minister.

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: There are a few things I want to say before I resume my seat. I am afraid I am directing the whole of my attack this evening against the member for Fremantle, but I cannot help it because of the slur he cast on local authorities and country traffic inspectors by the remarks he made. The member for Fremantle also stated that one local authority had been fairly strict because it had imposed a fine on his son for a speeding offence. By inference, I take it that the member for Fremantle is saying that if the traffic had been under the control of the police his son would not have been charged.

Mr. Fletcher: That is a reflection on the Police Department.

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: I merely said that that was the inference I had drawn from the remarks the honourable member had made. He remarked that his son was travelling at two or three miles an hour above the speed limit. I know the speed at which he was travelling, because I have a statutory declaration to show it.

Mr. Bickerton: You should be addressing the chair.

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: The son of the member for Fremantle was apprehended for travelling at 12 miles per hour above the speed limit. The inference to be drawn from the speech of the member for Fremantle is that if a police traffic officer were enforcing the law his son would have been let off.

Mr. Fletcher: Who said that?

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: The honourable member's statement was that his son was doing two or three miles more than the permitted speed limit, and that before they parted company the traffic inspector relieved him of \$20.

Mr. Fletcher: He relieved him of \$30.

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: I do not say the member for Fremantle said so deliberately but his son was not relieved of \$30. The inspector might have given him an infringement notice. In fact, the money was not paid at the time. The inference was that if a police officer were in control of traffic he would have been let off, but because it was a traffic inspector he was not.

Mr. Lewis: If the traffic inspector had been employed by the shire the job would be done properly.

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: Yes, and the offender would receive his just deserts. The same remarks were made in respect of the nephew of the honourable member. I think I have said enough about that subject.

I turn to another remark of the Minister—that in some instances there were police officers stationed in country districts who would be able to set up immediately an operation for traffic control. He made that statement as though such a situation was already in existence. I would remind him that in the district in question there is already a shire traffic office, and there is no need to set up another with additional clerical staff. The clerical staff and set-up have been available, as was pointed out by the member for Avon, for the past 53 years. Therefore, in that respect the situation has been under adequate control.

Housing for the inspectors has been provided by the shire. To a large extent—and I know groups of shires which employ up to five inspectors—the inspectors are available. For that reason how can the Minister say that the required

officers or the set-up are not in existence? Any duplication of the existing facilities and officers will mean that the shires will lose some staff, and their duties will be taken over by public servants or by the police traffic control officers. These officers, instead of patrolling the roads, will be sitting in their offices doing paper work, whereas the shire-employed traffic officer can be employed in patrolling the roads all the time.

To put into operation what the Minister hopes to achieve he will have to recruit more officers. In his speech the Minister said that the nucleus of 100 traffic officers from the Traffic Department would be lost, and the department could ill-afford to lose them. I agree with his comments, because a report appearing in *The Sunday Times* of the 7th May under the heading of, "Crime Rate Soars in W.A." bears out what he has said.

Mr. Bickerton: You have misunderstood that. We were discussing a separate traffic authority within the force. The department said it would lose that number of officers overall, whereas if they were kept within the present Police Force they could do other duties as well.

Mr. W. G. YOUNG: I would point out that the police traffic officers are doing other duties as well. The report in *The Sunday Times* states—

Upsurge in violence, bashings.

The chances of being bashed, robbed or murdered in Perth increases day by day. In the first four months of this year, the City of Lights has had a shadow of violence cast on its streets. . . .

In 1960, the strength of the W.A. Police Force was 1,142 policemen.

Taken on a population basis this was one policeman to every 621 people.

In 1971 W.A. had a population of 1,040,000 people and a force of 1,616 policemen—still one policeman to every 621 persons.

So, in a span of 11 years no improvement in the ratio of policemen to the population has been shown. Can we overnight hope to find a sufficient number of police officers to take over the duties of traffic control in the country and to perform the duties of police officers as well?

If the service is to be improved we will have to accept those officers who are already employed on traffic duties. In answer to a question I asked today, of the four country traffic authorities taken over only three of the inspectors were acceptable to the Police Force. Here we find another source of wastage, because of the criterion that has to be established. From discussions I have had with traffic inspectors I find that they do not like

to be transferred, because of the conditions imposed and engagement as first-year constables.

I ask the Minister from where he will recruit the officers to fill the gap? I assure him there will be a gap. We are aware that the transition is supposed to take place on a graduated basis and some areas will be taken over before others. The fact is that the Police Force has not been able to maintain an improved ratio of policemen to the population in the last 11 years. That being so I fail to see from where the additional officers will be recruited.

From those remarks, I am sure that you, Mr. Speaker, will be aware that I oppose the second reading of the Bill.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Fletcher.

PIG INDUSTRY COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Returned.

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 10.27 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 10th May, 1972

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver) took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Postponement

THE HON. W. F. WILLESEE (North-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [2.23 p.m.]: I seek the permission of the House to deal with questions on notice later in the sitting as is usually the case when we meet early in the afternoon.

The PRESIDENT: Permission granted.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

THE HON. W. F. WILLESEE (North-East Metropolitan—Leader of the House) [2.24 p.m.]: I move—

That the House as its rising adjourn until 11 a.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

Question put and passed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

On motion by The Hon. F. R. White (for The Hon. L. A. Logan), leave of absence for 12 consecutive sittings of the House granted to The Hon. J. M. Thomson (South) on the ground of private business overseas.