

Legislative Council

Tuesday, the 22nd October, 1974

The **PRESIDENT** (the Hon. A. F. Griffith) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

BILLS (3): ASSENT

Message from the Lieutenant-Governor and Administrator received and read notifying assent to the following Bills—

1. State Housing Act Amendment Bill.
2. Teacher Education Act Amendment Bill.
3. Fuel, Energy and Power Resources Act Amendment Bill.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

Tabling

THE PRESIDENT (the Hon. A. F. Griffith): I wish to table the report of the Auditor-General for the financial year ending the 30th June, 1974.

QUESTIONS (4): ON NOTICE

1. ORD RIVER SCHEME

Federal Policy

The Hon. W. R. WITHERS, to the Minister for Justice:

In view of the report on page 5 of *The West Australian* dated the 12th October, 1974, relating to the Ord River Scheme, and the quotations attributed to Dr Moss Cass, would the Minister please determine the following—

- (1) Was advice given to the State Government that Dr Moss Cass was in Kununurra making his observations?
- (2) Did Dr Cass obtain the information pertaining to—
 - (a) generated ecological problems;
 - (b) social problems;
 - (c) economic problems; and
 - (d) human health problems; from State Government records?
- (3) If all these problems are officially recognised in the Ord Scheme—
 - (a) what total assistance has been given by the present Commonwealth Government to correct the problems;
 - (b) what are the individual figures in aid moneys granted by the Whitlam Government in the segments listed in (2) above;

(c) has any irrigation scheme on the Murrumbidgee River initially failed because of undermined confidence, destructive criticism, and lack of Government support;

(d) if the answer to (c) is "Yes" what is the total economic output of that scheme in the financial year for 1973-74;

(e) how many Perth residents have been transported to the Ord River Scheme, and once there complained about the weather to Government departments;

(f) if the answer to (e) is known, was this information given by a State department to Dr Moss Cass; and

(g) are Aborigines living in the Ord River district given more or less assistance in education and grants than "white" persons living in the region?

(4) In view of Dr Cass's statement to the effect that the Ord Scheme is being undermined by pestilence, will the Minister please advise—

(a) what Government body now staffs and operates the Kimberley Research Station on the Ord Irrigation Scheme;

(b) why a Commonwealth organisation removed the only cotton research officer from the Kimberley Research Station and based him in the Eastern States;

(c) how many CSIRO research officers are permanently based at the Kimberley Research Station to specifically study any problems of insect plague;

(d) how many CSIRO research officers are permanently based at the Kimberley Research Station for the specific study of pesticide residues and their effects; and

(e) how many ornithologists are permanently based at Kununurra to study bird population growth and control?

(5) Will the Minister request Dr Cass to present evidence to show that attempts have been

made by Commonwealth agencies, or by grants to the State, in order to correct any of the problems which have led him to believe that the Ord River Scheme is a virtual disaster?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

(1) Dr Moss Cass is not known to have visited Kununurra since becoming Minister for Environment and Conservation.

(2) No.

(3) Ecological and economic problems are officially recognised. Currently there is no human health problem but the presence of a large water mass in the tropics could pose a potential hazard. There is no unique social problem, such problems as exist are those common to small communities and those generally found in communities in the North of Australia.

(a) \$36 000.

(b) The National Health and Medical Research Council have provided under the present Government, \$36 000 for research into arbovirus in the area including studies of the mosquito population.

(c) The Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area had difficulties initially which Royal Commissions found to be due to—

inadequate farm size coupled with poor soil types;
insufficient agricultural research;
insistence that the scheme meet all capital and operating costs;
lack of capital and agricultural skills by early settlers.

(d) Latest figure available in the State is 1971-72 when production was \$31 594 385.

(e) No statistics have been kept but many staff and their families have complained about the climate.

(f) No.

(g) More.

(4) (a) CSIRO.

(b) CSIRO decided to concentrate all cotton research at one centre and

selected Narrabri as it is the principal cotton growing area in Australia.

(c) None.

(d) None.

(e) None.

(5) Yes.

2.

HOUSING

Pilbara and Kimberley

The Hon. J. C. TOZER, to the Minister for Justice:

Would the Minister provide—

(a) the date of lodgment of the longest outstanding application for tenancy at each of the towns in the Kimberley and Pilbara; and

(b) the basis for determining—

(i) turnover of tenants; and

(ii) wastage in applications?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

(a) The information requested is contained in the schedule below.

(b) (i) and (ii) The turnover in State Housing Commission tenancy and the wastage in applications for accommodation are matters of fact as recorded by the State Housing Commission.

Schedule of Lodgment Date of Outstanding Tenancy Applications in Kimberley and Pilbara Towns, according to size of accommodation.

Town	Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal	
Broome	10/9/73	Pensioner	21/12/72	1 Bedroom
	12/3/73	2 Bedroom	7/3/73	2 "
	6/10/72	3 "	14/6/73	3 "
	29/9/71	4 "	6/6/74	4 "
Camballin	Nil		6/11/73	2 Bedroom
Derby	14/7/74	1 Bedroom	26/1/73	1 Bedroom
				(Applicant declined first offer)
	19/10/72	2 "	28/9/73	2 Bedroom
	26/4/72	3 "	13/3/74	3 "
	17/10/72	4 "	Nil	4 "
Halls Creek	27/6/72	1 Bedroom	12/12/73	1 Bedroom
	26/6/72	2 "	24/10/73	2 "
	26/6/72	3 "	12/12/73	3 "
	26/6/72	4 "	Nil	4 "
Karratha	Nil		23/1/74	1 Bedroom
			11/1/74	2 "
			1/2/74	3 "
			10/7/74	4 "
Kununurra	21/2/73	Pensioner	18/10/73	1 Bedroom
	13/9/73	2 Bedroom	17/1/74	2 "
	24/7/73	3 "	24/6/74	3 "
	4/1/74	4 "	24/6/74	4 "
Marble Bar	11/8/72	4 Bedroom	1/8/74	1 Bedroom
			18/3/74	2 "
Onslow	Nil	1 Bedroom	Nil	
	21/6/74	2 "		
	24/5/74	3 "		
	Nil	4 "		
Point Samson	Nil		28/5/74	3 Bedroom

Town		Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal	
Roebourne	1/2/69	1 Bedroom	29/6/73	1 Bedroom	
	15/9/70	2 "	30/7/73	2 "	
	6/10/70	3 "	14/11/73	3 "	
	13/7/70	4 "	Nil	4 "	
Port Hedland (includes South Hedland)	19/4/72	1 Bedroom (Pensioner)	6/9/73	1 Bedroom	
	13/3/74	2 Bedroom	4/10/73	2 "	
	10/6/73	3 "	18/8/73	3 "	
	4/9/74	4 "	7/8/74	4 "	
Wickham	Nil	1 Bedroom	11/2/74	1 Bedroom	
	11/9/74	2 "	22/10/73	2 "	
	1/12/72	3 "	27/12/73	3 "	
	Nil	4 "	Nil	4 "	
Wittenoom	Nil		Nil		
Wyndham	7/12/73	1 Bedroom	14/5/73	1 Bedroom	
	21/5/74	2 "	26/4/74	2 "	
	5/11/73	3 "	11/9/74	3 "	
	7/11/72	4 "	14/8/73	4 "	

3. HOUSING

Aborigines: North West

The Hon. J. C. TOZER, to the Minister for Justice:

To validate the replies given on the 16th October, 1974, to my questions on the northern housing programme, would the Minister please confirm—

- that at least 85 formal applications for tenancy have been received from families who qualify for homes being built under the Aboriginal housing programme; and
- that at least 45 applications for tenancy have been received from Aborigines in Roebourne?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

- Yes, except for the 45 houses being provided at Roebourne.
- No. The 45 houses being provided at Roebourne is a result of conjoint planning with the Department for Community Welfare for families on the reserve where living conditions will become untenable during the wet season, as a consequence of new road works diverting flood waters on to the reserve.

4. EDUCATION

School at Shelley

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN, to the Minister for Education:

- Is a primary school to be built at Shelley?
- If so, will it be completed by the commencement of first term 1975?
- What effect will the completion of Shelley school have on the contributing schools at Riverton and Rossmoyne concerning staffing and grading?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

- Yes.
- No.
- The opening of Shelley Primary School will have little effect on the staffing and grading of the Rossmoyne Primary School. It is anticipated that the opening of Shelley Primary School will ease pressure on accommodation at the Riverton Primary School. Riverton will be a Class 1A school for 1975. It is not considered that this classification is likely to change in the near future.

BILLS (3): THIRD READING

- Constitution Acts Amendment Bill.
- Distressed Persons Relief Trust Act Amendment Bill.

Bills read a third time, on motions by the Hon. N. McNeill (Minister for Justice), and passed.

- Western Australian Institute of Technology Act Amendment Bill.

Bill read a third time, on motion by the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (Minister for Education), and passed.

ALUMINA REFINERY AGREEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West—Minister for Education) [4.45 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is to establish a workable basis for the escalation of royalties payable by Alcoa of Australia (W.A.) Limited under the provisions of clause 9 of the Alumina Refinery Agreement 1961-1972.

Subclause (3) of clause 9 of that agreement, as amended by the Alumina Refinery (Pinjarra) Agreement Act of 1969, fixes the royalty Alcoa must pay to the State in respect of each ton of alumina it produces, the rate of royalty being raised or lowered in each quarter if necessary in accordance with the application of a formula based on the price of aluminium f.o.b. Toronto quoted in the London Metal Bulletin.

The subclause establishes as the basic royalty rate the sum of 25c Australian per ton of alumina; this basic rate being varied up or down by the ratio that alterations in the world selling price of aluminium bear to the price of aluminium in the year that the agreement was written; that price being \$500 Australian per ton. A formula is expressed in paragraph (b) of the clause, the application of which results in a royalty clearly

reflecting any increase or decrease appropriate to movements in the selling price of aluminium.

The price of Canadian primary aluminium, 99.5 per cent purity f.o.b. Toronto, as quoted at specified times in the London Metal Bulletin, was adopted for the purposes of the formula as an appropriate world price indicator.

However this price has not been published since May, 1972, and consequently it has been necessary to find an alternative on which an amendment of the agreement may be based. The Mines Department and the Department of Industrial Development have carried out a detailed examination of options available. These investigations have shown that an alternative price which the Metal Bulletin continues to publish is generally accepted by authorities in the matter as the best index of the world price of aluminium.

It appears that this price, which is described in the fifth supplementary agreement now before members as the price for virgin ingots Canadian c.i.f. all main ports excluding the USA, Canada, and the UK published under the heading of "Primary Metals" in the Metal Bulletin, is the correct substitute for the "f.o.b. Toronto" price now no longer published.

Negotiations with Alcoa on this basis have resulted in the terms of this supplementary agreement, which the Bill approves and ratifies, being accepted by the company and subsequently executed by the State and the company.

The new formula clearly retains the same principles as the original. It provides an acceptably smooth change-over, maintaining as closely as practicable parity with the royalty which could have been anticipated under the original formula. I am advised that figures taken out comparing the results of the old "f.o.b. Toronto" to the new "c.i.f. all other ports" prices show that although during the last year in which the f.o.b. prices were published there was an average ratio of f.o.b. 100 to c.i.f. 95.67 equivalent to a royalty loss of about \$20 000, the ratio varied in comparisons taken out over 10 years, from 94.6 to 107.5 and averaged 99.96. It is therefore believed that in the long run the new definition will achieve parity with the old one.

It has further been agreed that the formula will be reviewed again in two years' time and again four years later, thereafter reverting to seven yearly reviews as in the original clause of the agreement. In view of our experience with the original formula the agreement specifically provides for a review of the position in the event of the London Metal Bulletin ceasing to publish the information required for the formula.

In regard to the period which has passed since the original escalation formula became inoperative the company has paid all outstanding royalties on the new basis now agreed, in anticipation of this supplementary agreement being executed and ratified.

I feel it is of interest to mention that acceptance of the terms of this supplementary agreement will open the way for negotiations with each of the other parties with whom the State has alumina agreements as each of these agreements contains the inoperative definition. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. R. T. Leeson.

CONVICTED INEBRIATES' REHABILITATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West—Minister for Education) [4.50 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The objectives of the alcohol and drug authority to be established under another current piece of legislation include the establishment of relations with all agencies involved in the management of persons suffering from alcoholism and drug dependence.

It could well be that the alcohol and drug authority may in due course recommend that the convicted inebriates' Act be amended, or repealed and replaced by some other legislation, because a review of such areas of law will be a function of the authority.

In the interim and as a step towards the co-ordination of effort, this Bill is presented. Its principal purpose is to replace the existing Inebriates Advisory Board by appointing the members of the alcohol and drug authority to undertake the duties of the board. This is achieved by the substitution of the definition "authority" for the existing definition of "board" in section 3 of the principal Act.

This necessitates complementary amendments to sections 6 and 7 of the principal Act to adapt these sections to the change in composition of the board.

Opportunity is taken to update references to the Director, Department of Corrections. The principal Act refers to that officer by his previous title which was Comptroller-General of Prisons.

Apart from the matters to which I have referred the Bill seeks no changes at this time other than the establishment of direct link between the alcohol and drug authority and the Director of the Department of Corrections, and the institutions which he controls.

I commend the Bill to the House.

THE HON. S. J. DELLAR (Lower North) [4.52 p.m.]: The Bill before us seeks to amend the Convicted Inebriates' Rehabilitation Act; it is a very small, but a very important piece of legislation. The Bill has my full support, and I can see no objection being made to it by any member of the House.

The only minor criticism I can offer is that we do not have the other legislation, to which the Minister has made reference, to enable us to compare the Bill with that legislation and see how it fits into the overall picture. It is only a minor criticism, because I believe the provisions in another piece of legislation coming forward will clarify the situation.

The problem of convicted inebriates is a matter of concern to all sectors of the community. The reliance of some people on alcohol—those who reach the stage subsequently where their ability to live normal lives is destroyed—is a very sad feature in our community. It is not only a setback to the person involved, but also sadly affects his immediate family and relatives who have to undergo great hardship when no real blame should rest on them. This arises mainly from a lack of control by the person involved, who eventually reaches the stage where his complete reliance on alcohol destroys his normal way of life. I believe a general feeling is growing throughout the community that such people should not be pitied and left to their own devices—as they have been in the past.

