

It was resolved that the fairest basis would be that of acreage, which would overcome the inequities inherent in the use of unimproved values, but that the acreage basis should be subject to minima on a sliding scale, and that there should also be a maximum.

It was resolved therefore, to recommend that the Government be asked to amend the Vermin Act and Noxious Weeds Act, to allow for the imposition of a Vermin and Noxious Weeds Tax on the following basis.

The areas and rates are then set out in tabulated form, in the report, and they are as follows:—Properties up to 10 acres, \$4—a flat rate—properties between 11 acres and 20 acres, \$5.50; properties between 21 acres and 50 acres, \$6.50; properties between 51 acres and 99 acres, \$8; properties between 100 acres and 149 acres, \$8.40, and so they carry on until they reach properties which are between 400 acres and 499 acres. The owners would pay a flat rate of \$10. Thereafter, the rate would be \$10 per property, plus 1c per acre to a maximum of \$100.

This proposal would have meant that the Agriculture Protection Board would receive the same return as it receives under the existing system. However, that would be a more equitable method of taxing. Unfortunately, this system has not yet been adopted. I trust that this acreage basis, rather than the unimproved capital valuation basis, will be adopted in the very near future to relieve the burden which many primary producers are carrying, particularly in the near metropolitan area.

The Hon. E. C. House: It should be changed.

The Hon. F. R. WHITE: It has not been changed yet, and I am quoting from minutes which prove that the matter has been brought to the notice of the authorities concerned.

It is obvious that certain injustices are occurring. These have not been the result of the intention of the Government; they are the result of a problem which has developed from our very rapid expansion and the increase in land prices. However, they must be rectified, and rectified quickly, particularly in relation to properties within the metropolitan region close to the city.

I feel that in certain instances the new valuations should be stopped, and the vermin and noxious weeds taxes, and the metropolitan region improvement tax, should be based on the old valuations as is the case with shire rates in the Shire of Kalamunda. That has been the basis not only this year but also last year. In this way we would have better public relations with the owners of improved properties. It will have been noticed that during my speech I have avoided making reference to unimproved properties. The burden is too

great on improved properties, and genuine landholders—mostly very little people—are being forced off their land. That is not the intention of the legislation.

We must have a much more realistic approach and we must base all our taxes on the ability to pay, and not discourage enterprise and personal effort by individuals. We must introduce different legislation and endeavour to base the legislation on the use to which the land is put. Most important, we must give owners an opportunity to budget for the bills which are presented to them.

In the 1969-70 financial year, when a new valuation came into effect in the Shire of Kalamunda, the taxpayers had no warning of the impending accounts. They had no opportunity to budget and in the majority of cases the assessments were not received until the end of the financial year. One man received an account for \$500-odd in the month of June, which had to be paid, I think, within 42 days from the date on which the assessment was issued.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: What did he pay previously?

The Hon. F. R. WHITE: He previously paid \$67. It went up to \$514.20. However, he did not know what his bill would be until he received it at the end of the financial year. He will be presented with a second bill before next Christmas, so within six months that man will have to pay \$1,028.40, even though his shire rates are only \$185.50.

I consider that no land tax assessment form should be sent out to the owner of improved land where the assessment is higher than 50 per cent. of the shire rate. This is a proviso that could be written into the legislation—"Providing no land tax assessment exceeds 50 per cent. of the local authority rates." I support the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. J. Heitman.

House adjourned at 5.23 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, the 13th August, 1970

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

QUESTIONS (53): ON NOTICE

1. HOSPITAL Collie

Mr. JONES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

Referring to his answer to my questions of the 13th May, 1970, wherein he advised that the matter of toilet facilities in the male

section of the older portion of the Collie Hospital would be investigated with a view to finding an economic solution—

- (1) When was the investigation made?
- (2) What were the results of the investigation?
- (3) Have any alterations been made to improve the standard of the toilets and the general ablution block?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) to (3) Research and planning is proceeding. A new building would be involved in overcoming this problem. Approval has been given to upgrade sewerage facilities including the provision of a urinal in this area.

2. *This question was postponed.*

3. ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

Farming Properties

Mr. JONES, to the Minister for Electricity:

- (1) Will he supply details showing the various agreements for the connection of electricity to farming properties from State systems for each State in the Commonwealth?
- (2) If he is not in possession of this information, would he have arrangements made to obtain it?

Mr. NALDER replied:

- (1) and (2) The agreements are not available but the various State authorities will be asked to provide them.

4. ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES

Kwinana Power Station: Cost per Unit

Mr. JONES, to the Minister for Electricity:

- (1) What is the anticipated production cost per unit of power that will be produced from the three gas turbine units to be installed at the Kwinana power station?
- (2) What is the anticipated production cost of power per unit that will be produced from the Kwinana oil burning power station?

Mr. NALDER replied:

- (1) The gas turbines are to be used as standby plant. Their use will be minimal and production cost per unit depends on the extent to which they are used.
- (2) It is too early to make a useful estimate.

5.

NATIVES

Housing: Carnarvon

Mr. NORTON, to the Minister for Native Welfare:

- (1) Has he read the article in *The West Australian* of the 11th August, 1970, headed "Survey finds 116 Natives in 10 Houses"; if so, was he aware of the statements it contained?
- (2) Did he hear the news item on the A.B.C. State news of that morning wherein Mr. Parks, the native welfare officer at Carnarvon, stated that "native housing at Carnarvon had reached a crisis"?
- (3) Did he read a letter in *The West Australian* on the 31st July from Dr. Williams and Dr. Hicks relative to the health of native children under the age of 12 years; if so, does he agree with their statements; if not, why not?
- (4) How many vacant building blocks does his department hold in Carnarvon and for what period has it owned them?
- (5) How many houses have been built in Carnarvon over the past three years for natives and what was their type?
- (6) What is the area of the native reserve at Carnarvon?
- (7) How many houses are on the reserve and what is the area of each in square feet?
- (8) How many natives have applied to his department for assistance to build houses on their own land at Carnarvon and with what result?
- (9) Has he received a request from the Carnarvon Shire Council to visit Carnarvon and to see for himself the urgent needs of the natives there in respect of housing; if so, did he accept the invitation; if not, why not?
- (10) When is it intended to commence building houses for natives at Carnarvon and how many units does his department intend to build?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

- (1) Yes. The general situation in Carnarvon was known to me.
- (2) No.
- (3) Yes. In my view they were exaggerated.
- (4) Four. One since 1960, one since 1968, two since 1969.
- (5) None.
- (6) 18 acres.

- (7) There are nine primary transitional houses with an area of 510 square feet each and one of 340 square feet.
- (8) This information is recorded on personal files and there is no ready way of obtaining the total figure at short notice. Three such applications were approved and the houses completed, and one is still under consideration.
- (9) (a) Yes.
(b) No.
(c) The invitation was of a general nature and as I already had a general knowledge of the situation at Carnarvon I arranged for the senior local officer to attend a meeting of the Carnarvon Shire Council for particular discussion. If there is a need I am quite prepared to visit the shire at a mutually convenient time.
- (10) A contract has been let for the erection of two conventional houses. Tenders have been called for a further two.

6. NATIVES

Housing: Commonwealth and State Allocations

Mr. NORTON, to the Minister for Native Welfare:

- (1) What was the amount allocated to the Native Welfare Department by the Commonwealth for native housing during 1969-70?
- (2) In which towns was this money spent and how many houses did it provide?
- (3) What amount of money was allocated by his department for native housing in 1969-70, and in which towns was it spent?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

(1) \$990,000.	
(2) Geraldton	2
Perth	47
Goomalling	1
Moora	4
Merredin	2
Toodyay	1
Albany	2
Bunbury	5
Beverley	1
Harvey	1
Mt. Barker	3
Kojonup	1
Narrogin	3
Wandering	1
Katanning	1

—
75
—

(3) \$612,270 allocated as under—

Coolgardie	1
Esperance	8
Perth	21
Katanning	1
Albany	1
Narrogin	1
Wyndham	2
Derby	9
Meekatharra	5
Quindanning	1
	—
	50
	—

7.

EDUCATION

Carnarvon High School

Mr. NORTON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Are any alterations or additions to be made to the Carnarvon High School; if so, what are they?
- (2) Does he consider that there is adequate accommodation for the teaching staff at the Carnarvon High School?
- (3) Is the present science room adequate in all respects?
- (4) Has the school adequate library facilities for a school of its size?
- (5) Is it considered that a prevocational workshop is needed?
- (6) Is it considered that a demountable classroom is of sufficient size for an arts and crafts room?
- (7) Has a survey been made to ascertain the number of classrooms that will be required over the next two years; if so, how many extra rooms will be needed?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

- (1) An art room, prevocational centre, staff room, and staff toilets have been listed for the 1970-71 financial year subject to availability of loan funds.
- (2) No. See answer to (1).
- (3) and (4) The adequacy of the present library and science facilities is being investigated at present.
- (5) Yes.
- (6) No.
- (7) Yes. It is anticipated that the additions listed in (1) above will meet the school's requirements for the next two years.

8.

HOUSING

Exmouth

Mr. NORTON, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Have any complications or difficulties been experienced in the erection of two-storied terrace

houses at Exmouth and, if so, will he explain just what they were and how they came about?

- (2) What has been the cost per square of these buildings?
- (3) Has the contract price for these buildings been increased since the contract was signed?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Minor construction problems did occur due to these units being a prototype and did present some "teething" difficulties.

Contract completion date was the 24th January, 1970, and the contract as a whole—that is, the last block of the four—was available for occupation on the 4th August, 1970.

- (2) \$1,474.
- (3) Contract price increased by approximately \$1,400 as a result of contract variations.

9. HOUSING Carnarvon

Mr. NORTON, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Have tenders been called for the 12 two-storied terrace units and the three individual houses at Carnarvon referred to in question 22 on the 18th March, 1970?
- (2) If tenders have not been called, when will they be called?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

- (1) and (2) The 12 two-storied terrace units are going out to tender this weekend. Tenders were called for the three individual houses on the 14th May, 1970, and a contract signed on the 17th July, 1970.

10. CRIME

Persons Acquitted: Avenues for Proving Innocence

Mr. BERTRAM, to the Minister representing the Minister for Justice:

What avenues are available or will the Government make available to allow a citizen acquitted of a crime to prove his or her innocence?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

The only avenue that I am aware of is that, in the case of an acquittal by order of the Criminal Court of Appeal on an appeal from a conviction by a jury, for the citizen to ask the Criminal Court of Appeal to order a new trial.

11.

HEALTH

Injurious Detergents

Mr. BERTRAM, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Are certain detergents known to be injurious to human beings currently in use in this State for domestic and other purposes?
- (2) If "Yes" which are they and how much longer will it be before they are banned from sale and/or use?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) No, except that a few persons may be sensitive to various detergents, soaps, chemicals, etc., and so liable to a dermatitis.
- (2) Not applicable.

12.

LIQUOR

Beer: Price

Mr. BERTRAM, to the Minister representing the Minister for Justice:

- (1) Will the Government do anything to ensure that the foreshadowed increase in the price of beer does not occur or will be minimal?
- (2) If "Yes" what action does the Government propose and when will it be taken?
- (3) Will it include an endeavour to introduce uniform liquor prices for the various States as currently occurs in respect of petrol?
- (4) If "No" why?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) to (4) It is not the policy of the Government to exercise control of prices.

13. *This question was postponed.*

14.

DRAINAGE

Beachfront: Spillage

Mr. LAPHAM, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) What steps are being taken to ensure that the spillage from the drain on the beach front at Hammersley Street, North Beach, which connects with Carine main drain, Balcatta branch drain, and Delawney branch drain as shown in the plan on page 1737 of the *Government Gazette* of the 19th June, 1970, is free of contamination and not deleterious to a popular swimming area located approximately 150 feet north of such drain outlet and which is used extensively by the public and the Education Department for swimming tuition of school children?
- (2) If tests are made of such spillage, will he indicate the frequency of such and the results to date?

- (3) Will the spillage from the drain operate throughout the entire year or will it be confined to certain periods only, and if to certain periods only, what are the expected months of its operation?
- (4) What other drains spill either onto the beachfront or in the ocean within the area bounded by Port Beach to the south and Sorrento to the north?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) The waters of the lakes which will be controlled by the scheme have and will continue to be monitored. The Shire of Perth has agreed with the board that no industrial waste is to be allowed to discharge to the system.
- (2) The above waters will be tested regularly by the board. The results to date do not indicate any contamination.
- (3) Discharge to the ocean is only by pumping and it is anticipated that pumping will only be necessary following periods of heavy rainfall. This will usually be in the winter and early months of spring.
- (4) The Subiaco, Herdsman, and Scarborough main drains which are under Metropolitan Water Board control and some other local authority controlled drains. The outfall pipe serving Swanbourne and Subiaco treatment works also discharges treated effluent well off shore from Swanbourne Rifle Range.

