

As legislators we are charged with the responsibility of voting for legislation according to whether we think it is in the best interests of people throughout the State. On many occasions the member for Murchison, together with other members of his Government, has voted on questions which are far removed from the interests of the people on the Goldfields.

Mr. Hawke: He voted in favour of an increase in the water rates for the people on the Goldfields.

Mr. MOIR: Yes; that is one piece of legislation which he voted for, but which would not obtain the approval of people on the Goldfields. I intend to vote for the amendment.

*(The Chairman of Committees (Mr. Roberts) resumed the Chair.)*

Mr. CRAIG: I oppose the amendment not because of the question that is before us now, but because of the principle involved. The member for Boulder has said he has the responsibility of representing all the people in the State; but at the same time he is prepared to vote for any move whereby the responsibility placed upon him to make a decision is passed back to the electors. The function of Parliament is clearly defined. We have already decided on what action should be taken on the question before us. Therefore, I do not consider there is any need for a referendum to be held.

Mr. CROMMELIN: I move—

That the amendment be amended by deleting all words after the word "electors".

Mr. HAWKE: I have not a great deal of feeling one way or the other about the amendment moved by the member for Claremont. My amendment was worded as it was because the people who live in the Goldfields and North-West areas are not to have their trading hours altered in any degree. So it could be a bit unreasonable to ask the people in those areas, who are not to have their trading hours altered, to say what the trading hours should be at Claremont or Northam.

It could be all the more unfair because the closing hour on the Goldfields and the North-West is not only later than the existing closing hour in the metropolitan area and agricultural areas, but will still be later even if the 10 o'clock closing were to apply to the areas of the State other than the Goldfields and the North-West. That is the reason why I thought it would be fair to limit the referendum to people living outside the Goldfields and the North-West. The only thing I do not like about the amendment moved by the member for Claremont is that it will allow the people enjoying a closing hour now of 11 o'clock to cast a vote which could decide that the people at Bruce Rock, Narembeen, Northam, or Claremont may not have their closing hour later than 9 o'clock.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 1.14 a.m. (Thursday)

# Legislative Council

Thursday, the 5th November, 1959

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

### TEACHERS

#### Appointments and Qualifications

- The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM asked the Minister for Mines:
  - Does the same rigid application of the regulations concerning appointments of teachers obtain in metropolitan schools as in country schools?
  - Do all applicants for appointment as senior masters require a degree, or higher certificate qualification?
  - Have there been any appointments to metropolitan high schools to senior masters (Physical Education) of teachers not holding the regulation higher certificate qualification?
  - If the answer to No. (3) is "Yes", will the Minister say why the discrimination exists between country and metropolitan high schools?
  - If the answer is "No", will the Minister advise the number of appointments to senior master within the past six months, or appointments to take effect within the next six months?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes; with the proviso that any teacher who already holds the rank of senior master/mistress may be promoted to a higher grade of senior master/mistress.
- (3) Not since the regulation became effective; that is, since the 1st January, 1959.
- (4) Answered by No. (3).
- (5) Forty-four.

## ROAD HAULIERS, PARKESTON-PERTH

### *Contributions to State Revenues*

2. The Hon. J. J. GARRIGAN asked the Minister for Mines:

What amount of revenue per annum does the State Government receive from the road hauliers operating heavy transport between Parkeston and Perth?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

None; and South Australia would receive no revenue for a Western Australian registered vehicle between Port Pirie and Adelaide.

## TRAFFIC LIGHTS

### *Installation at Intersections*

3. The Hon. R. THOMPSON asked the Minister for Mines:

In view of the number of accidents that have occurred and the dangerous nature of the following intersections, will the Minister give some indication when they will be equipped with traffic lights—

- (a) South and Carrington Streets, Hilton Park;
- (b) Canning Highway and Point Walter Road, Bicton;
- (c) South and Solomon Streets, Beaconsfield;
- (d) Wray Avenue and Hampton Road, Beaconsfield?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

It is a misconception that the installation of traffic lights will reduce accidents. In some cases the installation of lights may increase the number of accidents while altering the type of accidents. Thus traffic lights are installed primarily on the basis of traffic volume and not of accidents, and are only recommended where conflicting traffic volumes are high enough to warrant the installation, or where there is a need for an interrupter pattern to major flows as on Stirling Highway. In respect of intersections (a), (c), and (d), the traffic volume warrants are not reached.