The position has changed. These people are capable of rehabilitation, and the more we can do to help them the better it will be, so that they can be re-equipped to enter the normal life of the community, and take their place in society as valued citizens of the State.

When the Minister explained the purpose of the Bill he pointed out that the major objectives were simply to replace the existing Inebriates Advisory Board by appointing the members to the proposed alcohol and drug authority, to be set up under a separate piece of legislation. This is to be done by substituting the definition of "board" in section 3 of the principal Act with the definition of "authority" as appears in the Bill.

Clauses 4 and 5 seek to amend sections 6 and 7 respectively of the Act, to enable the provisions in those sections to be adapted to the operations of the proposed authority, after it has been established. This is merely a means to enable the provisions of the existing legislation to be exercised by the proposed authority in handling the problem of inebriates.

The only other amendment in the Bill is a proposal to update the reference to the Comptroller-General of Prisons, and to bring it into line with the current title, which is, Director of the Department of Corrections. This change in the title

has been effected in another Act, and the amendment merely seeks to bring the title into line. The change in the title in the Act I have mentioned was effected by the previous Government when the Department of Corrections replaced the Prisons Department.

We have no opposition to the Bill. We hope it has a speedy passage, and that the subsequent legislation to be introduced will clarify the overall position. I believe it is good legislation, and it has been advocated for some time. With those comments I support the second reading.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. Grace Vaughan.

SUPREME COURT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West—Minister for Justice) [4.58 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The principal purpose of this short Bill to amend the Supreme Court Act is to give effect to a recommendation of the Chief Justice.

Provision for the recovery of land is contained in section 130 of the Supreme Court Act and in orders 13 and 22 of the rules of the Supreme Court, 1971. The manner in which the Supreme Court judgments for the possession of land may be enforced are considered to be inflexible and outmoded.

In particular, historical distinction between a judgment for the recovery of land and a judgment requiring a person to deliver up possession of land is confusing and serves no useful purpose.

It is therefore considered preferable that detailed provisions relating to enforcement should be contained in the Supreme Court rules rather than in the Act itself, and the Bill seeks to empower judges to make the necessary rules.

Currently subsection (1) of section 130 provides that a judgment or order for recovery of land may be enforced by a writ of possession. No notice is required to be given to the defendant before the issue of the writ of possession.

In subsection (2) of section 130 provision is made that, where by any judgment or order a person named in the judgment or order is required to deliver up possession to another person, the person to whom possession of the land is to be delivered may, without any order for that purpose, issue a writ of possession on filing an affidavit showing service of the judgment or order and that the same has not been obeyed. An order to deliver up possession of land must state a time when delivery must be given.

There is at present no provision that leave of the court must be obtained before the writ of possession may issue.

Subject to this amendment, it is proposed to amend the rules to require leave of the court to be obtained where it is sought to enforce a judgment or order for the possession of land.

This will ensure that notice is given to all persons in actual possession of land and provides greater protection to the defendant from a time factor point of view; and this naturally affects the plaintiff for the same reason.

The amendment to subsection (1) of section 167 is purely a consequential one to enable the necessary rules of court to be made.

A further minor amendment has been included to delete reference to section 17 in the side notes of section 30 as section 17 was repealed in 1971.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. R. Thompson (Leader of the Opposition).

RURAL AREAS

Attitude of Federal Government: Motion

Debate resumed, from the 19th September, on the following motion by the Hon. A. A. Lewis—

That this House deplores the attitude of the Federal Government to rural areas and in particular its obvious lack of appreciation of the problems confronting the primary producers of Western Australia.

THE HON. G. E. MASTERS (West) [5.00 p.m.]: I wish to speak briefly in favour of the motion and I do not intend to repeat the remarks of the many other members who have spoken previously. Suffice it to say the farmers at this time are facing a desperate situation.

To my personal knowledge many people with large investments in the south-west, and in many other areas throughout Western Australia, are barely making the average Australian wage. These people live mostly in remote areas, work long hours, live in comparatively poor housing, and although they are farmers I imagine they can be referred to as small businessmen.

I believe the Federal Government is launching an attack against the small businessmen, and the farmers are suffering accordingly. It is most important that this matter should be looked at in a much broader context and with a much broader vision. The potential of Australia, and Western Australia in particular, is food production with emphasis on agricultural production.

It appears that the Federal Government is not willing to encourage any substantial increase in food production. In fact, it has turned a blind eye to the very important fact that the world, at this time, is on the brink of some of the worst famines in its history.

It seems we have a restrictive economic policy. I believe that when the honourable Sandy Lewis suggested \$1 000 million should be injected into agricultural pursuits within the community he was not being silly at all. We should examine this matter on a world-wide basis and not look at it as a sad little backyard problem. It seems we have a narrow outlook.

The withdrawal of the superphosphate bounty, by the Federal Government, has restricted production, and it will continue to restrict production over the next year or two unless the bounty is restored. Decreased food production will increase the misery now existing throughout the world. Increased food production depends on improved technology, an increased use of mechanised equipment, and the increased use of fertilisers.

The trace elements and superphosphate which have been used in the coastal areas of this State provide a good example of the importance of increasing production output. The sensible use of this type of trace element in fertiliser has increased production.

Every day we read accounts, in our newspapers, of famines which are occurring throughout the world. We have only to look at what has happened at Bangladesh, which has been subjected to flooding and where the people are starving. Cyprus is another country which is facing famine; and so I could go on. These events are occurring day after day, and the situation is getting worse. It will continue to get worse within the next 12 months and certainly, in the years to follow.

We have to examine the position of our food production very carefully and encourage its increase. In fact, I believe that even the Prime Minister (Mr Whitlam) has now recognised the problem exists. When speaking to the United Nations he said that Australia's role in producing food was becoming increasingly important. It seems that something has got through at last.

Mr Cairns recently said that he recognised the role which Western Australia and Australia were to play in grain production throughout the world. So, perhaps there is a change in attitude and perhaps there will now be more encouragement given to the production of food.

In 1972 we had the great Russian grain robbery. That was, of course, to ensure the supplies for that country, and no-one

can blame it for doing so. However, that purchase and storage of grain completely drained the grain reserves of the world.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: It was not only Russia, but also China.

The Hon. G. E. MASTERS: Whoever it was, it had an unfortunate effect on the grain reserves of the world and they were at their lowest level for 20 years. It is important to note that in 1973 the reserves were not replenished.

The United States of America is the greatest food producer in the world. It produces mainly wheat and meat. It has been suggested that production in that country could possibly be increased between 30 per cent to 50 per cent. It seems that world production is untapped, just as Australia's production is untapped. I do not believe for a moment that the world population will outstrip production. There is no need for the population to outstrip production. It has been suggested that a drought in the United States of America could cause more deaths than the last two World Wars.

It is the duty of any humane Government to encourage food production. It has been suggested that the countries which need the food cannot afford to pay for it. I would like to refer to a publication called *Australia's External Aid 1974-75* in which, on the first page, it is indicated that Australia's external aid will amount to \$376.031 million during 1974-75. The publication states that the amount is an increase of 27.9 per cent on the previous year. However, a closer examination reveals that the aid is not by means of food supplies. It is in the form of projects, equipment, experts, related activities, training, and other bilateral aid. Out of a total amount of \$122.604 million only \$29 million will be aid in the form of food. In this context, the food aid could be increased.

On page 11 of the same publication it is stated that Australia will make \$40 million available towards the proposed United Nations special programme to assist developing countries. I presume that assistance will be in the form of Australian food. I believe that out of a grant of \$376 million we should make available more than \$40 million for food aid. I do not think even that would be sufficient.

I suppose it could be asked where the aid was to go. Firstly, aid to Indonesia will amount to \$6.2 million in the form of two "Attack" class patrol vessels, six smaller patrol boats, and a number of Nomad aircraft, together with training assistance, advisory services, and support equipment which will assist that country to combat illegal trading and fishing activities.

If we are able to give \$6 million in this form of aid I wonder why we are so short of protection on our own northern coast-

line. I suggest many other forms of aid could be provided apart from those I have just mentioned. The aid should be in the form of food.

If we were able to increase our aid in the form of wheat and meat there would be considerable saving. So much money is wasted in administration, and the publication to which I have referred demonstrates that a tremendous amount of aid is provided in the form I have mentioned. I have no doubt a great deal of aid is required in the form of technology and advice but we are probably overdoing that form of aid. The people want food.

We have a surplus of food in this country, more than anything else, and that surplus could be increased if farmers were encouraged along those lines. Our farmers are suffering because of a lack of markets but we are giving away tremendous sums of money. Perhaps our increased production would be only a drop in the ocean but at least it would be a step in the right direction. It would strengthen our agricultural community.

In the name of humanity any Government of any country must encourage agricultural production and, for that reason, I support the motion.

THE HON. J. C. TOZER (North) [5.10 p.m.]: I rise to support the motion now before us which is critical of the Federal Government for its policies as they relate to the rural communities, or the primary producers. Clearly, primary producers include miners as well as farmers and pastoralists.

I think I should make a general comment on the policy which the Federal Government has adopted since it came to power in December, 1972. I will back up my comments by quoting an impeccable authority in Mr Arthur Bickerton. Of course, Mr Bickerton was the member for Pilbara for 16 years and I will quote from an article which appeared in the *Daily News*, on Thursday, the 4th April, 1974, as follows—

Mr Bickerton is on the verge of being defeated in his Pilbara seat and becoming the first WA Minister to be defeated in office for nearly 40 years.

He blamed his imminent defeat on federal government policies.

Mr Bickerton is quoted as having said—

Sometime or another we may have a Prime Minister who is a statesman and not a politician. And by that I mean somebody who looks after the whole country and not a person who thinks in terms of seats rather than situations.

The federal government is not concerned about how the people of the North-West feel because it looks at the number of seats and sees what it needs for a majority.

It knows that it is going to score far better by putting in a new train service in Melbourne than it would by spending the money in a remote area of WA.

Mr Bickerton said the Federal Government's decision-making reflected that when it took office none of the new Ministers had previous ministerial experience. He said, "They are naive". Mr Bickerton went on to say—

Why deny the people of the remote areas the right to have the standards of living and facilities of people in Sydney, Melbourne or any other area of concentrated population when you don't deny it to the city people.

Mr Bickerton was an angry and disappointed man when he made the comments but I think it would be agreed that it is under such stress that a man is likely to reveal his true feelings. We can take for granted that what Mr Bickerton said truly reflected the feeling of a man who was well experienced in government.

I could question his remark that Federal Government Ministers are naive. That may be the case but I rather have the feeling that the policies lined up against the rural and primary producing community, in our country areas, are more than the activities of naive people; they are a concerted attack by policy-makers who have this adverse attitude towards the primary producing sectors of our community.

It is unfortunate that the policy makers have the support of the bureaucrats in Canberra. They have observed a manner in which added strength can be placed in their hands and they have the task of applying the policies so devastating to the outlying areas. I find it hard to see the motive behind those policies. It is clearly non-Australian and certainly anti-nationalistic in concept.

I recall earlier this session when Mr Tom Perry stood up and showed us a map of Australia with the south-east corner marked off. He told us that 90 per cent of the people in Australia lived in that corner. Our friends on this side of the House believe that 90 per cent of the parliamentary representation in Canberra should come from this same south-east corner of Australia.

What a disaster this would be for Western Australia, the Northern Territory, and Queensland. If anybody wanted a true illustration of what people think on this matter, they should look at the results of the election in the Northern Territory on Saturday when the people clearly stated their feelings about the Federal Government and its policies towards the more remote areas.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: The people in Darwin should be the last in the world to complain.

The Hon. J. C. TOZER: There is no doubt at all that Mr Perry and Mr Bickerton were on the same wave length on this matter, and I must say that I, too, am in tune with them.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: George Brand blamed the Brand Government.

The Hon. J. C. TOZER: There is no doubt that Mr Bickerton was alluding, in part, to the regional development of the area he represented. It is again interesting to see the places in which the Federal Government is pursuing its policies of regional growth centres. It is in such places as Albury-Wodonga, Bathurst, Orange and Monarto all in this south east corner of the continent. Never do we hear such policy put forward for the Pilbara—for the Dampier-Karratha-Roe-bourne-Wickham complex or the Kununurra-Wyndham complex in the Kimberley.

It is clearly evident where the policies of the Federal Government are being directed. We must not forget that this is a matter of great importance to the rural people, to the primary producers, and to those living in the outlying areas, for the simple reason that it is the support industries which are grouped around this regional development that provided employment opportunities for the younger people from those areas.

On the following morning—that is, on the 5th April, 1974—*The West Australian* reported on Mr Bickerton as follows—

Last November he said—

That is, Mr Bickerton had said—

—that these policies were mad. His statement embarrassed the State Government in its relations with the Federal Labor Government.

The newspaper article continues to quote Mr Bickerton—

With all due respect to my friends in the federal Labor Party, I have no compunction in doubting their ability to judge the situation when they don't know the area.

They should rely a bit more on local opinion rather than laying down a policy for the whole of Australia.

We agree with him completely. I would now like to make a brief comment on the Federal Government's financial management of the outlying areas—the primary producing areas of Western Australia.

I will not cover this matter in detail because other speakers have already done so. But I would again like to draw on the very best authority on this matter—and I am sure members will agree that Mr J. T. Tonkin is one of the very best authorities. On the 17th February, 1973, *The West Australian* made quite a long reference to Mr Tonkin's comments, and in the last paragraph it reports him as saying—

The decision to revalue did not have proper regard for the backbone of the country—the exporting industries.

This is what Mr Lewis' motion relates to—the exporting industries. Clearly Federal financial management in Canberra has no recognition of the contribution that is being made to the country by the primary producers—the exporting industries.

The Federal Cabinet cannot be oblivious to this, but for some reason its actions seem to be directed against the self-same industries. Of course we know that part of the damage done by the two major revaluations has been corrected to some extent; but there has not been sufficient correction. There is still considerable overvaluation of the dollar when compared with the situation in December, 1972.