15. *This question was postponed.*

16. **TRAFFIC BRIDGE** *Fremantle*

Mr. FLETCHER, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) Has there been any change in the 1971 commencement and 1973 completion date of the North Fremantle to East Fremantle traffic bridge, mentioned in reply to my question 1. of the 3rd September, 1969?
- (2) If not, and in view of the traffic congestion during peak hours on and approaching the existing bridge, will every endeavour be made to advance the dates mentioned above?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) The time required for design and completion of the necessary formalities would not permit an earlier commencement date. The Main Roads Department in 1969 engaged engineering consultants to carry out the detailed design of

this bridge because its own staff was fully committed on other major projects.

17.

MINING

Peat: Lake Muir Area

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

- (1) Have any mineral claims for the mining of peat, for the purpose of chemical extraction, been sought by any company in the Lake Muir area?
- (2) Does any such area sought include any part of any reserve or State forest?
- (3) Would he table a map showing the location of any such claims?
- (4) In the opinion of Mines Department experts, is there any possibility that after such peat beds are mined, and even if residue from which chemicals have been extracted is returned, that the impervious nature of the floors of such swamps could be destroyed, and consequently the lake system of the area jeopardised?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

- (1) No mineral claims, but a number of coal mining leases have been applied for.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) Although insufficient information is at present available to the Mines Department to predict the full effect of the mining of peat on the local hydrological regime, it is thought that this would probably be slight, and that the existence of the lake system would not be jeopardised.

The map was tabled.

18. **WOOD CHIP INDUSTRY**

Export Agreement: Negotiations

Mr. H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) In view of reports that Japanese-American wood chip agreements have been re-negotiated, a factor influencing the determination of an acceptable sales contract price for Western Australian wood chips, and that activities directed towards establishing wood chip industries in the Eastern States have been increased, what stage of development in negotiations between Western Australian Chip and Pulp Company and Japanese interests has been reached?
- (2) On what date does the right to negotiate for a wood chip export agreement, held by the above company, expire?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON (for Mr. Court) replied:

- (1) The Western Australian Chip and Pulp Co. Pty. Ltd. is continuing its negotiations, and recent events have strengthened its expectation of being in a position to export chips by the time the Bunbury harbour is ready for the berthing of ships to be used for transporting wood chips.
- (2) Under its agreement with the State, the company had until the 30th June, 1969 to establish to the reasonable satisfaction of the Minister that it had entered into or intended to enter into contracts for the sale of wood chips. However, provision is made in the agreement for the abovementioned date to be extended, and this action has taken place.

19.

PACKAGING Standardisation

Mr. DAVIES, to the Minister for Labour:

Are the provisions regarding standardisation of packaging now law—

- (a) in this State;
- (b) throughout Australia?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

- (a) and (b) Since the 1st November, 1969, requirements as to package size have been law in Western Australia, and as far as is known, have applied in all other States from the same date.

Other requirements as to marking, etc. are being progressively implemented as soon as practicable.

20.

BRIDGE Burswood Island

Mr. DAVIES, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) What action has so far been taken in regard to the provision of a bridge across the Swan River in the region of Burswood Island?
- (2) What is the programming for this bridge?
- (3) Is there any prospect in the foreseeable future of a bridge across the Swan River in the region of the western end of Heirisson Island; if so, what is proposed?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) The Main Roads Department in September, 1965, engaged consultants to examine in detail the concept of the inner ring freeway and its connecting radial free-ways, and also the need for another river crossing east of the

city. The report which was submitted in November, 1967, confirmed the need for a further river crossing east of the city. Local authorities were consulted in respect to the implications of the report, and after consideration of their comments a decision was reached that a bridge would be constructed across the Swan River at Burswood Island. Preliminary works have been carried out, including the placement of sand fill on the line of the approach embankments on Burswood Island. Design of the structure is in progress by the Main Roads Department.

- (2) Present planning provides for commencement of the bridge about the end of 1972.
- (3) It is most unlikely.

21.

EDUCATION Collie District Schools

Mr. JONES, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) When was a decision made to build demountable classrooms at Waterloo and Upper Ferguson?
- (2) What was the cost of the rooms?
- (3) Will he advise what efforts have been made to obtain land at Dardanup for the construction of a new school and when is it contemplated that the school will be operating?
- (4) Is it intended that children attending the school at Wellington will be transferred to the Dardanup School when it is opened?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

- (1) The Public Works Department was asked to erect demountable classrooms at both Waterloo and Upper Ferguson on the 28th July, 1970.
- (2) New demountable classrooms which are fully equipped and wired cost approximately \$7,500.
- (3) The Public Works Department is at present investigating the acquisition of a new site and it is anticipated that a new school will be operating by 1972.
- (4) The situation with respect to Wellington Mills is still being investigated.

22.

SHEPPARTON PRESERVING COMPANY Assistance

Mr. H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) What is the value of direct and indirect assistance given in each of the past two years to Shepparton Preserving Company for the purpose of canning the Western Australian peach crop?

- (2) What is the nature and extent of indirect assistance extended by the Government to the company?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON (for Mr. Court) replied:

- (1) \$40,389 and \$40,098 respectively for the two years, these sums representing rent and other charges paid in respect of the factory in Western Australia where canning operations are carried out.
- (2) Indirect assistance has been confined to help in accounting matters for S.P.C. operations in Western Australia.

- (2) If "Yes" will he advise of the alterations involved?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON (for Mr. O'Connor) replied:

- (1) A proposal embodying these items has been received from the council's town planning consultants, but no decision has been made in this connection.
- (2) Answered by (1).

28.

RAILWAYS

Loco Depot: Collie

Mr. JONES, to the Minister for Railways:

- (1) Is the department considering shifting the loco depot from Collie?
- (2) If "Yes" will he advise of the changes contemplated?
- (3) When will the changes take place?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON (for Mr. O'Connor) replied:

- (1) No, but its activities are expected to lessen as dieselisation expands. Main line diesel locomotives will "pool" through Collie but a demand for locomotive crews based at Collie will continue.
- (2) Answered by (1).
- (3) It is expected that complete dieselisation will be effected by 1972.

29. SWAN RIVER CONSERVATION BOARD

Staff

Mr. JAMIESON, to the Minister for Works:

- (1) How many inspectors has the Swan River Conservation Board on its staff?
- (2) Are regular inspections made of streams entering the Swan River complex?
- (3) What other staff are employed by the board?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) The board has an inspector and an assistant inspector.
- (2) Streams entering the Swan River complex (Swan, Canning and Helena Rivers), such as Blackadder Creek, are regularly policed. Drains entering the river are also checked and regular sampling is carried out. A check is also kept on streams which enter the river outside the board's jurisdiction.
- (3) In addition to the inspectors, the board employs two field hands on a permanent basis, and recruits casual labour as and when required and if this can be obtained. On the administrative staff there is a secretary and a stenographer.

23.

RAILWAYS

Gangs: Collie

Mr. JONES, to the Minister for Railways:

- (1) Are any of the railway gangs at Collie to be transferred?
- (2) If "Yes" will he give the reasons for the transfer of the gangs?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON (for Mr. O'Connor) replied:

- (1) Not any gangs at Collie are to be transferred. Two gangs have been amalgamated.
- (2) Answered by (1).

24.

MINES DEPARTMENT

Collie Office

Mr. JONES, to the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

When will new Mines Department offices be erected at Collie?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

The new Mines Department offices to be erected at Collie are listed on this year's estimates subject to availability of funds.

25. *This question was postponed.*

26.

POLICE STATION

Collie

Mr. JONES, to the Minister for Police:

When will a new police station and quarters be erected at Collie?

Mr. CRAIG replied:

The erection of a new police station and quarters at Collie has been scheduled for the financial year 1971-72, subject to finance being available.

27.

RAILWAYS

Station and Goods Shed: Collie

Mr. JONES, to the Minister for Railways:

- (1) In line with the Collie town plan, will he advise if it is intended to shift the railway station and the goods shed at Collie to another site?

30.

MUSEUM*Objects from Historic Wrecks*

Mr. HARMAN, to the Minister for Education:

Referring to question 23(1) on the 11th August, how many objects which have not been declared as having been recovered prior to the Museum Act Amendment Act, 1964, from scheduled historic wrecks have been presented to the museum?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

This question has been interpreted as referring to those objects which have been recovered since 1964. On this basis the answer is as follows:—

No material recovered after the proclamation of the Museum Act Amendment Act, 1964, has been presented to the museum because no person is entitled to make such a presentation. Any material recovered after that Act came into effect is the property of the Crown and must be surrendered to the museum. Examples of such a case are the five objects recovered from the scheduled wreck of the *Tryal* by Mr. Christiansen and party in May, 1969. These are Crown property and are in the museum.

Moreover, all declarations to the museum under section 42(1) of the Museum Act are scrutinised by officers of the museum and C.I.B. to discover whether there is any evidence that the material so declared was recovered after the amendment Act came into effect. Charges will be laid if false declarations are discovered. None has been discovered to date but investigations are proceeding.

31.

WHEAT*Quotas*

Mr. McPHARLIN, to the Minister for Agriculture:

Has further consideration been given to the negotiability of wheat quotas by—

- (a) buying back by the Australian Wheat Board;
- (b) purchases between wheat growers through a controlling committee?

Mr. NALDER replied:

- (a) I am advised that this question was considered at the April meeting of the Australian Wheatgrowers' Federation,

where it was tabled and will be considered further in September.

- (b) This matter has been referred to the Wheat Industry Advisory Committee for advice. The committee is not expected to consider the question in detail until after the Australian Wheatgrowers' Federation meeting in September.

32.

HOUSING*Albany*

Mr. COOK, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Is the commission aware of an offer by the Albany Brick Company for a discount rate for bricks used in the construction of State Housing Commission houses?
- (2) If so, what are the terms of the offer?
- (3) Does the commission propose to call tenders for its 1970-71 building programme in Albany specifying brick or brick veneer construction?
- (4) If not, why not?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Discount of \$8.00 per thousand from the published price list for "full brick houses only."
- (3) The commission proposes calling alternative tenders during the 1970-71 building programme.
- (4) The commission has over the years endeavoured to introduce brick-veneer construction; but the cost on individual houses has been prohibitive to date.

33.

SEWERAGE*Swan View-Greenmount-Helena Valley*

Mr. BRADY, to the Minister for Water Supplies:

- (1) Is the blanket prohibition on allowing subdivisions in the Swan View-Greenmount-Helena Valley area still being enforced because of the absence of deep sewerage?
- (2) If so, when is it expected deep sewerage will be available to allow subdivisions to be made?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) In the Swan View area the Town Planning Board on the advice of the Public Health Department is unable to permit subdivision because of unsuitable soil conditions. In the Greenmount area soil conditions are such that each application is investigated in collaboration with the Public Health Department and is decided on merits.

The Helena Valley area is zoned rural and subdivision for urban purposes is not permitted.

- (2) It is understood that the Shire of Mundaring has engaged a consultant for investigation of an interim proposal for the sewerage of this district. It is likely that any such proposal will eventually be integrated with the Metropolitan Water Board's system. The board's northern main sewer, which will eventually provide the means for such integration, is in course of construction and providing adequate funds are made available it is expected to be completed in 1974.

34. CHILDREN'S COURT

Midland

Mr. BRADY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Justice:

- (1) Is any arrangement being made to provide a properly equipped Children's Court at Midland?

- (2) If so, when is it expected the court will be available for use?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) Proposals for extension to the Midland courthouse have been included for consideration when the loan programme is being prepared.
- (2) This will depend on availability of loan funds.

35. POLLUTION

Trade Waste Disposal: Cockburn Sound

Mr. TAYLOR, to the Minister for Works:

With regard to industry in the Robbs Jetty-Coogee Beach area—

- (1) Which industries discharge waste materials into Cockburn Sound?
- (2) Which industries discharge cooling water or boiler water into Cockburn Sound?
- (3) Have each of the industries permission to dispose of such fluid wastes into the sound?
- (4) Which industries, if any, have been fined and/or warned with regard to unauthorised discharge of waste into Cockburn Sound during the financial years 1968-69 and 1969-70?
- (5) Which department or authority has final jurisdiction over the discharge of trade waste into the sound?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) There are seven firms—
W.A. Meat Export Works.
N. Shilkin and Son (Holdings) Pty. Ltd.
Coogee Fellmongers Pty. Ltd.
Cray Boats Co-operative Ltd.
Watsons Foods Pty. Ltd.
Wilcox Mofflin Ltd.
Anchorage Butchers Pty. Ltd.
- (2) State Electricity Commission South Fremantle power station.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) All industries have been warned that in some instances the discharge was not in accordance with the standards required by the port authority.
- (5) Fremantle Port Authority.

36. HOUSING

Lockridge Estate

Mr. BRADY, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Has any provision been made for a primary school for the benefit of children in Lockridge Estate?
- (2) Has provision been made for recreational grounds at the same estate?
- (3) Has provision been made for any of the following requirements:—
(a) infant health centre;
(b) kindergarten;
(c) church site?
- (4) If "Yes" will he state what provision has been made?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

- (1) A primary school site of ten acres has been provided on Rosher Road.
- (2) Details of the public open spaces provided in the Lockridge Estate are as follows—
Barlow Court— $\frac{1}{2}$ acre.
Morley Drive—5 acres.
Rosher Road—10 acres.
Grimsey Road—6 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres.
Thorson Way— $\frac{3}{4}$ acre.
Diana Crescent— $\frac{3}{4}$ acre.
Diana Crescent—8 acres.
Lipton Court— $\frac{1}{4}$ acre.
Hogart Way—1 acre.
Lod Street—5 acres.
Total = 39 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres.
- (3) (a) and (b) Provision of these amenities is the responsibility of the local authority and could be catered for on the land listed in answer to (2).

(c) Not in the subdivisional areas developed to date. When the balance of the commission's holdings are being planned, the local authority will be consulted as to the best location of a local centre which would include church sites if church authorities decide these are required.

(4) See answer to (3).

37. RAILWAY SLEEPERS

Exports from Albany

Mr. COOK, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) Is it correct that a large quantity of Western Australian sleepers will be required for a railway project at Mackay in Queensland?
- (2) If so, what quantities will be transported from Albany by—
 - (a) rail;
 - (b) ship?
- (3) What companies will be involved in the supply of the sleepers from Western Australia?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON (for Mr. Court) replied:

- (1) to (3) It is presumed that the question refers to tenders called for the supply of sleepers for the Goonyella project in Queensland. The member is advised that no tenders have been accepted, and further developments are awaited.

38. ROADS

Albany

Mr. COOK, to the Minister for Works: Will he detail the financial arrangements entered into with the Albany Town Council—

- (a) for the survey and construction of the western access road at Albany;
- (b) for the survey and construction of the Albany Highway from York Street to the Chester Pass rotary, including the rotary and approach roads?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (a) The construction of the western access road which will be carried out by the Main Roads Department is estimated to cost \$302,000. This will be shared over a two-year period with the Albany Town Council on the following basis—

Albany Town Council—
\$120,000.

Main Roads Department—
\$182,000.

The Main Roads Department will meet the cost of the survey work involved.

- (b) The total cost of this work was \$465,500, including extensive town drainage works. The expenditure was shared on the following basis:—

Albany Town Council—
\$254,500.

Main Roads Department—
\$211,000.

The cost of survey work was met by the Main Roads Department and the construction work was done conjointly by both authorities.

39. HOUSING

Albany

Mr. COOK, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) What is the number of applicants for State Housing Commission rental houses in Albany at the present time for—
 - (a) pensioner accommodation;
 - (b) flats;
 - (c) two bedroom houses;
 - (d) three bedroom houses;
 - (e) four bedroom houses?
- (2) What is the number of applicants for State Housing Commission purchase houses in Albany at the present time for—
 - (a) one bedroom houses;
 - (b) two bedroom houses;
 - (c) three bedroom houses;
 - (d) four bedroom houses?
- (3) What is the total number of applicants waiting for State Housing Commission accommodation in Albany, bearing in mind that some people have applied for both rental and purchase accommodation?
- (4) How many rental units were constructed in Albany in the years—
 - (a) 1965-66;
 - (b) 1966-67;
 - (c) 1967-68;
 - (d) 1968-69;
 - (e) 1969-70?
- (5) How many of these in each year were—
 - (a) pensioner accommodation;
 - (b) flats;
 - (c) two bedroom houses;
 - (d) three bedroom houses;
 - (e) four bedroom houses?
- (6) How many units were constructed for purchase in the years—
 - (a) 1965-66;
 - (b) 1966-67;
 - (c) 1967-68;
 - (d) 1968-69;
 - (e) 1969-70?

- (7) How many of these in each year were for—
- (a) pensioner accommodation;
 - (b) flats;
 - (c) two bedroom houses;
 - (d) three bedroom houses;
 - (e) four bedroom houses?

- (8) Would he itemise the commission's building programme in Albany for 1970-71?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

- (1) (a) 14 single units: 2 couples.
- (b) to (e) Although application forms do not specifically permit of applicants indicating either type of accommodation or number of bedrooms, those held indicate that—
- 9 require one bedroom accommodation,
 - 83 require two bedroom accommodation,
 - 63 require three bedroom accommodation, and
 - 13 require four bedroom accommodation.

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- (2) There are 49 applications for purchase homes. As in 1(b) to (e) sizes are not specified.
- (3) Two hundred and eight.
- (4)—

	Constructed	Vacancy Rate	Total Available
(a)	15	58	73
(b)	23	67	90
(c)	5	36	41
(d)	50	52	102
(e)	27	48	75
1970 to date	—	32	—

(5)—

	1965-66	1966-67	1967-68	1968-69	1969-70
(a)	—	4	—	10	4
(b)	—	—	—	—	22*
(c)	—	—	—	—	—
(d)	15	18	5	36	5
(e)	—	1	—	4	—

* Includes the four pensioner accommodations built in 1969-70.

- (6) (a) One.
- (b) Four.
- (c) —.
- (d) Fifteen.
- (e) —.
- (7) All of the purchase homes were three bedroom.
- (8) The commission's building programme in Albany for 1970-71 includes twenty-four houses and twenty-four units in the form of flats and terrace houses.

40. This question was postponed.

HOUSING

Albany

Mr. COOK, to the Minister for Housing:

What provision has the State Housing Commission made for recreational facilities and public open space at its flat development project in Hardie Road, Albany?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

Within the flat project in Hardie Road a child play area is being developed in the form of a cyclone fenced area with paving slabs and a sand pit.

An area of approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ acre is also being landscaped, planted with grass, trees, and shrubs for the enjoyment of the tenants. This area will be maintained by the commission.

In the general area around the flats, the commission has provided four areas of public open space totalling 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres, namely—

Lot 107—Burville and Mohave Roads.

Lot 133—Reidy and Nesbitt and Warden Roads.

Lot 123—Collingwood, Mokave Nesbitt Roads.

Lot 1—Linfeld, Dixon and Wainsborough Roads.

The development of these areas is the responsibility of the local authority.

42.

EDUCATION

Technical School: Albany

Mr. COOK, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) When will a new technical school be built at Albany?
- (2) Where will the school be located?
- (3) What classes will be conducted at the school?
- (4) What will be the total cost of the school?
- (5) When will construction commence?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

- (1) The Education Department has submitted proposals to the Commonwealth for the new Albany Technical School to be included in the programme for the triennium commencing 1971.
- (2) It is planned at this stage to locate the school on a site bounded by Albany Highway and Anson Road.
- (3) The full range of classes suited to local needs will be provided.
- (4) and (5) Not known at this stage.

43. DOOR TO DOOR (SALES) ACT

Amendment

Mr. MAY, to the Minister representing the Minister for Justice:

- (1) Is he aware that a substantial increase in the "door-to-door" high pressure salesmanship activities has occurred over recent months?
- (2) Is he further aware that the current Act lends itself to subterfuge concerning these activities?
- (3) Will he give consideration to having the Act amended to cover the present anomalies?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) In the absence of complaints, the Minister for Justice is unaware of any increase.
- (2) and (3) These matters are under review by the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General, which is currently studying the report of the Rogerson Committee.

44. EDUCATION

Rockingham High School: Completion

Mr. TAYLOR, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What is the present anticipated date of completion of accommodation for the proposed Rockingham High School?
- (2) Will the school be established at the beginning of 1971?
- (3) If "Yes" to (2)—
 - (a) what is the anticipated enrolment;
 - (b) what grades will be involved;
 - (c) where will the students be accommodated?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

- (1) Owing to unavoidable delays in the finalization of the plans, tenders have not yet been called for this work. However, it is hoped that the first stage of the building will be ready by the beginning of the third school term in 1971.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) (a) 270.
(b) 1st year.
(c) In temporary accommodation at the Kwinana High School.

45. *This question was postponed.*

46. STATE HERBARIUM

Administration

Mr. BURKE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Is it a fact that the State Herbarium was constituted originally by amalgamation of collections held by the W.A. Museum, Department of Forests, and Department of Agriculture, and that it

was then regarded as a separate institution governed by a State Herbarium Board and administered for convenience by the Department of Agriculture?

- (2) Does this board still exist?
- (3) If so, who are the members, how often does it meet, and what does it regard as its functions?
- (4) Does the Government now consider the herbarium to be an integral part of the Department of Agriculture?

Mr. NALDER replied:

- (1) The State Herbarium was constituted in 1928 by an amalgamation of collections held by the Agricultural and Forests Departments; the Museum collection was added in 1958. It was regarded as an inter-departmental herbarium to be administered by the Department of Agriculture and governed by a board formed in 1928. It is required to provide botanical services for Government departments, related organisations and the general public.

- (2) Yes.
- (3) The Public Service Commissioner—Chairman; Director of Agriculture; Conservator of Forests. The board only holds formal meetings if required but the members are aware of policy issues. The board was established to ensure the efficient operation of the herbarium and its continued accessibility to other departments and outside bodies.
- (4) Yes, within the provisions previously referred to.

47 and 48. *These questions were postponed.*

49.

HEALTH

Shelltox Pest Strips

Mr. TONKIN, to the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Does the announcement by the Commissioner for Public Health that Shelltox pest strips were quite safe if used in accordance with the directions mean that Dr. Davidson holds exactly the opposite view on this matter to that of the Food and Drug Administration of the United States' Health Service?
- (2) Will he explain the apparent serious conflict of opinion?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Labelling requirements in Western Australia have always required a precautionary statement for the prevention of contamination of food; there is therefore no serious conflict of opinion.

50. *This question was postponed.*

51. HOUSING

Lake Monger: High Density Project

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

- (1) Relative to the high density housing project planned for Lake Monger area, described roughly as being bounded by Britannia Road, Oxford Street, and Bourke Street, is delay being experienced in respect to it?
- (2) If "Yes" what is causing the delay and when will it be overcome?

Mr. NALDER replied:

- (1) and (2) Most of the land referred to falls within the approved Lake Monger Town Planning Scheme No. 4 which the Perth City Council is implementing. Some delays are being experienced and the council is doing everything possible to overcome them. Any specific queries should be directed to the Perth City Council.

52. RAILWAYS

Bunbury: Staff Accommodation

Mr. WILLIAMS, to the Minister for Railways:

- (1) Since his visit to Bunbury on Friday the 17th July, 1970, what arrangements are being made to improve the office and working accommodation for the District Engineer (Bunbury) and his staff?
- (2) What arrangements are being considered to re-establish and improve the ways and works workshops and staff accommodation in Bunbury?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON (for Mr. O'Connor) replied:

- (1) The feasibility of several alternative schemes is being studied.
- (2) The relocation of these workshops is being considered in relation to current developments in the harbour area.

53. *This question was postponed.*

QUESTIONS (2): WITHOUT NOTICE

1. HOUSING

Loans: One Per Cent. Subsidy

Mr. TONKIN, to the Minister for Housing:

Will he check with the Perth Building Society so that he may affirm the correctness or otherwise of his reply to a question yesterday concerning the scheme for a 1 per cent. interest subsidy?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for having given notice of this question. I did ask the Registrar of Building Societies to make some inquiries of the Perth Building Society but up until yesterday I understand that no applications had been received in respect of the interest rate subsidy scheme. The information from the Perth Building Society indicates there have been inquiries made regarding the interest rate subsidy scheme, but there is also an indication that from its point of view there have been no firm applications made for loans involving the interest rate subsidy scheme.

The society did indicate that it had deferred a number of applications for loans, due to the fact that it was not advancing loans over a period; but whether or not there have been specific requests for applications that have been deferred to be brought under the interest rate subsidy scheme, I have been unable to ascertain.

2. WOOD CHIP INDUSTRY

Export Agreement: Negotiations

Mr. H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Industrial Development:

Arising out of question 18 (2) on today's notice paper, can the Minister inform the House of the actual date to which the right of the Western Australian Chip and Pulp Company to negotiate for an export agreement has been extended, as asked for in the original question?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON (for Mr. Court) replied:

I cannot, off the cuff, tell the honourable member to what date the extension has been given. However, this information can be advanced to him; but I make the point that the agreement provides that further extensions may be granted if the Government considers it necessary.

Mr. Tonkin: That is a Kathleen Mavourneen.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: What would the Leader of the Opposition do?

Mr. Tonkin: I would give somebody else a chance. That is what I would do.

The SPEAKER: Order! If the Leader of the Opposition wishes to ask a question he is at liberty to do so.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: THIRD DAY*Amendment to Motion*

Debate resumed, from the 12th August, on the following motion by Mr. Cash:—

That the following Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's Speech be agreed to:—

May it please Your Excellency: We the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

To which Mr. Tonkin (Leader of the Opposition) had moved an amendment—

That the following words be added to the Address-in-Reply:—

However, we have to inform Your Excellency that the Government's complete and utter failure to appreciate and take appropriate steps to alleviate the hardship occasioned by the heavy burden of land tax consequent upon an unjust system of property valuation has created a situation in which the Government no longer has the confidence of the House.

SIR DAVID BRAND (Greenough—Premier) [2.52 p.m.]: The subject before the House is a censure motion which is contained in the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition at the conclusion of his Address-in-Reply speech. I presume that all the matters to which he referred in his speech, generally, will be debated as the Address-in-Reply continues, but that by and large on this occasion we will be confined to the question of valuation systems and land tax generally. Therefore, it is my intention to point out—not at any great length—that there is no basis for censuring the Government on any of the points made by the Leader of the Opposition, and certainly not in respect of the one he mentioned in particular.