I still continue to draw on the comments of the very best authorities in Australia, and in doing so I would like to quote Dr Cairns, the Deputy Prime Minister, who was referred to in a *Daily News* report of the 1st October as follows—

Dr Cairns, said today he believed the Government had acted wrongly in removing the superphosphate bounty.

He continued—

My view is that this could have been better handled.

We cannot agree with him more, particularly after hearing some of the members of rural constituencies describe the exact position during the debate in this House.

I come now to another major foolish policy that has been implemented by the Federal Government. Again, my very good authority is the Federal member for Kalgoorlie (Mr Fred Collard). I will now read from *The Kalgoorlie Miner* of the 1st August—

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: It is a very good paper.

The Hon. J. C. TOZER: *The Kalgoorlie Miner* when discussing the discontinuance of the petrol subsidy reports as follows—

Many Labor M.P.'s, particularly those representing outback electorates, were seriously concerned about the economic and political impact of the Governments decision.

They warned that petrol prices could rise by up to 18c a gallon in outback areas if the subsidy was removed.

The M.H.R. for Kalgoorlie, Mr. F. Collard, is reported to have told tonight's meeting: "Jesus Christ could not win Kalgoorlie now".

I believe there might be some truth in that if he espouses Labor policies. To continue, and this is important to note—

Mr Collard urged that the subsidy be retained in its present form.

He is believed to have said that abolition of the concession would have a severe impact on mining workers and other people in about 70 centres in the Kalgoorlie electorate.

Once again we find ourselves on common ground with these leaders of the ALP. They at least have some understanding of the problems created by the policies of the Federal Government, even if the Cabinet in Canberra is not able to see the adverse position that has been created by decisions that are being made.

Although the matter has been adequately canvassed, I think we might look at the impact on the pastoral industry. For many years in the past mustering was carried out on horseback. This necessitated the use of many men and horses, and took a great deal of time.

Because of the costs and other factors involved this method had to be changed, and the entire pastoral industry has now geared itself to a different way of operation. Such mustering is now done by the use of motorbikes, and landrovers, aided by aeroplanes and helicopters. By these means stockmen are able to carry out the task in a week; a task which previously took three months or more. As a result, the whole industry is now geared to the use of petroleum products, either in aeroplanes or in motor vehicles.

The pastoral industry is a very flexible industry. As in all other primary production the men in this industry have proved that they must be so. So the pastoralists have geared themselves to the use of petroleum, and Mr Collard has said that they are paying 18c a gallon more. But this is only when the product is delivered in bulk. If it is delivered in drums the cost is increased by up to 38c per gallon. This applies to all aviation fuel that is used to assist the pastoral industry, which is now married to the use of petroleum products.

I would like to look briefly at the Federal taxation policy and its impact on primary production. I will not go over the ground covered by other members, but I feel we should consider its impact on the mining industry, on the prospectors, and on the small producers to whom Mr Collard refers in his comments.

It is the changes in the taxation laws which remove the possibility of the people involved in mining making use of the accelerated depreciation arrangement. This will have a very grave impact indeed, because this is the means by which the small operators—that is the group syndicates and the prospectors—are able to get the cash flow in to sustain their operation in the field.

Suddenly we find the taxation depreciation has to be applied to the life of a mining venture, or to a period of 25 years whichever is the shorter. This means the

policy of the Federal Government will clearly drive the small miner out of business and will have as serious an impact in Mr Collard's Federal electorate as it will in the province which I represent. It is surprising not to see Mr Leeson and Mr Stubbs jumping up and joining in to support Mr Lewis' motion on the Federal Government's policies and activities which will drive half of the small operators out of business in the province they represent.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: They did it through the correct channel; not by using the House of Review.

The Hon. J. C. TOZER: It is not my intention to go over the question of the disabilities of farmers—Mr Withers and others have covered these points adequately—but it did seem imperative to me that remarks concerning the policies adopted by the Commonwealth Government as they affect the primary producers in the North Province had to be made in this House.

I support the motion.

THE HON. T. O. PERRY (Lower Central) [5.27 p.m.]: I support the motion. When our agricultural industries run into trouble the entire economy suffers.

I would like members to cast their memories back three or four years when we had a recession in this State. In the province I represent a small engineering works in Wagin—the Federick Engineering Company—sacked 100 men and this had a tremendous effect on the town of Wagin. During that recession all the industries in the Lower Central Province suffered; whether they were operating at Kojonup, Wagin, or Narrogin, they all suffered. This is understandable when we appreciate that agriculture still provides 52 per cent of our export income.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Fifty-three per cent?

The Hon. T. O. PERRY: I think possibly that we as farmers have made one big mistake in regard to the super subsidy. The average man in the street believes that the super subsidy is paid to the farmer whereas it is, of course, paid to the manufacturers. The subsidy has never been paid to the farmer. Everybody accepts the fact that a bounty is paid to Chamberlain Industries to enable it to provide tractors at a reasonable price and to help it market them at a reasonably low cost both here and overseas.

Super subsidies, however, have never been paid to the farmers. There is not a farmer in this Chamber who has received a cheque for a super subsidy.

The Hon. R. Thompson: He receives cheaper super.

The Hon. T. O. PERRY: I can recall the time when primary producers could have imported super from England. Had

it not been for the tariff protection provided to manufacturers of super in this country, super could have been landed on the farm from England cheaper than it was from Western Australia. Appreciating the position, the Government paid a subsidy to manufacturers of super in this country to help them keep their prices reasonably low, and also to enable them to establish a super industry here in Australia.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You can still land overseas cement in Australia cheaper than you can buy it here.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: What is the theory behind this subsidy?

The Hon. T. O. PERRY: I think the purpose was to enable producers to produce food at a reasonable cost to the city dweller or purchaser; to provide at a reasonable cost meat, wheat products, bread, and all other commodities.

I fear that the time is not far distant when we will see half a generation of farmers raped, and if that occurs they will never go back to the land. Possibly Mr Whitlam and Dr Cairns, who regret so much the removal of the super subsidy do so because they fear foodstuffs will be very costly in this country.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Don't you think they are dear now?

The Hon. T. O. PERRY: Not in comparison with many parts of the world. If Mr Dans tried to buy a pound of steak in America he would find that even today steak is much cheaper in Australia.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You ought to be very careful when comparing living costs in Australia and America these days; you might get a bad result.

The Hon. T. O. PERRY: The Federal Government's agricultural policy affects not only the farming community, but also businesses, such as the engineering company in Wagin to which I referred. It has affected Dalgetys, which is a big stock firm. That firm no longer carries on business in the south-west and agricultural areas; now it is interested only in the station country. The Massey-Ferguson firm reached a situation in which it almost went out of business.

The Hon. R. Thompson: That was when a Liberal Government was in office.

The Hon. T. O. PERRY: I am pointing out the importance of agriculture to the economy of Australia. I said during the debate on the Address-in-Reply or the Supply Bill I believed the centralist policy of the present Federal Government will act to the detriment of every Australian. I do not believe the Federal Government is at all interested in rural dwellers, for the reasons I have explained; namely, that about 90 per cent of the people of Australia live in that little corner formed by drawing an imaginary line from Brisbane to Adelaide.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: The "Brisbane line".

The Hon. T. O. PERRY: Already we are regretting bitterly the attitude of the present Federal Government to the farming community of Australia. However, I believe the worst is yet to come, because in the near future very many farmers will be forced to leave the land. I feel many of these will never go back to the land because it will be a financial impossibility for them to do so. In four, five, or six years' time, foodstuffs and agricultural produce will be much dearer than they are today; and then perhaps the city dwellers will begin to realise just what the policies of the present Government really mean to them, as well as to the men on the land. I support the motion.

THE HON. R. THOMPSON (South Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [5.33 p.m.]: Although I agree there is nothing wrong with moving this motion in this House, to me it seems a peculiar motion; it is one without foundation. I realise the calibre of Liberal Party representation in the Federal House is possibly at its lowest ebb since Federation.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: They have a better ratio in the Federal House than you have in this House.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I was speaking of the calibre of the membership.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: You couldn't compare it.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The quality of Liberal Party representation in the Australian Parliament is at its lowest ebb. The quality of the membership must not be very great when it is left to a rather new member in this Chamber to move a motion of condemnation of the Australian Government. As members opposite have the numbers, I would be foolish if I did not assume the motion will be carried; but what will happen to it when it is carried? If Mr Lewis believes this time-consuming effort—

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Come off it.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: —to vent his spleen at the Australian Government in regard to its policies is of some value, that is his privilege and I do not deny it to him. As I proceed I will refer to his speech.

The Hon. N. McNeill: What you are really saying is that the Federal Government will not take any notice of the motion, even if it is carried.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: What will the Minister do with the motion if it is carried?

The Hon. N. McNeill: The motion deplores the attitude of the Federal Government. Surely it is a matter for the Federal Government to take note of.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Will the Minister forward it to that Government?

The Hon. N. McNeill: We might just do that.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Yes, the Minister might do that, and he might not do it.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: It should not be necessary, of course.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I come back to the point made by Mr Masters a while ago when speaking about the munitions and other aid provided by the Australian Government under the Colombo Plan. He said this aid should be in the form of food. I think Mr Masters made a much better speech than did Mr Lewis. Mr Masters dealt with a few facts. However, I will criticise Mr Lewis' speech at a later stage.

Recently I attended a dinner with an Indian Minister and another member of the Indian Parliament. The Deputy Premier of Western Australia (the Hon. W. R. McPharlin) was also present, and during dinner the Indian people discussed the matter of aid in a very frank manner. They said they did not want aid in the form of machinery or food because too much wastage, graft, and corruption occurs. They said, "Our people want to work. We want money, not food, to buy the things we need."

The Hon. T. Knight: To develop a hydrogen bomb.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: They said, "More importantly, we want money to create employment." Mr McPharlin endorsed their remarks when he spoke; he said they promoted their ideas with common sense. He went on to say he agreed that the creation of employment is more essential and more life-saving than aid, because if people can obtain work they can produce. I agree with those remarks. Surely we will not have members opposite disagreeing with the Deputy Premier.

Mr Tozer remarked that projects in the Eastern States were being pushed by the Australian Government. He mentioned the Albury-Wodonga area and certain other areas and said the Federal Government has no interest in the Wickham-Roe-bourne-Karratha complex. Of course, that is completely untrue, because the Australian Government has already contributed and will contribute further—

The Hon. J. C. Tozer: Yes, \$100 000.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: —on a 50-50 basis to the complete feasibility study of the Pilbara complex. Last week—and I am surprised members opposite seem to have missed this—the Federal Minister for Minerals and Energy (Mr Connor) made a Press statement, which was criticised I believe by members of the State Government, to the effect that a petro-chemical

complex would be established in the Pilbara, and that a petrol distillation plant would also be established to extract that very worth-while commodity from natural gas.

Having made that correction, I point out that although on several occasions I have read through Mr Lewis' speech, I can find no valid points to which I may reply. He presented us with a lot of words and mumbo jumbo. He presented a generalised and hypothetical case and, of course, got back to the old theme when he said the total mis-management of this country is obvious.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: It is obvious, isn't it?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Of course, the problems we are facing in Australia today are a product of the capitalist system.

The Hon. N. McNeill: What rubbish.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: There are no problems in socialist countries at the present time.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Ask the Russians about their crops.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: There is no inflation or hold-back in socialist countries.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Why don't you go to Russia and—

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I did not interject on Mr Lewis.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Didn't you? Read *Hansard*.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: He likes to shout down people, but he will not get away with that with me.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: You do your lolly instead.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: In regard to the question of mismanagement, during his speech Mr Lewis made some reference to events which occurred during the life of the Liberal Government which was in office for over 23 years in Canberra.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Those terrible years.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Of course, that has no bearing at all on the Australian Government. To be honest, I must say Mr Lewis did qualify his remarks by saying that all Governments had not done the right thing by farmers, or words to that effect. He then got into the routine, which is popular at the moment, of blaming unions for the hold-up in respect of spare parts for farmers.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: I suppose they have nothing to do with it.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Referring to country businessmen, Mr Lewis said they will still try to provide parts, although

because of union stoppages parts are becoming harder and harder to get. He went on to say—

In the last year, the delivery of parts which have been ordered for six or seven months has been systematically stopped by union action and the people who need the parts in order to produce something are denied them.

He provided no proof of that; he did not even present a hypothetical case. He simply made those bold, irrational statements without providing proof, and expected the House to believe him. I do not think members of his party in this House—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: They didn't believe him, either.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: —believed him. He referred to the closing down of a business; and when questioned by Mr Cooley said that it had occurred in Sunshine, Victoria. The firm in question has a machinery works which, if my memory serves me correctly, was to be closed down in 1970 or 1971 when the McMahon Government was in office.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: I do not think that matters. I qualified that, if you read it carefully.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That was when the Liberal Government was saying, "Get big or get out."

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Then Mr Lewis went on to say—

We must provide finance so that farmers eventually can take over the marketing of their own products, but the backing for the short term must be there.

He also said—

Some Governments, however, have given us incentives that have been worth while and I have made the point that the rural interests cannot borrow money at a rate which is acceptable to the farmer.

It was only last week I pointed that out in this place; but my words had no effect on Government members who, to a person, voted to support an increase in the Money Lenders Act; and that has a bearing on farming, because it affects short-term loans and hire purchase which farmers use to buy their machinery.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Under a decent system they would not need hire purchase to buy machinery.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: We find that was supported rather blindly by members opposite.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: I do not think we supported an increase in the Money Lenders Act.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The honourable member agreed to a schedule of increases to be made, and in reply to the

second reading debate the Minister for Justice said that he imagined the maximum interest rate that would be allowed would be in the vicinity of 15 per cent.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: You said we supported an increase in the Money Lenders Act.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: If the honourable member will read the Minister's second reading speech he will find that the Minister gave examples of the interest rates applying in two States; it was 24 per cent in one State and 45 per cent in another. The Minister said the maximum allowable should be 20 per cent; those were his words.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: How many farmers would have short-term loans?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I do not know how many farmers would have short-term loans, but I suppose some would be obliged to seek such loans. I think we have to be honest with ourselves. On the one hand we are asking for lower interest rates, and then, on the other, we seek to increase them. We are suggesting that some people pay as high as 20 per cent interest on money borrowed, but that the farmers should be given money at a rate of 6 per cent or 7 per cent.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Whilst on that subject, would you like to return to the context and compare it with what was said in regard to where we were selling our products? You draw every red herring you possibly can across the trail.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I appreciate that, and I suggest it has no relevance whatever to the honourable member's argument, for the simple reason that he dealt with South Africa, the United States of America, and then, following an interjection, he dealt with the United Kingdom and Germany. Those are the fields he covered. We just cannot take the living standards of one country, its production, and all the other factors, and apply them to Australia. It would be stupid to say that this can be done.