In matters such as this, one does not wish to be personal; and who am I to say whether the speech of the Leader of the Opposition was a good one or a bad one? But he does have the habit of pointing to individual cases and of leaving the impression that they are of general application and that that is the general situation, when of course the facts indicate otherwise.

He rather led the House to believe that the whole scale of land taxation was harsh, and was something which had not been amended or upgraded at any time, and that, in all, it was a crippling burden on all the taxpayers of the metropolitan region. He did not give us any facts, but he read an odd letter. This was not very clear, because it concerned an individual case. It is not my intention to deal with individual cases,

because I realise that under any law there are occasions when anomalies and problems arise, and these have to be ironed out.

Whenever the Government has amended the tax laws of this State the Leader of the Opposition has taken part in the debate. As long as I can remember he has taken a very active interest in these matters, and furthermore he supported the last major amendments which we made to the land tax laws.

The story is that more than 100,000 householders did not receive land tax assessments this year, because they were exempted from land tax. I cannot see that under any circumstances a Government is censurable because it relieves 100,000 householders of the need to pay this tax. The people who have questioned me about not having received their usual land tax assessments pointed out that a very big percentage of the landholders did not even realise a concession had been made.

Mr. Tonkin: It is not much satisfaction to a person whose land tax has gone up 600 per cent. to know that other people do not pay this tax.

SIR DAVID BRAND: I have referred to the fact that there are anomalies, and I will come to the point which the Leader of the Opposition is making. I want to emphasise right now that more than 100,000 householders did not pay any land tax this year.

Mr. Brady: What about the 400,000 or 500,000 who have had their taxes increased?

Mr. O'Neil: That is a wild statement.

Mr. Brady: It is factual.

Mr. O'Neil: Did you say 500,000?

Mr. Brady: I said 400,000.

SIR DAVID BRAND: Not only were more than 100,000 householders exempted from this tax, but there were many thousands more who enjoyed some reduction in the tax as a result of the new scale which was introduced here last year.

The Leader of the Opposition also rejects the fact that measures have been adopted by the Government to stabilise land prices, and I wonder whether this might affect the people in the long run. In some cases there has been a reduction in the value of land.

Throughout the last session of Parliament, and prior to that, during the last election campaign, the Opposition made great play of the land boom and the high cost of land. The Government said that in the fulness of time it would apply a policy which would stabilise land prices, and even reduce them. Speaking broadly, I believe we can claim that land prices are reasonably stable at the present time. Forgetting the politics of this situation, or that a censure motion has been moved, I believe that we all look forward to the day when land prices will be reasonable from year to year.

Mr. Lapham: The stabilising of land prices was brought about mainly by the credit squeeze.

Sir DAVID BRAND: We know that many factors have contributed to the present situation, but it cannot be denied that the measures taken by this Government over the last 12 months have been most effective. This hits right home in Western Australia, where we have a real problem. The answer to the problem lies mainly in making more land available and having more of the land subdivided so that people who want land can obtain it.

The Leader of the Opposition quoted just one case concerning a tax assessment of \$429; but, of course, there could have been some difference between the land tax, the vermin and noxious weeds rate, and the metropolitan region tax. They might have been lumped together and regarded as land tax. Of course, that would make a better story. I do not know, but the fact remains that three taxes could have been involved in this total of \$429.

Mr. Tonkin: I think that was the position.

Sir DAVID BRAND: That is fair enough. Then again there was no mention of the acreage involved, and this is a very important factor in the whole story. This is a problem which the Government and the community face in trying to resolve the difficult question of land tax.

I would like to point out to the House that far from being complacent about the matter, and far from allowing the situation to drift from year to year, which was the case under previous Governments—and in saying this I am not pointing to Labor Government but to all previous Governments—this Government has retained that system, irrespective of the anomalies which arose from year to year.

I can recall that when the Leader of the Opposition was the Minister for Works he had problems brought about by revaluations; and so will every Government whilst this situation remains of there being some delay and inability to revalue the whole of the areas within a reasonable time.

There is no answer to this problem until we get more valuers and are able to adopt a system which will quickly bring the values of all the areas up to current levels.

Mr. Lapham: Have you had a look at the method of calculating a value?

Sir DAVID BRAND: Yes, of course we have. In 1968 the Government made the first of what was to be a series of moves on land tax. We introduced separate scales of tax to apply to improved and unimproved land. We reduced the overall tax scale on improved land and increased the tax on land which was held in an unused state. When the unimproved land was subsequently built on, it was provided that a rebate be made of the extra tax with up to four years' retrospectivity

This was to take care of people who had a block of land and were unable to build on it immediately.

At the same time we provided for relief to be given to families when the land value on the home had been affected by rezoning and more intensive land use; and Parliament will recall that action. I might say that the members of the Opposition supported the measures before the House and I believe, in some cases, they applauded the move.

Mr. Tonkin: It was a case of half a loaf being better than no bread at all.

Sir DAVID BRAND: Of course, that is right. However, we made the move to provide half a loaf and no suggestion was made by those on the other side concerning the source of the other half. Let us be honest about this. There is no easy solution, or someone would have produced it long ago. Year after year Governments face political problems of all kinds because of difficulties arising out of revaluation and, consequently, the tax associated with it.

At the time I made it clear that this was a preparatory move and the Government stood ready to take other steps should they prove necessary. In 1969 we introduced substantial concessions to the scale of tax applicable to improved land. Holdings of improved land valued at \$6,000 or less were exempted—and we have seen the benefit already of that action—from both the land tax and the metropolitan region improvement tax.

A tapered concession was applied to holdings valued at \$6,000 to \$18,000, so that for values of \$10,000, for example, the overall assessment was almost halved—and I said at the time that this would be the case. At the same time—and this is an important factor—we increased the rate of tax applicable to large holdings of unimproved land in an attempt to further reduce speculation in unimproved land and to force land of this type into productive use, whether for housing or for primary production.

I want to say that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who is of course not here today, submitted this proposal when he spoke on a number of occasions concerning land tax difficulties. He urged the Government to load the tax onto the big landowner when the land was unimproved. He may not have been the only one to advocate this. I would like to read some of the speeches of the Leader of the Opposition himself, because I guarantee that somewhere he has touched on this principle. Many people from this side made speeches pointing out that the Government should do something to influence large landholders within the city area to take action and it was suggested that, as an incentive, the tax should be loaded on unimproved land.

This is what we have done, but, always, when the Government moves in one direction it creates some anomalies. This is why I pointed out to the House that we were prepared to review the situation from time to time and amend the Act in such a way as to resolve some of the difficulties the people along the foothills are facing at present. No-one is denying the fact that there are a number of difficult cases there that should be looked at.

Mr. Tonkin: You should do more than look at them.

Sir DAVID BRAND: How do we go about this to resolve the problem? Are we going to lift the tax again and amend the tax law so that the big landowner with 50 acres undeveloped for many years will get off scot free and not pay a penalty for holding his land for the day when it will be much more valuable? If we do attempt to do something for the man who has, say, 10 acres of land, then we surely should not think of relieving the man who has hundreds of acres. There are instances still where, in spite of the present situation, hundreds of acres are not being developed. I guess these are being held for the day when land values will increase in the normal way. That is human nature and no-one could place any blame for it, if those concerned can get away with it.

However, I can assure members the Government does not propose they should get away with it, or be relieved of the penalty we have decided they should pay; but I go along with the suggestion that there could be the man on 10 acres who, under certain circumstances, finds himself in a very difficult situation because his 10 acres of land could be very valuable. It could be worth \$3,000 an acre, but he may not be able to sell it at the time and he may not have an income out of which he could pay the very high tax rate applicable.

So, I can assure the House—as I said last night by way of interjection—that we are having a look at this matter and we have been for a number of weeks, because I was most concerned about the publicity which was given to this very difficult situation. As I said earlier, the concessions we gave last year meant that more than 100,000 taxpayers, or about two-thirds of the total, became exempt, and they have not received an assessment this year. The public at large do not appear to have realised the extent to which they have benefited from the move, simply because they did not receive an assessment.

A large proportion of the remaining one-third has benefited from substantial reductions. As I made clear at the time, the revaluation cycle must go on and those parts of the metropolitan area which have not been revaluated since 1964 or 1965 must be brought up to date to be on a par

with areas that are now on current values, and this will create another problem. It always has.

Mr. Lapham: If you revalue properties you could lift them into a scale under which they would have to pay land tax.

Sir DAVID BRAND: The law is the law as it stands unless it is amended in the meantime. If the properties go up to a valuation of \$6,000 they will become taxable, but there is nothing new in that. That is the law as it stands now and is the result of the amendment made last year.

Plain equity between taxpayers requires that this should happen and in these cases there must be increased valuations which are sometimes considerable; but we should not lose sight of the fact that people in these areas have had the benefit of very low valuations over a number of years as compared with their neighbours, and I believe the valuations should be made as quickly as possible and a current value applied.

Now that these people have had revaluations the effect is cushioned by the concessions, so they are better off than anyone else. Thousands of taxpayers in the hills areas revalued last year have been unaffected by the revaluations because the concessions introduced last year have meant they are exempt or had the rise offset by the concessions.

Those whose new valuations took them beyond the scope of the concessions are, for the greater part, landowners with holdings of several acres with the only improvement being a house; or with wholly unimproved land.

Again, if their holding exceeded five acres, their assessment would have included vermin and noxious weed rates. It must also be realised that if the properties are developed and used for a business of primary production such as an orchard, or if only part is developed in this way, they are wholly exempt from land tax or metropolitan region improvement tax.

Therefore, before sounding alarm signals about the size of a land tax assessment, we should know the extent to which the land is used productively, the total acreage involved, and whether the inclusion of vermin and noxious weed rates has caused the high rate.

The Government is closely scrutinising some of the special problems and individual assessments to see whether we can get some lead as to how to deal with them without creating further anomalies, but at the same time easing the tax on that section to which I have already referred; namely, the big landowners.

Officers of the Treasury and the Commissioner of State Taxation are at present reviewing the effects of the Government's measures and will be recommending to

me any further steps that should be taken this year. I know that further changes will be made as a result of this review.

No-one appreciates the problem better than I. I know that revaluations after a gap of three or four years are considerable. In fact, in some cases they are almost frightening. This is because of the great growth that is taking place in the State. The situation is one of growth and prosperity. Indeed, the unions, when making their case for higher wages, referred to this in the court recently. I presume they believe what they say. It is quite evident that Western Australia is the fastest-moving state in the Commonwealth; it is certainly the fastest-growing State in the Commonwealth. This being so, it is inevitable that in a span of three or four years values will appreciate to such an extent that the resulting assessments will cause people a great deal of concern. We want to resolve this problem, if we can, without creating other problems.

Ideally, all land should be revalued annually, but this is impossible because of the problem of staff, which I have already mentioned. The whole answer to the problem is to achieve stable land prices and, therefore, prevent marked valuation changes over a three-year cycle.

This is the direction of the Government's attack on this problem. In a year or two we feel that all areas will be on current values and the tax rates will have been adjusted accordingly. Subsequent revaluations will not produce marked increases, because we hope that land prices will be held stable as they have been in the past year.

I want to say, too, that there are very real difficulties in respect of the vermin and noxious weeds tax as laid down in the Act. This matter has been reviewed time and time again, but it has not been easy to come to any conclusion, because it is one of those cases where the provision of relief at one end creates increased costs at the other. If relief is given by changing the system of valuation, the smaller landowner around the metropolitan area, where values are high, benefits. However, if it is decided to base the tax on area, it is passed on to the large-area farmer in the wheatbelt at a time when he can perhaps ill-afford to face up to the extra cost.

However, the Government will make a decision by the time the Budget is brought forward. It might well be that the Government accepts the recommendations put forward by a committee of parliamentarians to revert to the basis of tax on area. This has not been finally decided. However, I assure the House

that a decision will be made and, at that time, we hope we shall be able to offset some of the anomalies which are apparent, particularly in the area referred to.

Mr. Speaker, I have shown that the Government has attacked a difficult problem progressively and that we have brought about improvements. I admit that as a result of certain moves other difficulties have developed, but we intend to attack these and I hope to offer some relief in this regard when the Budget is presented.

I cannot see that any case at all was made out when an appeal was made to the House to censure the Government. The brief story I have told is indicative of the action and interest of the Government in attacking a very real problem which Governments of the past have not attacked, including the Government in which the Leader of the Opposition was a Minister and Deputy Premier for so long. Therefore, it is not a question of censuring the Government.

The problems which we face have come about as a result of the action of a forward-going Government which has created growth in this State to such an extent that there are large increases in the valuation of land and property. The Government certainly accepts that there are difficulties. I wholly reject the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition, because I do not think there is even the slightest ground for it.

MR. BRADY (Swan) [3.16 p.m.]: I shall first deal briefly with the Premier's remarks and then with the case I prepared last night, giving my views of the position.

Sir David Brand: I hope the honourable member sticks to the subject.

MR. BRADY: I shall try to do that. On the one hand the Premier is trying to create the impression that the Government has done everything that needs to be done and, in the next breath, we are informed by the Premier that he is appointing a committee to look into the matter. If the Government is satisfied that it has done the right thing and that the community has been fairly dealt with, why is there any necessity to appoint a committee to inquire into it? The Premier is dealing on the basis of "Heads, I win; tails, you lose" on that argument.