The Hon. T. Knight: We would prefer to repay our loans at the same interest and principal rate as that being paid by the North Vietnamese Government for the money given it to rebuild a hospital bombed by the Allies.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I could possibly agree with the honourable member, but had we not been drawn into the Vietnam war, and had we not spent countless millions of dollars on munitions and equipment that were sent to Vietnam to fire ammunition at people—and, incidentally, it is the only war in which Australia has been involved that we lost—

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Of the wars that Australia was involved in, which were those that we won?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: According to history we were in two World Wars and we were supposed to have won them. Mr Lewis went on to say—

During the rise and fall of prices we should take some of the money which is earned when prices are high and put this into a fund which could back the farmers during the poor times.

That is very good; I do not disagree with that statement. However this has nothing to do with the Federal Government. The honourable member should try to get things straight.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: That could not fail.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: During this session, in every speech that has been made in this House, from the policy speech to the Budget speech—let the honourable member name it, it will be there—an attack has been made on the Australian Government. Even in the Governor's Speech, this occurred 13 times in 11 paragraphs. If the honourable member wants to keep on attacking the Australian Government, we will start referring to the Premier's pet phrase, "We will put things right". The question is: When is he going to put things right?

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: On looking at the unemployment figures I thought we were putting things right.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: We've tried to tell you that, but you would not believe us.

The PRESIDENT: Order! There are too many interjections. The Leader of the Opposition will address the Chair.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: In his speech, Mr Lewis went on to say—

The next problem concerns fuel and distances which it is necessary for country people to travel. I do not refer only to farmers, I refer to all people, because it is necessary for us to build up a rural community supported by agriculture or mining as the case may be; a community which can live in the same degree of comfort as their city cousins. I feel that freight concessions should be granted to prevent groceries and other necessities having to be marked up to such great levels.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I agree.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I agree, too, but since this Government has been in office it has increased rail freights.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: I thought the Federal Government would give us some assistance to bring down rail freights.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The honourable member castigates the Federal Government, but he conveniently forgets the tax increases this Government has imposed.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Who told the Premier to return to the State and do just that?

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: The Commonwealth Government offered to take over the railways.

The Hon. N. McNeill: And what would have happened to us if it had? Mr Cooley should keep quiet.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: How is it, then, that the Premier of Queensland has seen fit to make only one increase in taxes, and he hopes to get a balanced Budget? I think in South Australia only two increases in taxes have been made; that is according to what I have read. I think Bjelke-Petersen has increased only one tax and, as I have said, he hopes to have a balanced Budget. Of course he never stops criticising the Australian Government, either.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: He had to take over a maladministered Government.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I suggest if we did not have this extravagant manifesto, in all probability the State Government could come to the aid of the farmers, but as yet it has not done so.

Anyhow, there was hardly anything in the speech made by the honourable member that was worthy of comment, and probably the little bit of horseplay we have had has some reflection on the lack of value of the speech. It was for this reason that I thought I was wasting my time commenting on it. I said to myself, "Why should I suffer listening to this speech and having to make a reply? I will send the motion and the honourable member's speech to Senator Wriedt to see what he thinks of it."

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: I take it that you were impressed with it.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I thought this was the weakest motion I have ever heard in my life. The following is the letter I forwarded to Senator Wriedt—

I am enclosing a motion moved by the Hon. A. A. Lewis in the Legislative Council and the speech he made introducing this motion.

Although I consider the motion in the speech to be totally out of place in our House, I would still be grateful if you would examine it and offer any comments that may be pertinent when I reply to him on the 1st October, 1974.

I wrote that letter on the 20th September, and on the 27th September I received the following reply from Senator Wriedt—

I refer to your letter of 20 September 1974 in which you sought comments that may be of use to you in replying to a motion in the Legislative Council of Western Australia by the Honourable A. A. Lewis, M.L.C.

Briefly stated, the Australian Government's policy recognises the great contribution made by the rural sector to the national economy both as a provider of food for our growing population and as a substantial earner of foreign exchange. The Government is, therefore, neither hostile to the rural sector nor indifferent to its periodic difficulties and has given repeated assurances that it will continue to assist primary industries in need.

Indeed, the Government is very much aware of the unpredictable circumstances surrounding the rural sector, such as seasonal variations, world currency realignments, fluctuating international markets, gluts and shortages. However, difficulties arising from such circumstances are neither uncommon nor a recent development. Any objective judgment of the Government's rural policy needs to take into consideration the many favourable decisions which have been taken. Some of the Australian Government initiatives which are of direct assistance to primary producers are shown in the attached list.

The policy measures taken by the Government have been aimed at structuring rural enterprises on a commercial basis and making them more self-reliant and responsive to market trends. The Government is opposed to open-ended commitments which place no limit on Treasury allocation and to subsidies which are inconsistent with market prospects.

Although the Government has considered it necessary to remove or reduce certain taxation concessions available to primary producers, this has been done to encourage efficiency and improve equity both within the rural sector and between it and other sectors of the economy.

Part of the Government's re-assessment of rural policy was the commissioning of a report by a small expert group. This report, commonly referred to as the "Green Paper" has now been completed and is under examination. The report has been well received by industry representatives. Rural industry groups have been invited to submit comments for consideration by the Government.

The Government has also established the Industries Assistance Commission which, as an independent body, will hold public enquiries into long-term assistance measures and report to the Government on its findings. The Reports of the Commission will be published before the Government makes its decision so that meaningful public debate can occur.

The following matters of direct relevance to the rural sector have already been referred to the Commission:

Mushroom Industry
 Apple and Pear Industry
 Promotion of Primary Products
 Dried Vine Fruit Industry
 Rural Reconstruction (including
 Fruitgrowing Reconstruction)
 Nitrogenous Fertilisers Subsidy
 Superphosphate Production
 Bovine Brucellosis and Tuberculosis
 Slaughter Compensation
 Rural Research
 Dairy Industry
 New Land Farms in Western Australia

The Government's decision on the Petroleum Products Prices Scheme as from 1 August 1974 was taken within its overall desire to see that the economy's resources were allocated in an efficient and equitable way. I have attached a paper which gives details on the fuel subsidy, the reasons for the decision and the effects of the decision on prices, which may be of assistance to you.

I note that Mr. Lewis also raised the question of rural credit and drew attention to the availability of rural credit in some other countries. I should say that while it is of interest to look at what other countries consider necessary in this direction, it is not always valid nor meaningful to make direct comparisons as the circumstances prevailing in Australia are often quite different.

The Government has recognised the need of the rural sector for long-term finance to augment that available from the lending institutions. The Government has provided extensive allocations of funds for rural finance through the Commonwealth Development Bank, the Farm Development Loan Funds and the Rural Reconstruction Scheme.

You will appreciate, however, that the provision of long-term finance for primary producers must be balanced against the need to ensure that resources in the economy as a whole are allocated in such a way as to foster the attainment of the Government's platform objectives.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: That is what we are concerned about actually.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: To continue—

A further point of relevance in relation to credit is that monetary control is one means of lowering inflationary pressures.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: It is not doing very much good at the moment.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The letter continues—

Current restrictions have been imposed to reduce excessive demand for scarce resources.

The rural community has a very real interest in control being exercised over inflation. Frequently the measures adopted are unpopular but primary producers must appreciate the need to hold inflation rates in Australia at least at a level which maintains our competitive position with our overseas trading partners.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Like 21 per cent.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: You have been listening to Bob Hawke.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: To continue—

Of immediate relevance to our competitiveness with other countries is the decision by the Government to devalue the Australian exchange rate by 12% and to determine future rates by changes in an average of foreign currency values weighted in accordance with trading significance to Australia. This decision will be of particular benefit to the primary sector of the economy which is so dependent on overseas trade.

Turning to the recent Budget brought down by the Government, the Budget papers show that direct government subvention to the agricultural and pastoral industries during 1974-75 is estimated to be \$311.2 million, which represents an increase of \$14.1 million over that provided in 1973-74 and \$72.5 million over that provided in 1972-73. This does not take account of the recent decision by the Government to appropriate \$150 million for the Australian Wool Corporation to enable it to operate a minimum floor price scheme at wool auctions during the current selling season.

The Hon. T. O. Perry: Has that ever cost the Government anything in real cash?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: If I could stop on this point—

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: I wish you would, and sit down.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I really meant that I wanted to pause a moment on this point. Mr Lewis mentioned that the \$15 million being used was money which was made out of the profits of—

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: It was \$13 million, was it not? I would like you to be accurate.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: If the honourable member referred to \$13 million, I will accept it, because I am not referring to notes. I understood it to be \$15 million. If that be the case, we all agree; we know it is factual, because we can read also.

The Hon. J. Heitman: They are taking 7.6 per cent of the gross proceeds from farmers' wool sales to finance the 250c a kilo clean wool.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: However, the very next day after Mr Lewis moved his motion—it could have been the day after that—we read that, without any prompting from me, the Government induced another \$150 million for this purpose. At least Mr Lewis must be quite satisfied that he has done the right thing—

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: It is a start.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: —because what he was advocating was done two days after he made his speech.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: If they did everything I advocated one or two days after I had spoken, we would get somewhere.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: From the commencement of the letter, the honourable member should be able to appreciate that neither we nor the Australian Government are unsympathetic to farmers.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: You have to convince the farmers of that.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The letter continues—

A feature of the Australian Government's overall policy which is frequently disregarded by rural critics is that people living in country areas will benefit from the general advances being made in education, health and welfare fields. The Government is concerned with the Australian nation as a whole and with the welfare of all our people, which can hardly be regarded as an anti-rural attitude.

The Hon. V. J. Ferry: How do they get a living in the meantime?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: To continue—

I should also point out that the Government has made other allocations of funds that will be of benefit to country people generally. An example is the recently announced grants to local government bodies. A copy of the Prime Minister's statement is attached.

I will not be reading that. I hope someone else will do so. Perhaps I will give it to a member on the other side because my throat would not last that long. To continue—

I have attached copies of speeches made by the Prime Minister and myself in July this year which outline the Government's policy towards the rural sector. I hope these comments and attachments will be of assistance to you . . .

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: He was not nearly as scathing as you were, was he?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: He probably did not read it.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: You are probably right.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: For a speech which did not warrant any comment, you went to a great deal of trouble.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I am a little like Mr Clive Griffiths. I am quite thorough when I deal with matters.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: Thank you.

Sitting suspended from 6.06 to 7.30 p.m.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The attachment to Senator Wriedt's letter is headed "Government Initiatives and Assistance Measures for Primary Producers", and it gives the date of the decision, the description of the decision, the value of the assistance, and remarks.

In February, 1973, the first advance to wheatgrowers was increased to \$1.20 a bushel and the quota limit was raised; the value of the assistance was \$41 million and it was the only major increase in 15 years.

In May, 1973, the rural lending programme of the Development Bank was extended for new purposes; the value of the assistance was \$20 million in 1973-74.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Would you like to go into that wheat business a little further?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I am quoting from an attachment which was sent to me. The increased first advance to wheatgrowers was the only major increase in 15 years. If the honourable member wants to go into that further I suggest he get in touch with some of the Ministers in the Liberal Government because they did not make any increases.

In May, 1973, post-revaluation adjustment assistance was given to the fresh fruit and canned fruit industries; the value of the assistance was \$3.6 million.

Farm development loan funds were replenished by \$41 million in July, 1973, and by \$36.3 million in August, 1974, making a total of \$77.3 million.

In August, 1973, education allowances for isolated children were instituted to the value of \$9.8 million, with retrospective operation to February, 1973.

In October, 1973, assistance was given to control a plague of locusts; the value of the assistance was \$500 000.

In December, 1973, a green paper on rural policy was commissioned.

In January, 1974, the Industries Assistance Commission was established, and 11 rural references have been made to the commission to date. I think I quoted those earlier.

In January, 1974, stabilisation arrangements were made for the apple and pear industries to the value of \$2.75 million in 1973-74, this being an expansion of arrangements which existed at that time.

In February and March, 1974, price support schemes were instituted for apples and pears exported to Europe during the 1974 season; the value of the assistance was \$2.6 million and it applied only to Tasmania, Western Australia, and Queensland.

In April, 1974, the Australian Dairy Adjustment Programme was established, to the value of \$28 million.

In April, 1974, an animal health laboratory was established, to the value of \$56 million.

In July, 1974, the Rural Reconstruction Scheme was extended until the 30th June, 1976; the value of the assistance was \$36 million in 1973-74 and \$28 million in 1974-75.

In July, 1974, the Fruitgrowing Reconstruction Scheme was extended until the 31st December, 1973; the value of the assistance was \$2.3 million, which represented unused funds from the original allocation of \$4.6 million.

In August, 1974, the floor price support scheme was established for the Australian Wool Corporation; the value of the assistance was \$150 million.

In August, 1974, a National Rural Advisory Council was established, and approval was also given to the establishment of a Bureau of Animal Health. Research programmes for many rural industries have been expanded and assistance has been extended, costing over \$30 million in 1973-74; to date expenditure of \$9.8 million has been announced for 1974-75. Initiative has been taken in establishing new market outlets for Australian primary products, of which examples are the promotion of long-term agreements for wheat and sugar to China. It is all very well to criticise and give one side of the story.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: How do the central Government's sales to China compare with those in the two years before it came into office?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I am relying on memory here.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: They were less.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: The market dried up because, it will be recalled, the previous sales by the Liberal Government were made on credit.

The Hon. J. Heitman: How much of this money is only loan money on which interest must be paid?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: According to the information I have been given, probably the advance on wheat—

The Hon. J. Heitman: That has to be paid back.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I said it was an advance.