The Premier also mentioned the affluent State and the great progress that has been made. He gave this as the reason why the workers are now asking the Industrial Commission to grant an increase in wages. I shall deal with that aspect in full shortly and show that the amendment moved to the Address-in-Reply by the Leader of the Opposition is more than justified.

Mr. Williams: Make sure that you stick to the amendment.

Mr. BRADY: If back-benchers on the Government side of the House would take the trouble to read the amendment, instead of trying to throw me off the track, they would appreciate exactly what the Leader of the Opposition said. This is what he moved—

However, we have to inform Your Excellency that the Government's complete and utter failure to appreciate—

The main words are, "complete and utter failure to appreciate."

Sir David Brand: They are not true.

Mr. BRADY: It continues—

—and take appropriate steps to alleviate the hardship. . .

That is only part of the amendment. Nevertheless, the Premier talked all around the subject. At the moment the member for Darling Range seems to be trying to say something, but I shall deal with his concern in a moment.

Mr. O'Neil: Tell us about the 500,000 taxpayers who have an increase.

Mr. BRADY: It would be more appropriate for the Minister to tell us about the money which the State Housing Commission has taken from people and is using for avenues other than housing.

First of all, let us go over the history of the so-called reduction. An article appeared in *The West Australian* on the 1st August, 1969, under the major headline, "Bill to Cover Jumps in Land Values." It reads—

Home owners will be protected from the effects of sudden increases in land values under government legislation outlined yesterday by the Governor, Sir Douglas Kendrew.

Sir Douglas was speaking at the opening of the second session of the 26th parliament.

He said that amendments were planned to land tax legislation and these would provide relief to home owners.

That was on the 1st August, 1969, and within a few weeks Mr. David Treloar from the University, recognised as an expert, had his comments recorded in the *Daily News*. They appeared on Thursday, the 23rd October. The article stated—

An economist says that the great land boom may have been checked by a myth.

Mr. Cash: Myth who?

Mr. BRADY: I will let the member for Mirrabooka work that one out. To continue—

In other words blocks were being built on and taken from the available pool faster than new blocks became available.

Further on, the article continues—

In the Batemans Estate at Booragoon a 170-block sub-division will come on the market soon with prices ranging from \$7000 to \$7500.

Now, that is \$1,000 to \$1,500 more than the provision the Premier is making.

Mr. Cash: What value was that \$7,000?

Mr. BRADY: This is in the Batemans Estate at Booragoon. So members can see that the Premier, who has been out to help the little man and give him relief, has not even covered the current prices of blocks of land.

Mr. Dunn interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BRADY: I am sure the member for Darling Range will have an opportunity to speak shortly.

Mr. Dunn interjected.

Mr. BRADY: Mr. Speaker, is the member for Darling Range making a speech, or am I? The fact remains that even the Premier's Department is not in a position to say exactly what is going on, and it is making a stab in the dark. This is what the expert had to say—

Accurate figures to support theories on land prices are harder to find than great train robbers. But one set of figures immediately available do have some significance.

They show that land transfers in WA for the first nine months of this year are running close to 20 per cent higher than for the comparable period last year.

Now, we are supposed to be checking land prices, and yet the land in the Bateman Estate is being brought under the hammer at \$7,000 to \$7,500; and the Premier says that he is giving relief because land valued under \$6,000 will not be taxed.

Mr. Cash: One is taxation value and the other is market value.

Mr. BRADY: Of course, the honourable member is out to help the Premier, but he cannot get away from the figures. They are here in black and white.

Mr. O'Neil: You are implying that the land would be taxed; it might not be taxed at all.

Mr. BRADY: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to read the whole of this article, because it covers five or six columns.

Mr. Williams: You are not allowed to read your speech.

Mr. BRADY: That is right. The member for Bunbury would know that from personal experience. However, I want to make this point: Mr. Treloar said that at present dealing in land is a speculators' paradise. It seems that the Premier, in giving this so-called relief, is barely touching the speculators. If one looks

at the figures one will see that the big landholders have been barely touched, and yet we are led to believe that the Premier has set out to provide some relief.

So the Leader of the Opposition was quite right when he said the whole thing is crazy. As I proceed, members will see that it is crazy, because I will quote cases to show that in a matter of a couple of years some young couples are faced with valuations which are 100 per cent. more than those of two years ago. As a consequence, they have to pay tax.

The irony of the position is that not only do those people have to pay higher tax, but they are also required to pay higher municipal rates as a result of the higher valuations. I quoted in this House in 1966 that 2,000 acres of land in the Swanview-Greenmount-Helena Vale-BelleVue area had a blanket placed on it overnight. The landowners could not subdivide because no deep sewerage was available. However, the land valuations have gone up and have continued to go up. As a consequence, people are paying higher rates. Where is the justice and equity in putting through land transactions when that position exists?

The answer I received to a question today indicates that virtually the same position is applying today.

Mr. Rushton: Is the land zoned rural?

Mr. BRADY: Some of it is.

Mr. Rushton: Well, they have a remedy.

Mr. BRADY: Of course they have a remedy, but the fact remains that the land is highly rated and the owners cannot obtain the necessary services in order to subdivide. They are not allowed to subdivide, so they are being afforded no relief. I mentioned this case before, and my remarks are recorded in *Hansard* of the 9th August, 1966; yet practically nothing has been done to help those people with their high valuations.

The position is that the Henry George League has submitted proposals whereby some anomalies can be overcome. The Premier says that there will be anomalies and that he hopes to overcome them, and that is why he has, among other things, appointed a committee. I would say to the Premier that is the whole basis of his failure in this matter. His Government is not on top of the position. The Government is dragging its feet all the time. Anybody who listened to the Premier today when he endeavoured to reply to the Leader of the Opposition could obtain no other impression. The Government waits until the rot sets in and then attempts to get over the difficulty by holding inquiries, when it should be ahead of the position and stopping the rot before it sets in.

Sir David Brand: I didn't say anything about appointing a committee. I said that a committee comprising officers of the Treasury and the Taxation Department is reviewing the effects of these measures and will recommend further steps to be taken this year.

Mr. BRADY: The Premier said that officers would be looking into the position, and that one of the difficulties that would be overcome concerns these anomalies. The whole weakness of the Government in this matter is that it waits until the horse is out and then shuts the stable door. That is just what the Leader of the Opposition told the Government, but the Government does not seem to be cognisant of the serious position that has arisen.

Mr. Rushton: You urged putting the whip on the horse.

Mr. BRADY: The Premier, when he introduced an amendment to the Land Tax Act two years ago, provided us with an elaborate schedule. I think every member received one, and I would like those members seriously interested in this matter to have a look at the tables in regard to improved and unimproved land in order to see how little the big manipulators and speculators have to pay in comparison with the little man on the basic wage or a small margin over the basic wage.

Let us see what actually happened in one instance about the time the Premier introduced his amendments. A couple living in my electorate bought a block of land from the Perth Shire Council for \$3,500. Within the last three or four months that couple wished to share their block on a gift duty arrangement and make it a joint tenancy. They submitted an application to the Stamp Office and that office assessed the value of their land at \$7,000.

This is what is actually happening in the metropolitan area. The block of land to which I have referred is in the Perth Shire Council area and the husband, who wants to transfer half the property to his wife, must pay gift duty on \$3,500, if the transaction is to go forward in the form I have mentioned. There may be a special concession for this particular couple because there could exist one or two anomalies in the case. The fact remains that in 2½ years the value of the land has gone from \$3,500 to \$7,000. Even though these young people are struggling to pay a deposit on their house, they will be called upon to pay land tax on a valuation of \$7,000.

I know another case in my area of a man who wanted to transfer half the value of his property to his son. He originally had the property in the name of his son and the value at the time was \$5,000. The Taxation Department has now, however, valued the property at \$9,000 for purposes

of gift duty. So, from a position of having to pay no tax, it is now necessary for him to pay tax on a valuation of \$9,000.

This is how the values in the metropolitan area are going up and very little relief is being afforded the people who need it most. The case to which I have referred is that of a pensioner who lives in Bellevue. His property was revalued to \$9,000. Because the costs were so high it was not possible for him to pursue his intention to assign half the property to his son by way of gift, even though he had paid his solicitor the initial fee.

I now come to a matter on which I would like the Premier to do something, particularly because of my reference, and his own, to the question. I refer, of course, to the Industrial Commission. I think I express myself in the right places at various times and I am one of those in the community who are alarmed at the tremendous difference in values, as these affect people who are making a worthwhile contribution to the economy of the community. I refer, of course, to the working man or woman—professional or otherwise.

The McCarrey report pointed out that in the Wembley Downs area the value of land went from \$935 in 1956 to \$5,780 in 1967. This constitutes an increase of 443 per cent. in a matter of 11 years. We find, however, that the salary of bank officers in the area has increased by only 69 per cent. So it will be seen that this gulf is widening in all directions; not only as it affects housing and land.

This is bringing about a very serious position in the community, particularly as it relates to salaries and wages. It is little wonder that there are so many strikes when this sort of thing is allowed to continue. The tremendous increase in valuations is the kernel of the trouble and unless the Government does something to stem the tide of increasing valuations we can surely expect a most serious aftermath.

The McCarrey report also points out that in the City Beach area a block of land which was worth \$3,800 in 1963 was valued at \$8,500 in 1967. This is an increase of 124 per cent. Even though there has been this tremendous increase, we find that the wages of the humble tradesman or fitter have increased in the same period by 26 per cent. The house in which he must live and the land on which it stands have increased in price by 126 per cent.

It is little wonder, therefore, that the advocate for the Trades and Labour Council is at the moment suggesting that a basic wage of \$60 be granted. This seems ludicrous when we compare it with the old basic wage.

The SPEAKER: Order! this has nothing to do with the subject.

Mr. BRADY: I feel it has a lot to do with it.

The SPEAKER: Order! You started to read the motion and you conveniently stopped before you got to the salient words which are "an unjust system of property valuation." You have not uttered one word on that subject. The sole question before the Chair is "an unjust system of property valuation."

Mr. BRADY: I am trying to point out that there is an unjust system of property valuation because speculators and subdividers are asking what they like for the land they are selling; they are placing any price they wish on this land and the community at large and the trade unionists in particular are expected to pay this price.

The SPEAKER: That is not a system of valuation but a factual thing.

Mr. BRADY: Let me deal specifically with the question of valuations and their effect. In *The West Australian* of the 12th August there is an article indicating that the Perth Shire Council had lifted its rates because of valuations. These valuations are imposed by the Taxation Department and, as a consequence, the shires have to operate on the department's valuations.

Mr. Rushton: You are out of touch. They do not have to.

Mr. BRADY: They do not have to, but in order to meet their normal commitments they must, and the member who interjected knows this to be true.

Mr. Rushton: They could reduce the rates.

Mr. BRADY: They could, but this would mean the shires would provide less service.

Mr. Rushton: They could reduce the rates.

Mr. BRADY: That is what the shire in question has done. It has endeavoured to reduce the rate from 2.2c to .93c. The fact remains that enormous revenues will still be obtained because the valuations have increased so tremendously. This is all brought about by what I believe—and what the Leader of the Opposition believes—are undue, unfair, and unjust valuations.

I have already pointed out—but I would like to do so again—that in 1947 with the basic wage at £4.5s it took 20 weeks to buy a quarter-acre block of land at £85. Today, however, it takes the best part of 80 or 90 weeks to buy the same block of land. In my opinion this is brought about by the unfair and unjust valuations that are being placed on these blocks.

On this question of the unfair system of valuations adopted by the Taxation Department, I suggest that, instead of dealing with one shire council in one year, another shire council the next year, and other shire councils in the following

years, which gives some shire councils the advantage of three or four years grace over others by virtue of the increased valuations during that period, the valuations could be increased over all the shires at a blanket percentage. This would overcome the advantage referred to.

This is how the Premier and his department could, I feel, overcome this problem. They know what the average increase in valuations has been in the metropolitan area over the last five or six years and, as a result, a blanket valuation could be placed over all the areas in question instead of the shires being valued one at a time—

Sir David Brand: That would create anomalies.

Mr. BRADY: —to the advantage of some and to the disadvantage of others.

Sir David Brand: This thought has been thoroughly investigated.

Mr. BRADY: I hope the Premier is right. I believe unfair and unjust valuations are imposed because of the system that operates within the Government departments. For the most part the people concerned—and I have received a letter from the Swan Gullford Shire Council on this matter—cannot obtain any services although their property values have increased.

I have the case of a man who lives in my electorate. For the last five or six years he has been trying to get the Main Roads Department to buy his land because the department wants to use it, eventually, for the building of a road under the metropolitan region town planning scheme. At the moment the department has placed a blanket, as I understand it is called, over the property and the person concerned cannot sell it privately because no-one will buy it in view of what is to happen to it. Despite this, the department will not purchase the property and the owner is left with it. The land is increasing in valuation all the time and he has to pay the rates which, because of the increased valuation, are rising all the time. In my view that is unfair.