The Hon. J. Heitman: What about the Rural Reconstruction Scheme? That money is only on loan.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That is right, but surely the honourable member can interpret the meaning of the words I have read out. I have given a list of the assistance the Australian Government has provided.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: What happened to the juice industry in Bridgetown?

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: Did the Australian Government establish the sale of wheat to China?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: It did not establish it but at least it has gone back to renegotiate.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: You are quite right in what you are saying. The first sales were made in 1961.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: But they did not continue.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I return to the green paper entitled "Rural Policy in Australia" which is a report to the Prime Minister by a working group in May, 1974. As there has been some criticism of the discontinuance of the superphosphate bounty, I think I should read paragraph 5.46 of the paper, which states—

A further, and in the long term potentially important, limitation of input subsidies of taxation concessions is that they encourage an imbalance in the use of inputs. If the problem is that the input's price is rising, i.e. it is becoming scarcer, a subsidy encourages freer use of a commodity that the market suggests should be used more economically. Moreover, it discourages research into methods of substituting for the input or for using it more efficiently and discourages the adoption of management practices which economise in its use—the more nitrogen fertiliser is subsidised the more it will be used, in place of a legume crop or pasture, with possibly adverse consequences for soil structure.

As my throat is giving out, I will not continue to quote from the green paper. As most members know, superphosphate is a very rare commodity. Farmers have told me, and I think members will admit, that some people misuse superphosphate. It is becoming scarce throughout the world and it will become dearer. Therefore, more responsible use must be made of it. Knowing very little about farming I plead ignorance; but I have seen people putting superphosphate on paddocks in February.

The Hon. J. Heitman: That is for sure, because they would not get the bulk feed for their stock.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I happened to be on a property in the Kellerberrin area when a discussion took place between two farmers. One said to the other, "You have wasted your super." The other replied, "I have been doing it for years."

The Hon. T. O. Perry: Have you seen the super trials done by the Department of Agriculture?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That very night a severe dust storm blew up and I would say that farmer lost 95 per cent of his super.

The Hon. J. Heitman: But his next door neighbour would get it.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Easy come, easy go. That is what he is trying to prove to you.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: This is a matter for discussion with the Industries Assistance Commission. It has already been referred to the commission by Western Australia but no final decision has yet been made on it.

Let us turn from the condemnation of the Federal Government. To the best of my knowledge, only two taxes or charges affecting farmers have not been increased; they are the fee for a dog license and the TAB charge. They are about the only charges the State Government has not increased up to date. It has put up electricity charges—

The Hon. J. Heitman: You did the same thing, did you not?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: —and rail freights. It has increased water rates, which the Tonkin Government reduced. Hospital charges, vehicle registration and license fees, electricity charges, water rates, and excess water rates have been increased. The 3 per cent which the Fremantle Port Authority must now pay into Consolidated Revenue will also increase farmers' charges. Shipping freights, in turn, have been increased by the Government, and the port charges will be reflected to some extent in the charges for the handling of produce and farmers' implements and supplies through the port.

Farmers should be most unhappy with the State Government which has increased all these charges. As I said earlier, I am dissatisfied with the content of the motion and the manner of its introduction. This motion should rightly have been introduced into the Federal House of Representatives. I intend to move to delete all the words after the word "the" in the second line with a view to inserting the following words—

State Government in continuing to blame the Australian Government for its own failure to put things right as promised in its Policy Speech.

The motion would then read—

That this House deplores the attitude of the State Government in continuing to blame the Australian Government for its own failure to put things right as promised in its Policy Speech.

Amendment to Motion

I move an amendment—

That all words after the word "the" in line 2 be deleted.

THE HON. R. T. LEESON (South-East) [7.47 p.m.]: The Leader of the Opposition has quite rightly moved this amendment. I well recall, and I know all members here can also recall, the many statements that were made in another place and in public about the intentions of the present State Government if it came to power. Of course, we all know what has happened. As yet we have seen no results.

When the Labor Government was in power prior to March of this year, the then Leader of the Opposition criticised constantly the Government of the day for not taking the initiative and doing something for the State of Western Australia without relying on the support of the Australian Government. Of course, it is well known that the Tonkin Government did all in its power to try to alleviate the problems of the rural sector, the mining sector, and various other industries in Western Australia. I do not think anyone will deny that. We all know that to some degree the States are handicapped in what they can do. Probably the major reason for the difficulties of the rural industries was the revaluations which took place over a period of time in various stages. Eventually it reached about 25 per cent—

The Hon. J. Heitman: Nearer 45 per cent.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: I thought the figure was 25 per cent.

The Hon. J. Heitman: But then you had to take into account the Japanese revaluation.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: We do not sell everything to Japan. I believe the correct figure is 25 per cent in relation to the dollar. As I said before, this revaluation hit the rural sector fairly hard, and nobody denies that. However, we must remember that the Federal Government does not represent any one particular section of the community and that it has to look at the economy in a broad sense. The Australian Government attempted to assist as many people as it could, although in the long term some sections of the community were disadvantaged.

The Hon. T. O. Perry: Revaluation affected everyone in the community adversely.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: I do not agree with Mr Perry, because even today many imported goods are a great deal cheaper than they were two or three years ago, and, of course, the Australian Government was responsible for tariff cuts. Everyone talks about inflation, but many imported television sets and machinery are cheaper today than they were a few years ago.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: They are cheaper if you can get a destroyer to bring them home.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: With our own shipping line we will bring anything home.

The PRESIDENT: I am obliged to remind the honourable member that the matter to which he must address himself is the amendment moved by the Hon. R. Thompson. The question before the House is to delete all the words after the word "the" in line 2 of the motion.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: Well, that is fairly broad, Mr. President.

The PRESIDENT: The amendment is not broad; in fact it is quite definite. The honourable member must keep to the amendment before the Chair. You cannot canvass the contents of the original motion when speaking to the amendment.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: We, on this side of the House, are still waiting for the State Government to do something to help the people it says it represents. When we look to see what action has been taken, all we can see is increases in prices, and particularly in country areas. No charges have come down; and no concessions have been granted. Government members do not seem to be doing much to alleviate the problems; all they do is try to blame someone else. Government members should attempt to do something for the people they represent. I support the amendment.

Point of Order

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I certainly oppose the amendment, but we must bear in mind your reminder to the previous speaker, Mr President, that we are debating the question: To delete all the words after the word "the" in the second line, with a view to inserting other words. Before embarking on a discussion of the amendment, I ask you, Mr President, whether the amendment is in fact proper and acceptable because it departs entirely from the original motion. Therefore, I believe it may well be considered to be out of order and I ask for your view on this matter.

President's Ruling

The PRESIDENT: Honourable members, the motion moved by the Hon. A. A. Lewis, although specific in its terms, has permitted a very wide range of debate on the subject matter. Having listened to the various speakers, I say without fear of

contradiction, that a whole field of enterprise has been discussed under the terms of the motion.

As I see it, the amendment attempts to move the blame—if there is any blame, and I do not pass an opinion about that—from the Federal Government to the State Government. I believe it would be better for me not to rule the amendment out of order, but to continue to allow discussion on the amendment to the motion as long as the debate is kept to the subject matter before the House; that is, the amendment to the motion.

Debate (on amendment to motion) Resumed

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West—Minister for Justice) [7.55 p.m.]: I accept your view, of course, Sir, and therefore I propose to limit myself to the question before the Chair; that is, whether the words proposed to be deleted should be deleted.

In addressing myself to that question, I simply direct the attention of the House to the fact that I believe this amendment is an obvious attempt to divert attention from the main purpose of the original motion. I can understand the wish of the Leader of the Opposition to try to divert attention from the shortcomings of the Federal Government, the subject matter of the original debate.

The Hon. R. Thompson: We're putting the blame where it lies.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: It is absolutely inconceivable to me that in the present state of the economy of Australia and of Western Australia, and particularly in relation to the primary industries, the Leader of the Opposition can make such an interjection. I realise he does not understand the true situation because by his own admission he knows very little about farming. If he did know anything about it, he would have a far greater appreciation of the effects of the policies of the Federal Government on rural industry. For that reason I am opposed to the deletion of any of the words of the motion.

It is quite useless for the Leader of the Opposition to claim, as he did, that this matter ought to have been discussed in Federal Parliament. That would be a useless exercise because he knows as well as everyone else that this matter has received a great deal of attention in Federal Parliament. He quoted tonight from the green paper, but how did that green paper come about? It came about because of the recognition by the Federal Parliament and Government that great problems existed. We must bear in mind—and the Leader of the Opposition knows this full well—that when the Federal Government came into office it admitted it had no

rural policy. Presumably it adopted stop-gap measures to give time to allow the preparation of a policy. To do this, the green paper was prepared.

The Hon. R. T. Leeson: Are you talking to the original motion or the amendment?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I know something about the green paper, because I recall that many industries throughout Australia were invited to produce submissions for the working committee.

The PRESIDENT: I am sorry to interrupt but I do not think the Minister is keeping to the amendment.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: My reason for referring to the green paper is that I believe it shows a justification for my view that the words should not be deleted. The deletion of the words from the motion would divert attention from the very subject matter of the motion which queried the rural policies of the Federal Government. In order to substantiate an argument as to why these words should not be deleted, it becomes necessary for me to make certain allusions.

However, I will not embark on that question to any great length, in view of the fact that you have called me to order, Mr President. If we were to agree to this amendment, we would be denied the further opportunity to examine the matters raised in the original motion. It is clear that there should be every possible opportunity of examining this whole question, if for no other reason than to try eventually to prevail upon the Federal Government to give some better recognition to the circumstances in which the rural industries find themselves and which, in fact, are a consequence of the policies which have been adopted by the Federal Government.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: Why did you bury it for six weeks?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: In view of your advice on this question, Mr President, I will not elaborate any further. I certainly could elaborate at length on the whole question of the impact of Federal policies on rural industries. The fact remains that there is a great need to give the greatest possible airing to these problems, and not to provide for the discussion which was envisaged by the mover of the original motion would be to deny a proper expression of the people who are experiencing tremendous problems at present. These problems of course, are spreading and are being shared directly and indirectly, by the entire population of Western Australia.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Can you tell me when you are going to put things right, as was promised in the Liberal Party policy speech? When are you going to start?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I am sure the Leader of the Opposition would be the last person ever to acknowledge that anything

has been put right. The first thing that was put right, of course, was that there was a change of Government. I would be appalled, and I am sure the people of Western Australia would be appalled, if the rural industries—the subject of the original motion—were subjected to a Government which adhered to the same principles and policies as are adopted by the Federal Government.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Tell us what you have done for the rural industries since you have been in Government?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: What have we done for the rural industries?

The Hon. R. Thompson: Yes, other than put up charges.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: In the first instance, we have provided to the people of Western Australia a feeling of security; they know they have a Government which understands their industries.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Can they spend that feeling of confidence at the bank?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: The Government they have is one that understands their circumstances and is prepared to act on their behalf; certainly, that is not a situation to which they had become accustomed over the last couple of years.

The Hon. R. Thompson: But no help has been provided.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: As I said, the Leader of the Opposition would be the last person to acknowledge that any form of assistance had been provided.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Tell us what help has been provided.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I have already indicated what help we have given.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Tell us one thing you have done to help the farmers—one constructive thing.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I could go on for a considerable time doing that.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I want only one.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: If the Leader of the Opposition would just remain quiet for a moment, I would be prepared to discuss that question. I acknowledge the fact that charges have been increased; nobody regrets that more than we do. However, there is no question about the fact that, by virtue of the circumstances imposed upon us by the Federal Government, these increased charges were necessary. We have attempted to bring to the notice of the Federal Government the situation which it has created. One cannot blame the State Government for these increased charges when in fact they were imposed under the conditions and instructions laid down by the Federal Government.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Did the Tonkin Government assist the farming community from the State coffers when the farming community was in trouble in 1971-72?

The Hon. N. McNEILL: We remember when the Tonkin Government came into office.

The Hon. R. Thompson: We helped them financially, and you know it.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: We remember the great promises that were made and the advertisements which appeared at the time. To instance just one, I recall the advertisement showing money growing on trees, indicating the Labor Party was going to restore prosperity to the farmers. What did the Tonkin Government do? One proposal which comes to mind was the scheme to provide a minimum income and return to the farmers. How far did it get with that one? It was going to provide a tremendous amount of money to rural industries.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That was a Commonwealth policy. I think you are getting your policies mixed up.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I am not getting mixed up at all. I remember this very clearly.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Your memory is all wrong.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I think your memory is slipping.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I am becoming convinced that the Leader of the Opposition wants to encourage the Minister not to keep to the amendment.

The Hon. N. McNEILL: I can understand that, Mr President; the Leader of the Opposition has moved his amendment in order to divert attention away from the subject originally under discussion; but, in the course of his interjections, he is certainly directing attention back to a consideration of that very question.

I will not delay the House any further. Clearly the amendment which has been moved is quite unacceptable in the circumstances. I believe further opportunity should be given us to examine the question placed before this House in the original motion moved by the Hon. A. A. Lewis. Therefore, I oppose the amendment.

THE HON. H. W. GAYFER (Central) [8.07 p.m.]: In the first instance, having sized up the amendment, and without disagreeing with your ruling, Mr President, it appears to me that the amendment does not necessarily follow the tenor of the debate. I think it will have a tendency to completely circumvent the original intention of the motion.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That is not our intention.

The Hon. H. W. GAYFER: No, it would not be the intention of the honourable member. My advice to Mr Thompson would be to vote against his own amendment and then move it at the appropriate time, as a separate motion, after the original motion is carried. Mr Thompson said he expected the original motion would be carried; therefore, he or some of his colleagues must be going to vote for it. Once the original motion is carried, Mr Thompson could come in and say, "Of course, if the Federal Government is to blame, the State Government is also to blame." I can see no point in discussing this further; I believe it is entirely out of order. I caught the look you just gave me, Mr President, and I apologise; it is not out of order. However, I believe that Mr Thompson would have been better advised to hold his motion up his sleeve until the original motion had been carried, at which time he could have moved his motion. I know I am not allowed to discuss the original motion in detail, but I must refer to it.

The PRESIDENT: In no detail.

The Hon. H. W. GAYFER: I must be able to refer to it to show where I think the amendment is at variance.

The PRESIDENT: The honourable member must address himself to the question before the Chair which is that the words to be deleted be deleted.

The Hon. H. W. GAYFER: That is right, Mr President. If we were to agree to the amendment, we would be removing from the original motion the marriage of the problem to the Australian sphere, which is the vital part of the original motion. Inadvertently, Mr Thompson would shift the blame onto the State Government, which I am sure is not his intention. My colleagues no doubt would agree with me on that point.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: We only want you to put things right; there is nothing wrong with that.

The Hon. H. W. GAYFER: I believe in all sincerity that Mr Thompson's amendment represents a genuine attempt to highlight both positions. Having said in the first place that he expects the first motion to be carried, he is admitting that the situation is wrong and that the motion should be carried. Having seen the original motion passed, he could then seek the support of the House for his motion; that would be the correct form to adopt. I cannot support the amendment as I do not think it is appropriate to the present situation.

THE HON. R. F. CLAUGHTON (North Metropolitan) [8.11 p.m.]: I can understand Mr Gayfer coming in at that time, to save the Leader of the House further embarrassment. During his brief speech,

in which he was challenged to name just one thing that this State Government had done for the farmers the Minister for Justice was at a complete loss to do so. This State Government should stop whipping the socialist, centralist bogey, and all those other things it needs to use to distract attention from its own incompetence and get down to some good, solid work in trying to resolve the problems faced by Western Australia. The State Government is not doing justice to itself or to the state in continuing to adopt this line. I know that advice is quite gratuitous; if we are to judge from what members opposite have done in the past, they are not likely to accept it. This would be rather sad for Western Australia.

The Government's attack on the Australian Government began with the Speech it wrote for the Governor on the opening of this Parliament. A number of references to the Commonwealth were made in that Speech. This more or less set the pattern. During the same Speech, we heard very little of what this Government proposed to do to set about correcting what it believed were problem areas.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: Are you dealing with the amendment?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Yes; the President would point it out if this were not the case. During the election campaign the then Opposition was hard pressed to find anything to criticise about the work the Tonkin Government was doing. Yet members opposite came up with the slogan, "We will put things right." One of the early sections of the election manifesto of the Liberal Party, which is contained in a booklet entitled *Liberal Policy 1974-77* is headed, "Improving Commonwealth-State Relations" and purports to set out the intentions of the Liberal Party to work towards greater co-operation and co-ordination with the Australian Government. The policy speech states that the Liberal Party intends to set about improving Commonwealth-State relations.

The Hon. N. McNeill: Are you debating the amendment before the Chair?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The amendment is that the word "the" be deleted, so I have to give reasons why that should be done.

The Hon. N. McNeill: Do you say the amendment is to delete the "the" and not all words after "the"?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The only way we can persuade members to delete the word is to present arguments for the inclusion of the words to be inserted. We must present as strong an argument as we can.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: You say it is to delete the word "the"?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I shall present my argument in the course of my presentation. The responsibility rests with the Government to set its own house in order.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: This is all about deleting the word "the"?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: In a speech on the previous occasion I was reminded that I should not indulge in tedious repetition, so on this occasion I shall not repeat the argument I have just advanced to Mr McNeill. I hope Mr Lewis will listen.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: I am listening, but you said the amendment was to delete the word "the". That is not the amendment before the Chair.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: In an early part of its policy speech the Liberal Party declared that it would set about to improve Commonwealth-State relations. Since the Speech made by the Governor on the opening day of this session there has been carping criticism by members opposite of the Australian Government and its actions.

The Hon. N. McNeill: Can you tell us why the words ought to be deleted?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I thought I was doing that. I regret the Minister does not understand, just as he did not understand when he dealt with the Australian Government and its policies.

The Hon. N. McNeill: I deferred to the President's request.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: As I shall also defer to the President should he call me to order. I have just referred to the first matter in which we find there is a marked divergence between the stated intentions of this Government and what it has done.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I must remind the honourable member that he must keep to the amendment before the Chair; and the amendment is that the words to be deleted be deleted. If the words are deleted then it is competent for members to address themselves to the words that will be inserted. Until the words are deleted members cannot carry on a discussion firstly about the motion, and secondly about the total amendment foreshadowed. The question before the Chair is that the words to be deleted be deleted.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I am doing my best to keep within the confines of that subject. In giving reasons for the deletion of the words it is almost impossible not to make reference to the words proposed to be inserted. What argument anyone can put up for the deletion of the word "the" in that context is hard to imagine.

The Hon. N. McNeill: You are wrong. The amendment does not seek to delete the word "the".

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: It is completely irrelevant.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I meant the deletion of all words after the word "the".

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Now that you are right I am sure members opposite will not continue to interject.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: You admit you were wrong before?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I am never reluctant to admit a mistake. I have never suffered a loss of dignity or respect from admitting mistakes. I say that people who admit their mistakes are respected for doing so. I have been referring to the deletion of all words after the word "the". We cannot persuade anybody to our point of view unless we are able to put forward arguments that cover the reasons for the deletion.

To come back to the point I was making, this Government seeks to put things right, but it has not made a great deal of impression in improving Commonwealth-State relations. This is an extremely important field. The policy speech of the Liberal Party also contained proposals for dealing with the problem of inflation, a subject which has received a great deal of debate in recent times.

I say that each Government must operate within the field for which it is responsible. Of course, the Commonwealth Government is responsible for the economic management of the whole of Australia, and the State Government is responsible for economic management within Western Australia where it has jurisdiction. One would expect the State Government to set about taking action to promote stability, productivity, and a general air of confidence within the borders of the State. One could imagine a number of steps the Government could take, but one could hardly say that the proposal contained in the Governor's Speech to introduce a Bill to amend the Fuel, Energy and Power Resources Act would inspire a great deal of confidence in the Government.

The PRESIDENT: Order! that subject has nothing to do with the amendment before the Chair, and I think the honourable member knows that.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I was referring to the Governor's Speech, but I accept your reprimand, Mr President.

The Hon. N. McNeill: The subject we are debating has given the farmers a great deal of encouragement.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: We could look at specific policies announced by this Government to stabilise prices within the State. A question was asked recently about the increase in the price of bread. This is in an area over which the State Government has a reasonable measure of control, yet it allowed the price of bread to be increased to an inflationary degree. Of course, the increase was far in excess of the amount which was needed to cover wage increases.

The Hon. N. McNeill: I thought that was subject to price fixing. In other words, you are saying the prices tribunal does not keep prices down.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: The State Government has some say in such price increases, but it did not express concern publicly in allowing the increase in the price of bread to be effected. On the question of interest rates on housing loans the Government has set up some sort of arrangement.

The Hon. N. McNeill: Will you elaborate a little more on the subject of interest rates for homes?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: A group within the community has been agitating for a reduction in the interest rates for housing. We know the Government has done something, but this has not proved to be effective.

The Hon. N. McNeill: It has not been for want of making approaches to the Federal Minister for Housing (Mr Johnson).

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: We are all aware that a large building company in this State has gone to the wall; obviously in that respect the Government has not put things right.

The Hon. N. McNeill: Do you mean to tell me that you dare to raise this subject in this Parliament?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: A confrontation has arisen over the proposal to establish a shopping centre at Whitfords, because the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority has not given its approval. Whatever the reasons for its not giving approval, the Government has not put things right in that respect. In whichever direction we look we find a great deal of inactivity on the part of the Government. A great number of words have flowed from the Government as to what it would do, but when it comes to tin tacks we find that it has done very little, as the Minister for Justice showed appallingly when he was asked about the steps taken by this Government to assist the people of the rural areas.

The Hon. N. McNeill: I am prepared to discuss that question when the President allows discussion on the subject.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: What has that to do with the amendment?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: We say that all words after "the" should be deleted. The members on the Government side are blaming the Federal Government for lack of appreciation of the problems confronting the primary producers of Western Australia. We are suggesting that all the words after the word "the" be deleted and other words be inserted; so that if the amendment is agreed to the motion will be to the effect that the House deplores the attitude of the State Government in continuing to blame the Australian Government for its own failure to put things right, as promised in its policy speech.

There is, indeed, a whole range of matters in respect of which the State Government has failed dismally. Those matters relate to areas over which the Government has control. Instead of taking steps to reduce costs in the rural areas and to obviate further cost pressures, the Government has introduced increased fees and charges. Such action by the Government will increase the cost structure and the rate of inflation.

I could go on at great length in mentioning the steps which this Government said it would take. The policy speech of the Liberal Party contained several pages outlining the steps it promised to take. One proposal was to stop the housing crisis. The Government has been in office since the end of March last. If there was not a crisis at the end of March then there certainly is a crisis today.

The Hon. N. McNeill: Are you saying the Federal Government had no responsibility in that field?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: Members opposite say the State Government has no responsibility. That is typical of members opposite!

The Hon. N. McNeill: Did I say that?

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: I refer to the slogan which the Minister has mentioned. It is to this effect; "Don't blame me." This epitomises the ethos of the Liberal Party. It is not prepared to accept responsibility and to say, "This is what I should be doing." That has not happened, but we have heard empty words as well as a lot of propaganda flowing from the Government.

The Hon. N. McNeill: We are very happy to have the responsibility, but the Federal Minister will not allow us to assume it.

The Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON: As I am not allowed to proceed with my argument for the insertion of the proposed words, I conclude my remarks by supporting the amendment.

THE HON. S. J. DELLAR (Lower North) [8.30 p.m.]: I support the amendment moved by my leader, the purpose of which is to change the motion moved by Mr Lewis. If the amendment is agreed to the motion will read—

That this House deplores the attitude of the State Government in continuing to blame the Australian Government for its own failure to put things right as promised in its Policy Speech.

Before the last State election that was the theme song of the Liberal Party: If elected it would put things right. By interjection, during the course of debate in this House, the question was asked as to whether things had been put right and the answer given was, "They have put things right". To that answer, I added the word "up".

Point of Order

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: On a point of order, Mr President, is the member discussing whether the words should be deleted? It appears the honourable member is going into a speech about what the present Government should have done.

The PRESIDENT: I uphold the point of order. I have already pointed out on three occasions that the question before the House is that the words to be deleted be deleted. That is the subject matter of the motion.

Debate (on amendment to motion) Resumed

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: Mr President, I thank you for that advice, but I understood you to say I am to debate the question as to whether the words should be deleted. It has been said that we cannot go back and speak to what is contained in the motion because we have to discuss what words will be substituted once the words proposed to be deleted are deleted. My interpretation is that we are discussing whether the words should be deleted.

The PRESIDENT: The time to talk about the words to be added is when the motion to add the words is put. If the words to be deleted are deleted then the second question will be put to the House.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: Then, we will talk to the fact that the words proposed to be deleted be deleted.

The PRESIDENT: If the honourable member will speak to those words he will satisfy me.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: The words we desire to delete are all words after "the" in the second line of the motion.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: An interesting exercise.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: Those words are—

Federal Government to rural areas and in particular its obvious lack of appreciation of the problems confronting the primary producers of Western Australia.

I support the move by my leader to delete those words. The words to be deleted refer to the attitude of the Federal Government towards rural areas in this State. I understand that if the words are not deleted we will not have an opportunity to discuss the words which my leader intends to substitute and which refer to the failure of the present Government to put things right.

The PRESIDENT: The amendment is in two sections. We are now dealing with the first section which is to delete certain words. I do not know how many times it is necessary for me to remind members of the subject matter under discussion.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: Thank you, Mr President. The present Government has blamed its failure to do certain things on the attitude of the Federal Government. I will get back to the attitude of the Federal Government towards rural areas.

The PRESIDENT: Order! We are discussing the deletion of the words.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: I find it rather difficult to speak to those few words.

The PRESIDENT: I am sorry, I cannot help the honourable member. My duty is to keep the discussion to the subject matter before the Chair.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: Thank you, Mr President. If we look at the words proposed to be deleted, I believe they should be deleted. The Federal Government's attitude, as mentioned in those words, has been misinterpreted. I believe the Federal Government has a responsible attitude to the rural areas of this State, and it is interesting to note that the words proposed to be deleted refer only to that attitude in respect of primary producers.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Mr Don Dunstan does not think it has a responsible attitude.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Now we have a third Government in the debate; Federal, State, and now South Australia.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: We do tend to use this place to criticise different aspects of government in Australia. It is not unusual that the words proposed to be deleted have been included in the motion and, for that reason, I argue they should be deleted. Since 1972 we have witnessed continual reference to the Federal Government and in all respects the references have been to the attitude of the Federal Government towards farming areas.

I will use the situation of the superphosphate bounty. That did not only apply to farmers in Western Australia, but to every other person in Australia.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: The member should be talking about the deletion of the words.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I am sure he can manage without the assistance of the member opposite.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: The claim that the superphosphate bounty applied only to farmers is not true because it applied to all primary producers in Australia.

The Hon. N. McNeill: No, it did not.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: Most of them, in respect of the farming community.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It was more disastrous to our farmers.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: It is claimed the attitude of the Federal Government will cause further hardship in rural areas and Mr Lewis has claimed that 30 per cent of the farmers will go broke next financial year, as will 30 per cent of the small businesses in country towns which depend on the farmers for their livelihood. I question whether or not that will be the case. How many wheat farms are for sale on the market at the present time? If they are for sale, are they at a reduced acreage price?

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: Yes.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: I am sure that Mr David Wordsworth, when he gets up to speak, will talk about the words which it is proposed should be deleted.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Properties can now be bought for about half the price they were a few years ago.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: The attitude of the Federal Government is not against the farming areas and that is why we believe the words proposed to be deleted should be deleted. The attitude of the Australian Labor Party is not anti-rural; it does not represent only one sector of the community.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It has fooled about 100 per cent of the rural population.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: That may be so; I do not know. The attitude of the Australian Labor Party, both Federal and State, is not anti-rural. In both the State and Federal platforms there is a multitude of policies we consider should be implemented to assist rural areas. Now those policies are in the course of implementation we are told our attitude towards rural areas is wrong. In referring to the words proposed to be deleted, it is necessary for me to correct this impression.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: The member should look for his magic wand because that is what he will need to correct or change that impression.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: The attitude of the Federal Government to rural areas in Western Australia—and these are some of the words proposed to be deleted—has been criticised. I have with me a copy of a speech delivered by the Prime Minister of Australia (Mr Whitlam).