The weakness in the whole system is that the Government is not keeping abreast with the times and steep increases in valuations are taking place because, on the one hand, insufficient valuers are employed; and, on the other hand, there is not an overall increase covering all areas so that everybody is dealt with equitably. However, the fact remains that valuations throughout the metropolitan area and the country districts are increasing from year to year. I have with me the assessment of a relative of mine who has a block of land just outside of Geraldton. The valuation has increased from \$500 to \$800, and the same sort of thing is happening throughout the State.

There is no doubt the money received through land tax, and other forms of taxation, as a result of increased valuations, must be well in excess of what the Premier estimated over the last two years. I would be surprised to hear that it was not 300 to 400 per cent. greater than it was in 1964 and 1965. I understand my colleague, the member for Belmont, will probably be dealing with some figures in this regard so I shall not intrude on what he intends to say.

In *The West Australian* of the 28th October, 1969, there was a leading article headed "Faulty taxation." After dealing with the system of revaluations, the leader writer had this to say—

The Government could use this interval for a more fundamental examination of the nature of the tax. The exemptions for the lower levels are welcome, but valuations have been rising at a much greater rate than capacity to pay and if they continue to go up the value of the concessions will become progressively less.

I will finish on that note because that is the point I wanted to make. Valuations are going up and the concessions that have been allowed by the Premier will not apply to many people—not many more than were able to obtain concessions when the amendment was first introduced.

Sir David Brand: Only 100,000!

Mr. BRADY: So I support the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition and I hope it will be carried.

Sitting suspended from 3.44 to 4.02 p.m.

MR. DUNN (Darling Range) [4.02 p.m.]: When about to speak just before the afternoon tea suspension, I was nipped in the bud.

At the outset, I want to state that whilst the member for Swan and myself both have electors who are, to a large extent, affected by the land tax standard at the moment, that does not allow me in any shape or form whatever to support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. I do not think the motion warrants even partial consideration by this Chamber, for the very reason that it does not—and, I repeat, does not—include anywhere near the whole populace of this State and the people involved in paying land tax. The motion simply highlights, as the Premier has said, a few cases which he and his departmental officers are considering.

I have had the opportunity of discussing these problems with the Premier and he has told me quite clearly that he is fully aware of the situation which applies in these instances. The Premier and Cabinet are looking into the matter and I am sure that full consideration will be given to the problems which arise in the outer metropolitan areas.

To my mind this does not, in any shape or form, warrant a censure motion against the Government simply to satisfy a few of those unfortunate people who are caught up in legislation designed to affect the State as a whole. I think this is a very pertinent point and I would like to feel that the House will reject this censure motion, as it surely deserves to be rejected. The amendment, in part, reads as follows:—

... the Government's complete and utter failure to appreciate and take appropriate steps to alleviate the hardship occasioned by the heavy burden of land tax—

I will pause at that point and refer to this heavy burden of land tax. The heavy burden of land tax has been with us since time immemorial. The system has been operating for years and years, through the life of the various Parliaments which have governed this State.

Mr. Lapham: Is it a good system?

Mr. DUNN: I am prepared to say that it is a good system because it has been accepted down the years by the various Governments. It is a good system in this respect: overall, it satisfies requirements. There are certain aspects of implementation which I will deal with but I am prepared to say, in answer to the interjection from the member for Karrinyup, it is a good system because of its general acceptance. The amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition continues—

—consequent upon an unjust system of property valuation. . .

The valuation system has operated for years and years and was not altered when the Labor Party was in Government and we were in Opposition. I do not see how it could be altered.

Mr. Tonkin: Why did you say at a public meeting it was crazy?

Mr. DUNN: I did not say that; the Leader of the Opposition said it.

Mr. Tonkin: You said it; I have a copy of a report.

Mr. DUNN: I did not say the system was crazy at all.

Mr. Tonkin: Yes you did.

Mr. DUNN: I said the system was crazy as it applied to the area I represent. That is quite clear and I want to make that point for the edification of the Leader of the Opposition, because it is apparent that he must be made aware of that fact.

I want to make it clear that I have the greatest sympathy with the Leader of the Opposition in what he is endeavouring to point out because he highlights a problem which is peculiar to the outer suburban electorates. I welcome the opportunity the Leader of the Opposition has given me to say a few words regarding the problems involved, but I cannot

for the life of me see how this Chamber can, for one moment, give the slightest consideration to censuring the Government for something which affects only a relatively small section of the community. Surely it is not the responsibility of a Government just to satisfy a few.

I repeat: I have had an opportunity to speak to the Premier regarding the Darling Range area and other outer metropolitan electorates. The Premier has given me an assurance that he is fully aware of the problems which exist.

The problem is not peculiar to any Government; it has been occurring for years. For that reason I point out that the motion before the Chair as a censure motion has no right to be here, because it concerns only a few of the people. It is not worthy of consideration when dealing with the overall problem of governing this State.

I would like to point out how the whole issue becomes completely and utterly a farce. The problem we are looking at in regard to taxation involves that of town planning. Certain areas have been set aside as rural zones and they cannot be subdivided or developed without fulfilling two requirements. Firstly a proposed subdivision has to be accepted by the Town Planning Board so that it can be rezoned urban and, secondly, it has to be shown that the necessary services can be supplied.

The Government does not have sufficient money to provide the capital expenditure necessary for the provision of services. This problem is overcome, to a large degree, by the Government insisting that private developers accept the responsibility of providing services. This places the development of urban areas into the hands of a relatively few developers who are capable of carrying out the development. The Government imposes certain restrictions and conditions per medium of the Town Planning Board which, in turn, reaches its decisions according to the availability of services.

It is a well-known fact that if one goes to the Town Planning Board with an application to subdivide 100 acres, the board will give permission provided the land can be rezoned. However, when one tries to get the land rezoned one faces all sorts of difficulties. If the land is rezoned the Town Planning Board stipulates that the developer has to provide roads, footpaths, kerbing in some cases, and water to every block.

I can tell members that there are some 1,600 acres in the lower foothills area which are subject to consideration for redevelopment and rezoning. The local shire has passed the scheme, and it has been before the Town Planning Board. The scheme is now subject to objection and is in the hands of the Minister for Town Planning. I feel confident in saying that

in order to get that 1,600 acres developed, and in order to provide water to the blocks, the cost will be \$1,000,000. To provide sufficient water to the area a main will have to be brought from Armadale or Kelmscott. Until such time as the water is taken to the area it cannot be subdivided, and that is the crux of the whole problem.

The Government does not have sufficient funds available for the capital investment necessary to supply services to the area. This problem is not new; it has been occurring for a long time, and I imagine it will continue to occur.

One wonders why the Opposition, when it was in Government, did not look to the future and, instead of spending \$5,000,000 on a project, spend \$20,000,000 with the idea of reaping its reward as the State progressed and developed. I hasten to say that the Opposition can be fully excused because during its time of Government nobody could have imagined the terrific impact of the mineral development which has taken place over the last few years. I venture to say it would have been very hard, indeed, to have been farsighted enough to be able to cope with the development which has taken place.

We now find ourselves in the situation where we are progressing at a tremendous rate which is forced on us by the impact of the development of mineral deposits. We now have to face up to the problems involved. I believe the Government has done a tremendous job and I also say that in doing that terrific job it has been a little remiss—in fact, very remiss—so far as my electorate is concerned and, possibly, as far as the electorates of Swan and Dale are concerned also.

The Government does not appreciate the fact that it is sacrificing people who do not deserve to be sacrificed. I refer to those living on 5-acre blocks. I can quote cases similar to those mentioned by the member for Swan, and one in particular concerns a woman who, with two children, pushed a pram out into the bush. She developed a property and has been there for some 42 years. She has now been placed in the position where she cannot pay the tax; and she cannot sell the land, as nobody wants to buy it because nothing can be done with it until water is provided. She finds herself, as do many others, in this impossible situation.

What happens? Such people are eventually forced to sell, and they sell to those who have got the money to meet the service demand. Those are the ones who are virtually controlling the whole of this land development.

Sir David Brand: What was the size of the woman's block?

Mr. DUNN: Eight acres. She has now put in an application to subdivide it into two, but that will not be allowed because

it will not be an economically viable rural unit. The point I make is that she is only one; there are many others there. It is true to say that developers have gone in. In fact quite a number of people who bought land in this area of 1600 acres have since let their contracts lapse. One, I believe, has lost a deposit of something in the order of \$60,000 because he could not go ahead with his contract on account of this service development. Unfortunately such people create the price of land which is the basis of the valuation.

The problem highlighted by this amendment concerns not only land tax; it also concerns vermin tax, to a great degree, but I understand that matter is being considered. In considering this amendment, members must be fair, just, and honest. Can anybody honestly say that in the matter of land tax the Government has not been fair and just? I fail to see how anybody could bring before this House an amendment of this nature—which is only designed to satisfy a relative few in the whole community—and seek to censure the Government by it.

I support the leader of my party in his opposition to the amendment. It should never have been brought here and it is wasting the time of this Chamber. I oppose it.

MR. FLETCHER (Fremantle) (4.18 p.m.): Unlike the honourable member who has just resumed his seat, I believe that the amendment is quite justified and desirable in the best interests of the community. To quieten the interjections and monotonous that I can hear, I will read the amendment—

However, we have to inform Your Excellency that the Government's complete and utter failure to appreciate and take appropriate steps to alleviate the hardship occasioned by the heavy burden of land tax consequent upon an unjust system of property valuation has created a situation in which the Government no longer has the confidence of the House.

I realise the amendment is couched in strong terms. I will deal first with the complete and utter failure to take appropriate steps.

Until the Premier interjected last night as a result of this amendment, there had been complete and utter failure to make this House aware of what he alleges is going on behind the scenes. I was not cognisant of what was happening, nor was this House, until this amendment was introduced. If it achieves nothing else, it has at least stirred the Premier in the way I have mentioned. If the Government had knowledge of this matter it should have informed the House. This amendment has activated the Government so to do.

The public still suffer a disability, despite the undertaking given by the Premier, and they will continue to do so until they receive subsequent relief from this problem.

As I have said, this amendment precipitated action on the part of the Government. The Government is vulnerable while this injustice continues, and there is an obligation on the Opposition to precipitate action along the lines that it has. Those who are in trouble are predominantly in the lower income group. I will admit that there is alleviation in those cases where the valuation is less than \$6,000.

Mr. Cash: There are over 100,000 of them.

Mr. FLETCHER: I do not know whether or not it is 100,000. I am not here to quote statistics; they can become very boring. There is a considerable number of people whose properties are valued at more than \$6,000 and they are the people we are attempting to protect, because \$6,000 these days is an infinitesimal amount compared with what it was worth when we were in Government, owing to the declining value of money.

Mr. Cash: They still paid tax in your day.

Mr. FLETCHER: I wish the honourable member would not interject. He can make a speech on his own account.

I am concerned about this difficulty which has precipitated the amendment. A situation has developed in which many people do not have confidence in the Government because of what has happened in regard to property valuations. The amendment is justified on those grounds, and I support it.

I will not weary the House with statistics but I want to deal with this matter as it affects my constituency. In East Fremantle valuations have jumped in recent years, and they drag land tax and other taxes along with them, including mine and my neighbours'. However, my neighbours do not receive my income and as a result they find it proportionately more difficult to pay the exorbitant rates and taxes that are imposed upon them by this Government. Local government rates are also being inflated by Taxation Department valuations, and land taxes and rates follow them. Local authorities in my area are not happy with the hardships that are inflicted as a result of increased rates flowing from the valuations that are imposed by the Taxation Department.

Mr. Gayfer: They did not have to raise their rates.

Mr. FLETCHER: The honourable member's interjection is not valid. He knows enough about local authorities to realise that, because of the works to be undertaken in accordance with the desires of the ratepayers, they do have to increase their rates.

Mr. Gayfer: That is not the fault of revaluation.

Mr. FLETCHER: Local government authorities have to relate the rates to the value of money from time to time. However, the ratepayers are not happy about this, either, as the honourable member knows.

With the hardship that is mentioned in the amendment, a situation has now arisen in which home owners wonder whether they can enjoy the luxury of having their own homes. There are old homes in which people have raised families, and young couples, after marriage, like to return to those old homes, to familiar rooms, and familiar surroundings; and they like to bring the grandchildren into homes where the families can be reunited. It is a hardship for people to be taxed out of those types of homes.

Retired people and those on superannuation are forced out of their homes because of the burden of land tax and other taxes to which my leader has made reference. Our way of life is disappearing as a result of those old homes being bulldozed down. Speculators have watched this happening. As the old homes go, developers take advantage of the prospect of a quick dollar. In the Fremantle area home units have mushroomed into existence and people who previously owned their own homes and gardens now have to move into home units after being taxed out of their original homes.

Much was said on the other side of the House about the 100,000 but not many of those 100,000 people live in my electorate. Many people cannot now afford to maintain their own homes, and they have to sell them and buy something smaller. In the home units they have strangers living just the other side of the wall and just above the ceiling, which is not to be compared with the life they had previously in their own homes on their quarter-acre blocks.

The Premier would not have made his explanation today if it had not been for the amendment put forward by my leader.

Sir David Brand: What explanation?

Mr. FLETCHER: The Premier knows very well what explanation. He interjected last night and said the Taxation Department and other Government departments were at present investigating the matter. That is the first knowledge this side of the House had of it.

Sir David Brand: It is last year that is being reviewed.

Mr. FLETCHER: I was here, and I have been here throughout the entire debate, but until the amendment was introduced there had been no promise of review. The Opposition has therefore done a very worth-while job in getting that undertaking from the Premier.

Sir David Brand: It was not given because of you.

Mr. FLETCHER: I believe, because of that, if for no other reason, the amendment suggested by my leader was justified and I have much pleasure in supporting it.

MR. RUSHTON (Dale) [4.29 p.m.]: I have much pleasure in adding my words in rejection of the amendment. The Opposition has given us the opportunity to highlight the things that have been done to help so many people in regard to land tax. I hope it appears in every newspaper that 100,000 people have been exempted from land tax and metropolitan regional tax. That number represents something like 75 per cent. of those who would normally have had to pay those taxes.

I will endeavour to run quickly through the points I wish to make. What I have heard from so many speakers on the other side emphasises the hypocrisy of bringing such a censure motion against the Government.

When one reads the speeches made by members opposite on this very subject during the last couple of years, one finds many contradictions. For example, we had the Leader of the Opposition urging that the land tax be increased tremendously to bring about a reduction in land values. On one occasion he even mentioned that he would take the land off the people in an endeavour to achieve this objective. On the 30th October, 1968, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was reported in *Hansard* as having said this—

The situation is so desperate that people who own blocks of land should be compelled, by the pressure of land tax, to get on with the job of using the land, and developing it; or else dispose of it because of the unprofitability of continuing to remain the owner.

These emphases what has been said by those on the other side of the House. In fact, it makes one on this side of the House slightly nervous when one realises the Opposition is pressing for such a move. One can readily see that the endeavour of those on the other side is to make a noose, encourage the Premier to put his neck into it, and drop the trap.

Mr. Jamieson: We would not do that to the Premier.

Sir David Brand: It is the simple process of quartering.

Mr. RUSHTON: Let me press on. The member for Swan was also urging for such things, and here are the words he was reported as having said on Wednesday, the 30th October, 1968, at page 2368 of *Hansard*—

For that reason, I do not think there will be an immediate effect and to achieve the objective of the Premier, I think that ultimately he will have to step up the tax on unimproved land.

If that is not an urge and an endeavour to exert pressure to increase land tax, I do not know what is. He also made the comment that it would be too hard for the horse to bear, but I think this is applying the whip. The comments made by members of the Opposition during the same debate continue. For example, the member for Ascot had a few words to say on the subject on the 28th October, 1969, and they are reported on page 1897 of *Hansard* for that year. His remarks are as follows:—

This is a case of half a loaf being better than none, because this is a Bill which we as the Opposition must support, whether or not we like the proposals, as it seeks to ease the incidence of land tax in respect of a section of the community.

That could be taken in a different way, and I will say the honourable member had much more to say. One important point he did make, to which I lend my support, was that he considered the best way to handle this subject was to deal with it in the long term, in the same way as it was dealt with by local government. We have a difference among those on the Opposition side of the House as to what the best remedy should be.

The member for Fremantle on Tuesday, the 28th October, 1969, on page 1898 of *Hansard* was reported as having said a few words on this subject, but they do not sound consistent with what he has said this afternoon. In 1969, he had this to say—

We cannot look a gift horse in the mouth. We accept what the Treasurer has offered at the present time as coming within that category.

This relates back to land tax again, so one can go on quoting inconsistencies.

Mr. Fletcher: I am not talking about built-up land in my area.

Mr. RUSHTON: These are general statements.

Mr. Fletcher: My comment related to unimproved land and not to built-up areas.

Mr. RUSHTON: I would like to go on because my time is somewhat short. We have the member for Fremantle saying to the Premier that he gave no warning of a review, but if we read the debates of *Hansard* in previous years we will find that the Premier did in fact state, when he introduced a Bill last year, that it would be subject to review. However, he did have other things to say. In regard to rural land he did not expect that the tax would have the effect that it has had in some ways, because today the tax is adversely affecting those who carry on farming and agricultural pursuits.

Mr. Fletcher: There is no farming in my area.

Mr. RUSHTON: Some members represent areas in which farming is being conducted. We have to look at the true intention of the land tax and its effect on the State as a whole. The censure motion refers to hardship and I am merely explaining to the House now that the hardship that is being experienced in certain instances can be alleviated by people carrying out a certain amount of development by which they will become liable for vermin tax and thus render themselves exempt from the payment of land tax and metropolitan region improvement tax. This is the reasonable solution to the problem.

The Leader of the Opposition has suggested that the remedy would be to increase the land tax by a fixed percentage every year. Without going to any great length to give an explanation of this method, I say it would be unworkable, because it would be totally inequitable when imposing the tax on the valuation of one property as against the valuation of another. The ideal solution, of course, would be to have valuations made at the one time in the one year, but it would seem that such an ideal is impossible of achievement. However, if something were done towards this end then the rate struck each year would be far more equitable.

Mr. Lapham: Would you agree to a constant variation?

Mr. RUSHTON: How would it be varied; according to the tax that is levied?

Mr. Lapham: Would you have one valuation each year, or what?

Mr. RUSHTON: No. I am putting forward a suggestion similar to that made by the member for Ascot; namely, that a rate be struck each year or in whatever cycle is agreed upon, and this would bring in the amount of tax that was intended to be raised. It would be more exact in its operation than the method used now.

Mr. Lapham: You would vary the rate as you vary the valuation?

Mr. RUSHTON: The honourable member is aware of what happens in local government when the rate is changed. I suggest that the same method be adopted with the imposition of land tax. In local government, revaluation is carried out at three-yearly, five-yearly, or other intervals agreed upon, and the rate is struck according to the needs. In the same way the Treasurer would strike a rate to bring him in the necessary funds by way of land tax.

The rate would change from year to year. That would be far more acceptable than the present method of levying the tax. It would mean that the tax would be equitable between one property and another and between one district and another. We have to adopt a system that will be fair to all people irre-

spective of where they live—in the hills districts, in the country, or in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Lapham: Could we not have an automatic variation whereby when the valuations were increased the rate would be increased by a certain amount?

Mr. RUSHTON: It is not in any way involved. It is a system that is applied every year by local government and it is a system that we could use with simplicity.

I press on to the last point I wish to make. The member for Darling Range did mention the problems that are encountered in the outer suburban areas and I agree with him that they do exist. I believe it is not the intention of the Government or any member of this House that pressure should be put on people who are occupying small properties in rural or outer suburban areas. There would be no gain to the State if these people were forced off their properties. They are not properties that can be subdivided; they are occupied by people who enjoy their way of life.

At present most of them would not be attracting land tax. It would be an odd case if a property over five acres were attracting vermin tax, land tax, and metropolitan region improvement tax; and, if the owner developed his property to an extent that would attract vermin tax, the other two taxes would disappear. In some instances the owners of such properties have this option. If it did not work out that way, then we would know that something would have to be done to alleviate the hardship such property owners were suffering.

In the main, this system would apply. In recent times most of the protests have been emanating from those people who reside in the Darling Range electorate. This is a result of the rise in valuations that were made quite recently, and it emphasises the difficulty being met by those people who have not engaged in any rural activity.

Mr. May: How about the deferred urban areas?

Mr. RUSHTON: I will now make a comment that is appropriate. I think we must give relief, in urban areas, to the owners of those properties that are withheld from the market through no fault of the owners, but as a result of orders issued by the Town Planning Board or because services, such as sewerage, are required but not available. Therefore I hope that this problem will be considered when a review is being made so that these people may be given some relief.

Mr. May: How would you do it?

Mr. RUSHTON: It would require a great deal more time than I have at the moment to give the explanation. The

system would not be beyond the intelligence of any honourable member to work out. I am sure that some reasonable solution could be found and, to my mind, that must be done, and I feel sure it will be done. I think the Leader of the Opposition has given those on this side of the House a golden opportunity to emphasise how wrong and how inapplicable this censure motion is. By moving it he has given us the opportunity of saying just what has been done to relieve so many people of the burden of paying land tax, especially those who deserve to be relieved of it.

In my electorate I would say that over 90 per cent. of the people would be exempt from the payment of land tax. I would like to see an assessment issued on which was printed the words "You are not liable to tax." This is something that people do not realise when they do not receive an assessment.

They are not aware that they have been subject to exemption of tax. There are people in this State now who have come from countries where a tremendous amount of tax is imposed. We know that such tax covers all sorts of things and we would not be able to segregate the taxes unless we saw the assessment. However, I have been informed that in those countries something like \$550 in tax is paid on a suburban house, but, as I have said, that covers several items. Such people, however, are most appreciative when they find that the tax assessed by their local authority amounts to only \$20 or \$30. Such a charge is relatively low in comparison with what they have been used to paying.

I strongly support the Premier in his rejection of the censure motion, but I appreciate the Opposition bringing it forward, because it has given us a great opportunity to emphasise the benefits enjoyed by the people as a result of the legislation that was brought forward last year.

MR. JAMIESON (Belmont) [4.43 p.m.]: I think there is justification for the censure motion. The honourable member who has just resumed his seat tried to support the attitude of the Premier towards it, but he had difficulty in so doing. The fact that the land tax rates have increased to such an extent that they impose hardship on the people must be fairly obvious when one looks at the figures for the last five years. For example, in 1964-65 the amount of land tax collected was \$2,891,902. Last year, after granting the relief that we hear so much about from members on the other side of the House, \$6,932,058 was collected in land tax alone; not from the collection of metropolitan region improvement tax, or anything else.

Sir David Brand: How many more taxpayers were there?

Mr. JAMIESON: That is the amount, irrespective of the number of taxpayers. The Premier has told us of the number that has been taken off the list of those who are eligible for the payment of this tax, so obviously the people who are still liable for this tax have had their rates increased so that the total figure may be realised.

Many people are being caught up with unfairly, and are being treated unfairly. The increase in those five years amounting to \$4,040,156 is a fairly large one; it represents an increase of nearly 300 per cent. over those years. Looking at the financial statement of last year and comparing it with the one for this year, we find that the cash receipts from land tax have increased from \$4,892,454 to \$6,932,058. One would think that if some relief had been granted by the Government the result would be reflected in the revenue from this source. We do not see that; we see there is an increase of just over \$2,000,000.

Mr. Rushton: A considerable amount of that would be back tax.

Mr. JAMIESON: That happens every year. I give an example of what happened to me personally. Last year I received an assessment for land tax applicable to the previous three years. Evidently there was some mix-up in the computer, because I received two notifications—one in my own name, and one jointly with my wife. I straightened that out, but I thought the amount of tax was pretty high. However, the department did the same thing again this year. I do not know what part of the amount received represents surplus tax, but in my opinion the huge increase in this tax in the last year would not be represented to any large extent by the backlog of past years.

The commissioner has explained to me that his department is constantly facing this problem, because of the backlog in the issuing of assessments in some areas. Whilst the department tries to send the returns out each year, sometimes it finds that two or three years have passed before it gets the returns out. For this reason it would be a complex task to determine what percentage of the amount that has been collected from this tax is represented by back taxes. I would hasten to say that we will not see a decrease in this tax for the present financial year; and so, hardship is, no doubt, being experienced as a consequence of the heavy burden of land tax.

It is all very well to say that relief in some fields, particularly in the rural industries, should be granted; but I would point out that the people of Newburn have no option. Many of them have houses on their properties on which they used to run two or three cows. These properties might be of about seven acres, with some pasture established. As the

occupiers grew old they got rid of the cows, but they are still stuck with the high land tax. They have no way to dispose of the land except at give-away prices, because of the blanket restriction that has been applied, not by law of the State, but by Commonwealth and State departments. They have got their heads together to impose the restriction, without bringing the matter before Parliament. These are the unfortunate landholders to whom some relief should be given. They cannot develop their land, because it is supposed to be rural land; yet it is rated at a high level.

The nearest parcels of land which have been sold lie in the Darling Range electorate and in the industrial area to the south of Newburn. The prices paid have been pretty high. The basis used by the valuers is to take into account the prices paid for the surrounding land I have mentioned or for land at a similar distance from the city. The prices are averaged out, and the valuers arrive at a basis for their valuations; and on these valuations the landowners are required to pay land tax. Yet they cannot sell the land or develop it, because it is not suitable for development. Some of these properties used to be piggeries, but owing to the proximity of the land to the city the owners cannot at present obtain licenses to conduct piggeries or to use the land for similar pursuits.

It is true that a few of these people are able to eke out a meagre living by operating market gardens and, to a lesser extent, orchards. The fact remains that the valuation of the land is far too high to enable these people to meet the tax. Apparently no thought has been given to the granting of relief to them. They are expected to carry the burden through the years until the Department of Civil Aviation decides that it wants the land. When it does it will try to resume it as rural land or acquire it at rural prices. The owners of this land have not obtained any relief from the measures taken by the Government last year.

These people are placed between the State Government and the Commonwealth Government, neither of which is sympathetic towards them. These two Governments can find all the reasons in the world as to why they should not do anything, should not rezone the area, or should not acquire it for the Department of Civil Aviation. They are not doing anything for the people who are now called upon to pay this heavy burden of tax. As a consequence it is hard to imagine who are the 100,000 people who do not have to pay this tax.