The PRESIDENT: Order, please! I just cannot allow the honourable member to quote Mr Whitlam's speech. It has nothing whatsoever to do with the deletion of the words.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: Thank you, Mr President. I find myself in a similar situation to that of Mr Gayfer: a little tied up at present. I thought I had the right interpretation on how we were to debate this issue. However, I bow to your ruling, Mr President, and I support the move for the deletion of the words.

The Hon. N. McNeill: Now the member understands why I could not answer Mr Thompson.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: I trust members will see fit to agree to the deletion of the words in order that we may debate the next motion. It is obvious, if the words are not deleted, that will be the end of the situation as far as we are concerned tonight. Mr Gayfer said it is obvious that the motion, in its original form, will pass this House. He gave the impression, however, that if it were passed by this House my leader would have agreed with it.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: That is not what he said.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: He said it is obvious that with the numbers the motion would pass through this House.

The Hon. S. J. DELLAR: We have not heard any argument put forward against the deletion of the words. We have heard some ranting by Mr Lewis and some words of advice from Mr Gayfer. I believe the words should be deleted in order that we may discuss the next issue.

THE HON. D. K. DANS (South Metropolitan) [8.40 p.m.]: I rise to support the amendment moved by my leader, Mr Ron Thompson, to delete from the motion moved by Mr Lewis all words after the word "the" in the second line. You, Mr President, would agree with me that it is a pretty narrow confine in which one must speak in order to support the removal of those words. Of course, I do realise that you have been reasonably—or very—patient in allowing members to wander around a little.

In dealing with this subject, which is to remove all words after the word "the" in the second line of the motion, I will refer

to the words which it is proposed to delete. They are—

Federal Government to rural areas and in particular its obvious lack of appreciation of the problems confronting the primary producers of Western Australia.

We must start to think of the people about whom we are speaking. They are the primary producers of the country and, in particular, the primary producers of this State. We are dealing with a class of people who believe in the individualisation of their profits and the socialisation of their losses. That is a fact!

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: It has nothing to do with the deletion of the words.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: It has a great deal to do with the deletion of the words because that is the point we are proceeding from. I have to refer to some of the remarks made by the Leader of the House, the Hon. Neil McNeill, when he said it is absolutely useless to put forward this kind of proposal in the Federal House. If it is useless in that House, it is equally or doubly useless here.

If the words proposed to be deleted are deleted and, at a later stage, the words proposed to be inserted are inserted, the motion would be more in keeping with the purpose of this House.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: Our purpose is to look after our electors.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I am very grateful for the interjection from Mr Wordsworth. However, I am certain I could make a speech without his assistance. The words which it is proposed to delete are—

Federal Government to rural areas—

The Hon. J. Heitman: I think we would like to delete the Federal Government.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: After listening to all this ranting and raving I wonder if members opposite will tell us what the policy will be when they take over the reins of Federal Government, which will certainly happen one of these days. I will be interested to see what happens.

The Hon. D. J. Wordsworth: It will be a good start to just get back where we were.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: The Government told the people of this State it would put things right but the moment it gets into office it moves a motion such as the one now before us, and which will have no effect whatsoever. The words to be deleted are—

Federal Government to rural areas and in particular its obvious lack of appreciation of the problems confronting the primary producers of Western Australia.

Just what does that mean?

The PRESIDENT: It means the member is not keeping to the motion.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I would like to keep to the motion.

The PRESIDENT: The question before the Chair is that the words to be deleted be deleted.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: I am trying to speak to those words.

The PRESIDENT: As the honourable member said, I have been patient but my patience is running out.

The Hon. D. K. DANS: That is a difficulty of having to speak well into the debate, Mr President. Your patience is running out because everyone else has exhausted it.

If members give serious consideration to the amendment moved by Mr Ron Thompson, to delete certain words, they would support it, because if the other words were added the motion would at least make more sense to the people outside. While these words remain in the motion it does not convince anyone; it only adds to the general feeling in the community as to the sham that is going on here now; because if the words are allowed to remain in the motion they will only highlight the shambles in which the Government finds itself, particularly when it has to draw on all kinds of irrelevant material to confuse and delay any action that should be taken by the State Government.

I would urge members to vote for the deletion of the words in question, and at a later stage I urge them to support the words Mr Thompson intends to add.

THE HON. GRACE VAUGHAN (South-East Metropolitan) [8.46 p.m.]: I support the motion to have the words deleted, because I believe that all the words following are a smoke screen; they are, in fact, hiding the obvious lack of initiative shown by this Government, and are putting forward in its stead the scapegoat and the excuse that the Federal Government is responsible for anything and everything that goes wrong in this State.

On the one hand members of this House are continually emphasising the importance of the State Government, while on the other they seem to trace anything that goes wrong to the policy of the Australian Government.

I consider these things are irreconcilable. If we are to say the Federal Government must be blamed for everything that goes wrong, then surely everything it does must be also laid at the door of the Australian Government.

It seems to me that the wording of the motion suggested by Mr Lewis does in fact place a negative approach before the House; it seems to say, "Let us forget what we are doing ourselves."

The PRESIDENT: Order! Mr Lewis' motion is not under discussion. The question under discussion is that the words to be deleted be deleted.

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: That is so, Mr President. While the words in the motion moved by Mr Lewis, which we want to have deleted, are such that point to the Australian Government as a scapegoat for whatever goes wrong, surely this House should be looking at means which are positive, whether or not they please members on either side of the House and those who are decrying somebody else as being the great ogre, the thing to be frightened of, the unnamed things it is going to do to try to destroy the State.

It seems to me that from the beginning this has been a self-fulfilling prophecy. From the very beginning this Government has said, "The Australian Government is no good; it will not do any good in Western Australia", and so on. If we believe sincerely enough that a certain thing will happen, it certainly will happen. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

From what I can see, every time the Premier makes a statement and says that something has gone wrong, he endeavours to lay the blame at the door of the Australian Government; and he is abetted by his Ministers of the Cabinet who say, "Yes, the Australian Government is certainly responsible." I do not accuse these Ministers of insincerity, but if they are sincere the self-fulfilling prophecy will certainly eventuate. There is nothing surer than that.

Accordingly, in deleting these words, the House will be showing a very positive approach to the problems that are occurring. I know you will not allow me to do the things I want to do, Mr President, but I did want to emphasise some of the good things that have been done by the Australian Government for the rural sector.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: You could slip them in: it would not take long!

The Hon. R. Thompson: When you get to the motion you can do that.

The Hon. GRACE VAUGHAN: I support the motion, and I urge the House to seriously consider the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition in order that we might have something positive which will help solve the problems confronting the State.

THE HON. D. W. COOLEY (North-East Metropolitan) [8.50 p.m.]: I too support the Leader of the Opposition in his amendment, and the question that the words to be deleted be deleted. I think members opposite should support this proposition if they have the interests of the State at heart, because if these words could be deleted, and the amendment proposed by our leader could be placed before the House, it would give members an opportunity to debate the question of the Government's performance since it has been in office. If the Government's performance is good, the Government would have no difficulty and need have no fear

in justifying its position. If we allow the amendment to go through we will provide an opportunity to engage in debate in respect of what the Government has done since it has been in office—since the 30th March this year. This would present an excellent opportunity for such a debate.

On many occasions we have said we are a House of Review and I feel we should try to live up to that name, and we should review the situation by agreeing to the deletion of the words in question which would enable us to see whether or not the Government is doing its job properly, and whether it is justified at every opportunity it finds in making the criticisms it has of the Australian Government.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: Would it not be better for you to move an entirely different motion?

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: That may be so, and when we think of doing so we will invite Mr Gayfer to give us his opinion.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: It might, of course, be an entirely different motion.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: I would like to refer to something I have in my hand.

The Hon. A. A. Lewis: What is that?

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: It is the Liberal Party policy. There are many things which the Government said it would do and which it may be able to justify if the words in question were to be deleted; and if the Leader of the Opposition were permitted to go ahead with his amendment. What have members opposite to fear in this respect if the Government is doing a good job? If we were the Government and we were doing a good job—as no doubt we would be; indeed, it would be far better than the job being done by this Government at the moment—we would accept every opportunity to explain what we were doing.

The Hon. H. W. Gayfer: Carry the motion moved by Mr Lewis and we will have a go at amending your motion.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: There is a different concept here altogether. I know it is restrictive but there is an entirely different concept altogether between Mr Lewis' motion and what is proposed now. We are simply asking that the words referred to be deleted in order to give the Government an opportunity to justify its position.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: To put things right.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: Yes. If the Government felt something was wrong on the 30th May, and if it thought it could put things right—which may or may not have been a good slogan—and if it has put things right, the deletion of the words concerned would enable it to show where this has happened. Neither the Leader of

the House, nor his Ministers, have been able to instance one case where the Government has done one thing to show what progress it has made since it has been in office.

The Hon. N. McNeill: Yes I did.

The Hon. D. W. COOLEY: If we could delete the words—and it is possible the Leader of the House was caught on the hop and he could not tell us the things the Government had done—it would give the Leader of the House an excellent opportunity to enunciate what the Government has done since it has been in office.

We should go along with the proposition put forward by the Leader of the Opposition because we would then have an opportunity to assess whether or not we should proceed with Mr Lewis' motion. This could be a broad discussion and allow us to review the actions taken by the Government since it has been in office.

As a House of Review I think we should be looking at this situation, and I hope the House provides an opportunity to delete the words in question to help us have this discussion.

THE HON. A. A. LEWIS (Lower Central) [8.56 p.m.]: I oppose the amendment.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That surprises me.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: It is interesting to hear the Leader of the Opposition, who has been in this place for a number of years, criticise a very new member for bringing forward this motion.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: What has that to do with the words to be deleted?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: It is interesting to see the Leader of the Opposition move an amendment to debate something he desires and on which his followers have spoken one after the other.

Point of Order

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I ask for a withdrawal of the words used by Mr Lewis. I did not criticise the member for bringing this motion forward. I said he had every right to bring the motion forward but I added that it should have been moved in the Federal House.

The PRESIDENT: What does the Leader of the Opposition want deleted from the record?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Mr Lewis said I criticised him for bringing the motion forward. I certainly did not do that.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I withdraw my remarks if they offend the Leader of the Opposition; but he did say he thought it was odd that the motion should be brought forward by a new member of this House. I think the Leader of the Opposition will agree with that.

*Debate (on amendment to motion)
Resumed*

The Hon. D. K. Dans: What are you doing?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I am opposing the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition because all the speakers from that side of the House have said they support the deletion of these words because this would provide an opportunity for the State Government to say what it is doing.

The Hon. D. W. Cooley: What is wrong with that?

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: The Leader of the Opposition has been here a great many years and it surprises me that he could not get on his own feet and perhaps with some assistance from the people who sit behind him, move a motion as I have done.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Don't try to teach your grandmother to suck eggs.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: Surely the Leader of the Opposition could have moved his own motion without attempting to amend the one that has been moved by me. It surprises me that the Leader of the Opposition could not frame his own motion and that he has to resort to amending the motion that I have moved. I am amazed that this should be so, because the Leader of the Opposition has been very well trained; he is brilliant—or at least he tells us he is—and it should be quite easy for him to move a similar motion.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You do not know much about political tactics.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I am surprised that the Leader of the Opposition's minions should have continually jumped up and supported him in the amendment he has moved.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Get on with it and tell us what you are speaking about.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: I am opposing the words which the Leader of the Opposition seeks to delete. If Mr Dans would listen he would understand what I am trying to put forward. Since Mr Dans is so anxious to support his leader's amendment why does not he at some stage move a motion in terms which would include the manner in which the amendment is couched? We, on this side of the House, are not frightened to say exactly how we are putting things right.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: In no way can you say that you have.

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: During the Tonkin regime we never knew of such progress.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You are in a shambles and you know it.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. A. A. LEWIS: The only shambles is that which we took over on the 30th March. I oppose the deletion of the words because I believe it will have little effect. The Leader of the Opposition took the opportunity to speak to the motion, and his followers also have that opportunity. He also has the opportunity to present a motion of his own—if he can think one out—to criticise the State Government. I believe I need say no more because the Opposition, by its silence at this moment, obviously realises what I am saying is correct.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Did you think that up yourself?

The Hon. R. Thompson: You should be in a Punch and Judy show.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes—8

Hon. R. F. Cloughton	Hon. R. H. C. Stubbs
Hon. D. W. Cooley	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. S. J. Dellar	Hon. Grace Vaughan
Hon. R. T. Leeson	Hon. D. K. Dans

(Teller)

Noes—16

Hon. C. R. Abbey	Hon. N. McNeill
Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. I. G. Medcalf
Hon. H. W. Gayfer	Hon. T. O. Perry
Hon. Clive Griffiths	Hon. J. C. Tozer
Hon. J. Heitman	Hon. R. J. L. Williams
Hon. A. A. Lewis	Hon. W. R. Withers
Hon. G. C. MacKinnon	Hon. D. J. Wordsworth
Hon. M. McAleer	Hon. V. J. Ferry

(Teller)

Pairs

<i>Aye</i>	<i>No</i>
Hon. Lyla Elliott	Hon. G. W. Berry

Amendment thus negatived.

Debate (on motion) Resumed

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. C. R. Abbey.

**INDECENT PUBLICATIONS ACT
AMENDMENT BILL**

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 17th October.

THE HON. S. J. DELLAR (Lower North) [9.05 p.m.]: The Bill before the House seeks to amend the Indecent Publications Act 1902-1973, and it raises the question of censorship and the attitude of the community towards it; and mainly the personal attitudes of different people because, as members will be aware, in a society such as ours many people have different views regarding whether or not censorship is needed. As the Act has been on the Statute book for over 70 years it is obvious that in the early days it was thought necessary to provide for censorship of publications.