It is difficult to know where one can find a block of land which is valued at less than \$6,000, although I know that for

land tax purposes the valuation is depreciated. I doubt whether one can obtain a reasonable block near Perth for \$6,000.

Sir David Brand: It was not worth while making the concession?

Mr. JAMIESON: The fact remains that this is not a very great amount of money, in view of the prices that are being paid for land today. Unfortunately, on this issue the public is caught up by the action of the Government. In the debate last night the aspect of paying high prices for land was dealt with. Some sensible decision should be arrived at, despite what might be the policy of the Liberal Party in respect of restriction on land and on price fixing. The sensible thing to do is to establish a basis where the people can see into the future, so that the marketing of land can be proceeded with in accordance with that basis.

Some people holding land are making huge profits unnecessarily out of the present situation. By selling the land at high prices they are hurting the owners of land such as I have referred to, because the valuations are based on the prices received. I can see no way of giving the landholders at Newburn any real relief, or of letting them know how they will be placed in another five or 10 years' time. If the present trend in land tax collections continues we can expect in 10 years' time an amount of something like \$40,000,000 being collected each year in Western Australia. This is a reasonable prediction; if it does eventuate then most people will be priced out of existence. In saying that I am referring to the people living within a reasonable distance of the metropolitan area.

While I agree that some restriction should be imposed on people who delay the development of the city by sitting on parcels of land and thereby accumulating an equity which is not rightfully theirs, some way should be found to specify such types of properties and to impose a heavy penalty for that sort of activity. However, this should be done more by specific application than by general application of the penalty. That is where I think the Government has failed and, in so doing, has brought about a heavy burden of land tax on the people of this State.

Mr. Rushton: Would you support an adjustable rate of tax?

Mr. JAMIESON: I have just made a suggestion in that regard, although probably it was not in the same terms as the honourable member's proposal. Where landholders are hindering the development of an urban area by sitting on the land they hold, and so accumulating an equity in respect of land for which they have done nothing to develop, they should be penalised. On the other hand owners of properties zoned as deferred urban or as rural who are placed in the position of, perhaps, having to live on a small house on one

parcel while their adjoining parcel remains unused, because they cannot do anything with the land, should be protected by specific provisions in the Act. These are the types of people we seek to protect.

Whilst a burden continues to be imposed on them there is good reason for the move by my leader to censure the Government for not taking cognisance of the situation that exists. According to the terms of the amendment to the motion the Government has created the situation where it no longer has the confidence of the House. In my view this amendment is justified, if the people are not given better treatment.

The imposition of a blanket on the development of land is not new. Instances have occurred in the district of the member for Swan and in other electorates. No doubt they have also occurred in the electorate of Dale. Such land has been placed under a restriction for years because of the adoption of unsuitable zoning. As a consequence many of the people who have to hold on to their land—some of them might have held it for a long while with no specific intention of using it other than to accumulate some wealth from so doing—may find themselves in the poorhouse if they are compelled to pay the tax.

In today's *Daily News* appears a report relating to a big rise in rates in the Perth Shire. The report states—

Valuations have jumped between 1,600 and 1,750 per cent. in the Herdsman-parade area rezoned for flats.

One might say that the increase has been brought about by rezoning the land, but nevertheless the increase is a very steep one. The report continues—

This means that some people will pay 16 times more in rates.

An example of this is that a man's rates for a five-acre property will jump from \$24.20 to \$397.57—and he has no flats on the land.

Of course, the equity still remains on this land, and the owner could obtain a big price for it; but by the same token we should take into account what is established on the land. If there is a house in the centre of this land, and the owner wants plenty of space around him in which to live, some exemption should be granted to him until such time as he sells the land at the ruling market price and the income from the block can be taxed. That would be preferable to requiring such people to become responsible for the immediate payment of the tax as soon as the department sends out demand notices.

That is all I have to say on the matter. If this amendment is defeated I hope the Government will still pay some heed to the problems that are associated with the present high rate of tax which applies to whole areas of land covered by blanket

restrictions, the owners of which deserve some exemption from the tax. They should be given some form of relief.

I am sure they will have no sympathy for the Government if it continues to disregard the burden this tax is placing upon the people. The Premier assured us last year that the burden would be eased. He referred to some 100,000 people who would not pay any tax. That figure seems very high, but it was the one he quoted. If this is true, some people must have had their rates heavily increased in the overall blanket, in view of the increase over the last 12 months. I support the amendment.

MR. LAPHAM (Karrinyup) [5.01 p.m.]: I, too, support the amendment, and I appreciate the reason my leader has submitted it. I feel that this amendment has at least given us the opportunity to voice our thoughts on the subject and to apply ourselves to this problem, which is due for rectification.

The difficulty seems to arise from the fact that for many years the same method of valuation of improved or unimproved land has been applied. Today that system is outmoded. It was all right years ago when prices were stable; there was not the degree of fluctuation in land prices that exists today and therefore the unimproved and improved valuations were reasonably constant. However, today, because of price increases as a result of inflation, the valuations are not constant and this has become a colossal burden for the average person who owns a home, whether that home be in a good area or in a poor area.

It is easy at this stage for the Premier to say that two-thirds of the population have not received a land tax assessment, but there is no guarantee that that situation will remain as valuations continue to increase. The law at this stage does not contain a provision for an automatic increase in the amount below which the exemption applies so that the ratio will remain constant.

Sir David Brand: The Government will be anxious to maintain that level—and improve it.

Mr. LAPHAM: Will the Premier give an assurance that the Land Tax Act will be amended to allow this automatic adjustment of the amount of \$6,000 below which properties are exempt, so that the present ratio will remain constant?

Sir David Brand: You just be a little patient and wait and see.

Mr. LAPHAM: The Premier has the opportunity to say whether he agrees with the principle and is going to continue with it so that as the valuations increase so will the minimum amount under which properties are exempt. That is all I am

asking him to do. This is necessary because of the outlandish methods of valuations which have been adopted and never been altered.

Let us consider how valuations are decided. If a person desires to develop a new area he first of all applies for a survey and then he is faced with survey and shire fees, and subdivisional and legal costs, as well as the cost of providing roads, kerbs, and water. Those are the items of expenditure involved, and it is upon those items that the selling price is based.

Another factor taken into consideration is the desirability of the public to live in that locality. In addition to all this, the profit the developer wishes to make is included. For some reason the amount at which a block is sold is said to be its value. I have never been able to understand how we arrive at this value by totalling up the items of expenditure and then adding the desired profit, but that is the method employed for new areas.

Mr. O'Neill: I think you would find that the tax value is 20 per cent. below the assessed market value.

Mr. LAPHAM: The tax value is based on the sale of land within a certain locality.

Mr. O'Neill: It is struck about 20 per cent. below that.

Mr. LAPHAM: That could be so, but it is still based on the price obtained at a sale of land in the particular locality. That figure might be reduced by 50 per cent. or 75 per cent. but it is based on the value of the block at sale. The more costs involved, the greater the value.

Years ago when this particular method of development was not adopted and the shires were responsible for the improvements such as roadways, kerbing, water, and so on, the value of the land was not as great because those costs were a part of the activities of the shires.

Mr. O'Neill: Not at the beginning, but as the improvements were made, the value increased.

Mr. LAPHAM: Let us look at another aspect. Take, for instance, the suburb of Claremont which is a nice area in which the residents are very good citizens and conscious of their homes. They go out of their way to make them look as picturesque as possible. They have retained many of the big trees and have their lawns extending over the nature strip wherever possible. They have developed their gardens by planting flowers and shrubs and have spent a great deal of money on manures. Many of them are not satisfied until they have installed other amenities in their garden and made the buildings more attractive.

The owners preserve and maintain their homes and gardens in the best possible way and as a consequence the suburb looks an ideal place in which to live. A person

driving by will say, "My word, what a lovely area this is. Look at the gardens and shrubs. It is just like a park." There might happen to be a block for sale in the area and so people vie with one another to buy it, not because the land itself is of great value, but because the area in which it is situated has been made attractive by its good citizens. The local residents are the ones who lift the value of that vacant block of land, but they do not obtain any profit from its sale. What happens to them? Their rates are increased. How stupid can we get? How imbecilic will the situation become?

Mr. Rushton: If you alter the rate, there is no problem is there?

Mr. LAPHAM: Those living on the beachfront have a similar problem, and I can speak with authority on this matter because many beachfronts are located in my electorate. Years ago many of the residents bought their little homes on the beachfront on top of the adjacent hills in order to obtain good views of the ocean to both the north and south. They were superannuated but felt secure in the knowledge that at least they had their homes in which they could spend the rest of their days.

However, what has occurred? Land in the vicinity has been sold at terrific prices and as a consequence these people are now faced with a great problem of increased rates, both land tax and local authority rates. This has developed to such a stage that they just cannot pay them. We all know that immediately the value of the land increases, the local authority concerned reassesses its rate. It might reduce the rate, as has the Perth Shire, but normally the local authorities, needing money, take the opportunity when revaluations increase to extract a little more each time from those who are compelled to pay.

I am referring particularly to the area from Trigg Island to Sorrento where the residents, many of them superannuated, are paying as much as \$100 in shire rates. That is without their land tax. The area is becoming a shockingly expensive one in which to live because the same thing occurs as has occurred in Claremont. People drive by on a nice summer afternoon when the gentle breezes are blowing in from the ocean and the locality looks like a paradise to those who have been sweating in suburban homes miles away, and they decide it would be nice to buy a block there. They forget, of course, that during the winter months all the residents have is sand, salt, and water spray together with all the problems imaginable. They might not even be able to open their front doors. However, because of the particularly pleasant weather when they drive through they believe the place is a little paradise, and they then vie with each other to buy any land available, thus raising the price.

The valuations are based on these factors. On the one hand, the purchaser buys because he is envious of something which is there and he wants it. Envy, greed, and jealousy are all involved in the purchase of a block of land.

On the other hand, the already-established residents, because they desire to beautify their homes and gardens, spend a great deal of money on them, but as a consequence the value of the land increases and they are forced to pay more in taxes. Yet we call it an unimproved land tax. As I said before, how imbecilic can we get?

I commenced my speech by saying I appreciated the reason my leader submitted this amendment. I feel it is high time that as sensible people we study this problem. I repeat that the present method based on improved and unimproved valuations was quite satisfactory in years gone by when everything was stable, but that is not the case today and we should adopt an entirely different system. I may not have the answer, but my suggestion is an area system of valuation with a set percentage adjustment each year. I believe this method would be far preferable to the one at present employed.

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

Ayes—20

Mr. Bateman	Mr. Jamieson
Mr. Bertram	Mr. Lapham
Mr. Brady	Mr. May
Mr. Burke	Mr. McIver
Mr. Cook	Mr. Moir
Mr. Davies	Mr. Sewell
Mr. H. D. Evans	Mr. Taylor
Mr. T. D. Evans	Mr. Toms
Mr. Fletcher	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Harman	Mr. Norton

(Teller)

Noes—24

Mr. David Brand	Mr. McPharlin
Mr. Burt	Mr. Mensaros
Mr. Cash	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Craig	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Dunn	Mr. O'Neill
Mr. Gayfer	Mr. Ridge
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Runciman
Dr. Henn	Mr. Rushton
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Stewart
Mr. Kitney	Mr. Williams
Mr. Lewis	Mr. Young
Mr. W. A. Manning	Mr. I. W. Manning

(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr. Bleckerton	Mr. Bovell
Mr. Jones	Mr. O'Connor
Mr. Graham	Mr. Court

Amendment thus negatived.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. I. W. Manning.

SUPPLY BILL

Returned

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

MORLEY HIGH SCHOOL SITE

Reply to Question: Correction

MR. LEWIS (Moore — Minister for Education) [5.16 p.m.]: I seek the permission of the House to give a corrected answer to a question which I answered on Tuesday.

The SPEAKER: The Minister for Education has sought the leave of the House to make a statement and there being no dissentient voice, leave is granted.

Mr. LEWIS: The correction relates to question 13(3) asked by the Leader of the Opposition. The question reads—

- (3) What was the total outlay during last financial year on the purchase of school sites—
 (a) in the metropolitan area:
 (b) in the country?

I supplied the answer—

- (3) (a) \$2,317,495.
 (b) \$83,267.

However, the corrected answer to part (3) is—

- (a) \$2,234,228.
 (b) \$83,267.

This information was supplied to me today and I wish it to be incorporated in *Hansard*.

House adjourned at 5.18 p.m.

Legislative Council

Tuesday, the 18th August, 1970

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS (6): ON NOTICE

1. GOVERNMENT OFFICES AND HOUSES

North-West: Amenities

The Hon. G. E. D. BRAND, to the Minister for Mines:

- (1) Would the Minister recommend to the appropriate authority that the 26th parallel demarcation line between the north west and southern portion of the State be disregarded when consideration is being given to the supply of amenities such as airconditioners, verandahs and verandah blinds, etc., to occupiers of Government Employees' Housing Authority houses and State houses?
- (2) Would the Minister also recommend that towns in the remote areas of the Murchison-Eyre electorate be included when the supply of the aforementioned amenities is