However, from time to time amendments have been made to the principal Act to keep it in line with the current attitude of the population and the effect indecent publications may have on the community. I think we have all noted that the amount

of this type of literature which is available to the public has increased dramatically over the last 10 to 15 years; so much so that in 1973 the then Chief Secretary introduced legislation in an attempt to tighten up the law and to provide protection for the community at large and for those persons dealing in such literature. As we can see by the number of prosecutions we read about in the Press, that legislation has not worked. I understand many more people have been apprehended but for various reasons have not been taken to the courts.

The attitude of the public in respect of this question does vary from time to time. I think there is a growing school of thought amongst some sections of the community that publications of this nature should be available to those who wish to read them, providing they are not minors; whereas other people are concerned about the volume of material which is available, and they say it is becoming difficult to control its distribution and sale.

This Bill recognises the need to clarify the law regarding the production, distribution, and sale of obscene literature. It is obvious the amendments contained in the Bill will clarify many of the questions exercising the minds of the people of Western Australia. At present it is difficult for the police to obtain a conviction against a publisher or distributor; it is much easier for them to obtain a conviction against persons actually selling such material. If the proposed amendments—and I agree with all but one of them—are incorporated in the parent Act, the publishers, distributors, and sellers of this type of literature will have a firm understanding of where they stand in regard to the law and of what publications are permitted to be sold. They will be advised of those publications the distribution of which to the general public is restricted.

I believe the provisions of the measure will provide a sensible basis upon which to establish control of this problem. Once the Bill becomes law all those concerned will know where they stand.

When the Minister introduced the Bill he said the amendments are not designed, generally speaking, to alter in any way the current standards but rather to allow more effective policing of the Act. As I mentioned earlier, one of the problems associated with the parent Act is that some doubt has been left in the minds of many people, and more particularly in the minds of the police, in regard to the exact powers and limitations contained in the Act. The Bill tends to extend those powers.

The Minister pointed out that the major provisions of the Bill are to allow the police more scope in their policing of the Act with regard to the publication, distribution, and selling of obscene literature.

Clause 4 is to include in the definition in the Act cinematographic film, gramophone records, and tape recordings. I feel this will assist a great deal in controlling the distribution of such articles, whether it be intentional or unwitting. It is possible some people have been involved in this without being aware of the type of material they were handling.

Clause 5 is designed to deal with distributors and publishers of literature, and also includes slight increases in the penalties which may be imposed upon people convicted of selling obscene literature. Penalties are also provided for publishers and distributors, and provision has been made to cover the principals of firms involved in this activity. This clause will close a loophole. In the past the sellers of this material have been bearing the brunt of the prosecutions because the persons really concerned—the printer, publisher, and distributor—have been difficult to pin down.

I feel this is where the real fault has existed because if people do not publish and distribute such material the sellers and the public would not be aware of it; and therefore sellers would not have such material on their shelves available for sale to the public.

The Bill contains provisions for the registration of persons wishing to conduct the business of publishing, distributing, and selling obscene literature. I have no objection to that; I believe it is one method of controlling the activity. It further provides for the appointment of a secretary to the committee, and he will have the job of taking care of the registration of those people who wish to engage in this activity. The secretary will provide the committee with a mailing list of such people in order that the sellers may be kept informed of decisions made by the committee in respect of whether or not certain publications should be distributed. This matter has been the cause of some concern in the past because the committee has made decisions without knowing which people are involved in the activity of publishing and selling this material, and it has not been possible to communicate its decisions to all those concerned. I do not know whether that has been the fault of the committee or of those concerned in the activity.

However, registration will provide the secretary of the committee, when appointed, with a readily available mailing list. This does raise one query; that is, whether or not it is desirable to have a full-time secretary. I do not know whether there is provision in the Chief Secretary's Department for a mailing list to be obtained for a reason other than the requirement that people who are involved in this business should be registered. Be that as it may, one way or the other we

have to get to the crux of the problem and perhaps to rely on some official to draw up a list may not be the correct procedure.

The fact that people will be able to register—although it will cost them \$25 a year—will possibly make the situation a great deal better so far as the police are concerned because they will know who are registered and who are permitted to deal in this material. Further, the person registered would probably have a legal standing if he were not supplied with a list of the articles which were or were not acceptable, because if he could prove that he had not been advised by the secretary of the committee, perhaps he would have some legal “out”. However, if it could be proved that he had been provided with a list, that could render his case null and void.

From the wording of clause 8 I do not know—perhaps the Minister will tell me if I am wrong—why any person wishing to carry on this type of business would apply for registration. Under clause 8, proposed new section 11A reads as follows—

11A. (1) Any person who is carrying on or intends to carry on the business of distributing or selling publications, by wholesale or retail, may apply to the secretary of the Committee to be registered under this section.

The words “may apply” are the ones that confuse me. The proposed new section then goes on to deal with the fee that is to be charged. Then there are further provisions that registered dealers shall be notified of what is acceptable to the committee and what is not.

However, subsection (7) of proposed new section 11A reads as follows—

(7) A person shall not have in his possession for sale any restricted publication unless he has been registered under subsection (1) of this section.

I am not over-confused about that, but I just query the reason why any person wishing to carry on this type of business may apply for registration. Obviously, if he wished to carry on such business it would be in his own interests to apply for registration. I just thought that perhaps a person intending to enter this field of business would make a point of becoming registered so that he would have the safeguards that are written into the Bill. I do not know whether or not that is meant to read, “he shall apply for registration”. If it did read that way it would then fit in with subsection (7) of proposed new section 11A; that is, he shall not do certain things unless he is registered. Perhaps the Minister will explain this more clearly at some later stage.

The principal objection I have to the Bill is found in clause 9 which is divided into several parts. The part that does

concern us is subsection (1) of proposed new section 12A. That reads as follows—

12A. (1) Where the business of selling or distributing publications is carried on in any premises a member of the Police Force may, without further authority than this subsection, enter those premises at any reasonable time and search for and seize any publications which appear to him to be indecent or obscene.

That means that we could have a situation whereby any police officer, at any reasonable time, could enter any premises that were considered to be constituting a business of distributing, publishing, or selling any obscene literature. I understand that at the moment the situation is that a police officer has actually to purchase the item that is considered to be obscene. This new provision, however, will give a police officer the right to enter any premises and seize any materials which appear to him to be indecent or obscene. Subsection (2) of proposed new section 12A reads—

(2) Where a justice is satisfied by complaint on oath sworn by a member of the Police Force, that there is reasonable ground for suspecting that—

- (a) indecent or obscene publications are kept for the purpose of gain, or apparently for that purpose, in or on any premises specified in the complaint; or
- (b) one or more indecent or obscene publications have been sold, distributed, exhibited, lent or otherwise published in, from or at any premises specified in the complaint,

the justice may by warrant under his hand in the form of the Schedule to this Act, or in any like form, authorise any member of the Police Force to enter those premises with such assistance, and using such force, as may be necessary and to search for and seize any publications which appear to the member of the Police Force to be indecent or obscene found in or on those premises.

There are safeguards in the Bill in regard to materials which are seized; that is, as to whether or not a conviction is successful by the police and they obtain a judgment against the person involved. There is adequate safeguard for the materials either to be returned to the person concerned, or, if a conviction is recorded, the material can be confiscated.

I feel that the provision in subsection (2) of proposed new section 12A would at least cover the situation where the police obtain a warrant to enter premises if they consider that any person was in fact selling, manufacturing, or distributing obscene literature; that only by convincing a justice that the police had reasonable grounds for suspecting that obscene literature was being distributed or sold

could a warrant be obtained to search the premises, and if the suspicions of the police were found to be justified the materials could be seized.

It is not a lengthy process to obtain a warrant; in fact, it can be obtained quite readily. I do not know on how many occasions a police officer would be required to obtain a warrant to enter premises to deal with this particular problem, but we do feel that the additional provision in clause 9 is rather an extension of police powers. We are all aware of the need to try to control this particular problem, but I consider the police have adequate power under subsection (2) of proposed new section 12A and perhaps there is no sound reason—unless the Minister can offer one—that this extension of power to the police should be granted; that is, if the clause is agreed to and is included in the principal Act.

I have no intention of delaying the second reading of the Bill, but there are two or three points we can discuss in Committee. I therefore support the second reading of the Bill and I trust that whatever comes out of it will meet with the general wishes not only of the Government—because this is the Government's legislation—but also of the public in general. It is generally considered that there is a requirement for increased surveillance to overcome this problem, though perhaps it should not be as far-ranging as that provided in the Bill. Nevertheless, I agree that this is necessary legislation and I support the second reading.

THE HON. R. F. CLAUGHTON (North Metropolitan) [9.25 p.m.]: The Indecent Publications Act has been a matter of concern to newsagents for some considerable time, and not merely to those who specialise in dealing in those publications that are more unrestrained in regard to sex. The ordinary suburban newsagent receives into his shop a good deal of material that he does not get time to peruse in detail, and he is quite liable to find on his shelves publications that could become the subject of restrictions under this legislation.

The newsagents who have spoken to me have felt a great deal of frustration about the matter. They are not out to purvey pornographic material; they are just caught up in the present-day situation; that is, in regard to matters relating to sex, publications are much more explicit than they were in past years. In other words, they are much more readily accepted by the public.

Newsagents are ordinary, decent people trying to make a living from the business they have chosen to operate. To them it would seem to be much more sensible to attempt to stop these publications from being distributed at the source rather than at the retail outlet where they are made available to the public. On the other hand,

this is where the Government has met all the problems. If the Government cannot deal with wholesalers and publishers in this State, how would it deal with other material that is imported into this State and which does not come through the channels which are readily supervised? I cannot see that that sort of problem will be solved by the provisions in this Bill. We will still find that publications printed outside the State will be brought into Western Australia and distributed to retail outlets.

Nevertheless, I think the bulk of this material will, in fact, be covered, because a great deal of the material that is forwarded to the majority of newsagents comes from wholesale distributors, and they are the people about whom I am concerned. So far as that goes I think this Bill is an attempt to remove some of the problems that are facing the ordinary suburban newsagents. Nevertheless, I am not all that satisfied that the provision of registration will be much better than that which we have at present. I cannot really see why suburban newsagents cannot be circularised in the same way as they are circularised by a number of other people who want to do business with them.

Wholesalers would have the names and addresses of newsagents and it would not be difficult to convey to them a request, or to inform them that if they wish to have lists of material forwarded to them they should send their names to the Chief Secretary so that a mailing list can be compiled.

That would satisfy them because they only want to know those publications that are likely to get them into trouble. They do not want such publications on their shelves. However, this Bill will do nothing to help them in that situation. All it provides is that if a person is selling restricted publications he should be registered and if he has a restricted publication on or under his shelf and it is for sale, then he is liable to a fine of \$100. That makes it compulsory.

I can foresee that the problems facing the people concerned will continue and they are likely to be subjected to harassments similar to those to which they are subjected at the moment. An unfortunate outcome might be that newsagents themselves will limit their range of publications, and this is not what we want. We do not want a restriction placed on the dissemination of information and knowledge simply because it may—not that it actually does, but it may—contain something contrary to what is permitted under the Act.

Although this is not the attitude adopted by my party in respect of earlier provisions in the Bill, I would like the Government to consider what I have said, because I envisage that the newsagent's problems will continue.

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West—Minister for Education) [9.32 p.m.]: I thank the two members for their contribution to the debate. If they agree—and Mr Dellar, who gave a detailed examination of the Bill, indicated he would—I would prefer to deal with the questions raised when we go into Committee. I believe there is an explanation for the queries raised but it would be better given in Committee.

Mr Dellar indicated his general agreement with the provisions in the Bill, except for his request for additional information.

In answer to Mr Claughton, I would say that the general purpose of the Bill is indeed to provide protection for the news-agent, or, at least, to ensure that he is not the only "bunny" in the exercise so that some action can be taken against those people who are manufacturing, producing, or distributing pornographic literature, audio tapes, or cinema films.

The point Mr Claughton raised about people being able to import such material is well taken. If a person knew where he could sell the material, he could bring it from the Eastern States by car, and so forth. I did not know there was so much profit in such material. Nevertheless, it must be shown or listened to somewhere on some premises. It does not have to be sold, which is the purpose of the Bill; that is, to extend the definition of pornographic material. As Mr Dellar said, it is obvious the situation has existed for a long time and successive Governments have made endeavours to ease the laws or to tighten up certain of them to make them fairer.

This Bill is a genuine effort to overcome the difficulties Mr Claughton highlighted because at present it is the newsagent or actual seller only who has action taken against him.

The other points raised will be better discussed in Committee, so I will content myself with those few remarks, and commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

ART GALLERY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Returned

Bill returned from the Assembly with an amendment.

ALCOHOL AND DRUG AUTHORITY BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. N. E. Baxter (Minister for Health), read a first time.

House adjourned at 9.38 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, the 22nd October, 1974

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

HOUSING OWNERSHIP AND FINANCE

Royal Commission: Petition

MR BARNETT (Rockingham) [4.33 p.m.]: I have a petition prepared by the residents of Rockingham addressed to the Hon. the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled. It reads as follows—

We, the undersigned residents in the State of Western Australia do herewith pray that Her Majesty's Government of Western Australia will give consideration to the appointment as soon as possible of a Royal Commission to inquire into home ownership and all finances pertaining to home ownership in the State of Western Australia.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that your honourable House will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

The petition contains 1 235 signatures, and I have certified that it conforms with the rules of the House.

The **SPEAKER**: I direct that the petition be brought to the Table of the House.

The petition was tabled (see paper No. 302).

"THE PILBARA STUDY"

Tabling

SIR CHARLES COURT (Nedlands—Premier) [4.35 p.m.]: I have for tabling the report of the Pilbara study. I should explain that, by arrangement, it is being tabled in the Federal Parliament to coincide as near as is practicable with its tabling in this House. I seek leave to table it.

I also seek leave to table a statement by myself relating to the report. I intended to seek leave to read it out but, having mercy on the House, I shall merely table it. I advise that I will make a copy of the statement available to all members tomorrow.

The report and statement were tabled (see paper No. 301).

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

Tabling

The **SPEAKER** (Mr Hutchinson): I have for tabling the report of the Auditor-General on the Public Accounts for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1974.

The report was tabled (see paper No. 300).