In respect of (b), the Canning Highway-Point Walter Road, intersection, interrupting lights are to be installed at Petra Street and Stock Road. Site conditions at Point Walter Road are such that a traffic light installation at this intersection could be dangerous; moreover cross-traffic is very light. There is thus no proposal at present to install traffic lights at these four intersections.

## TALGARNO

### *State Contracts with Commonwealth Government*

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

If the Liberal and Country Parties are sincere in their pronouncements concerning the welfare of private enterprise, why has the State Government obtained contracts from the Commonwealth Government to construct £30,000 worth of roads at Talgarro?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

Firm negotiations were entered into between the Commonwealth Department of Works and the Main Roads Department in February this year before the present Government took office. This was a work of much urgency, and the Main Roads Department had men and machines in the vicinity.

## WATER RATES

### *Reconciliation of Country Figures*

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

As the Minister for Mines stated in this House on the 3rd November, 1959, that the proposed additional revenue to be obtained by increasing the rating charge for water supplied to towns on the Goldfields water scheme to a maximum of 3s., would be £36,000, and that members were wrong in quoting the figure of £57,948 or approximately £58,000—

- (a) How does the Minister for Mines explain the figures he quoted, as compared with the figures given by Mr. Wild, Minister for Water Supplies, on Thursday, the 8th October, 1959 (*Hansard* page 2002)?

- (b) As the Minister for Mines, when introducing the Country Areas Water Supply Act Amendment Bill, quoted no proposed increased revenue figures, was it not to be assumed that members would quote figures given by the Minister in charge of

country water areas, in the belief that those figures were correct?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (a) The increase of £57,948 mentioned by the Minister for Water Supplies was the increase in revenue from rates which would result if all consumers paid the proposed maximum rate of 3s. It will be noted that the Minister also mentioned that this increase in revenue from rates would be offset by reductions in excess water charges. The figures quoted by me were the net figures after an estimate had been made of the amount that would be offset by a reduction in excess water charges.
- (b) When members were quoting increased revenue figures they did not qualify those figures as did the Minister for Works when he was answering the Hon. J. Hegney's question.

### **SUPERPHOSPHATE**

#### *Sacks Used for Deliveries*

6. The Hon. A. R. JONES asked the Minister for Mines:
  - (1) In view of the fact that superphosphate is delivered to war service land settlement project areas in consacks will the Minister inform the House—
    - (a) Are the sacks generally referred to as super bags washed or left unwashed;
    - (b) are the super bags returned to the works for refilling?
  - (2) If super bags are not returned for refilling, are they sold?
  - (3) If they are sold—
    - (a) To whom are they sold;
    - (b) what price is obtained;
    - (c) who is credited with the proceeds?
  - (4) If they are not sold, what happens to them?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) (a) Generally unwashed except where water supplies are easily available.
- (b) Early deliveries are returned to works for refilling.
- (2) The bulk are sold.
- (3) (a) To the best sources available.
- (b) 4s. 6d. to 6s.—per dozen.
- (c) The developmental account of the project to which they belong.
- (4) Where not sold, they remain on the farm for the use of the lessee.

### **BILLS (2)—THIRD READING**

1. Albany Harbour Board Act Amendment Bill.
  2. Town Planning and Development Act Amendment Bill (No. 3).
- Passed.

### **HOUSING LOAN GUARANTEE ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

#### *Second Reading*

**THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH** (Suburban—Minister for Housing) [2.41] in moving the second reading said: When the Housing Loan Guarantee Act of 1957 was amended in 1958, to permit the giving of guarantees, a new section 7A was added to the legislation. In the new section, in respect of the guarantees to be given under it, it was not intended that two separate fees would be payable into the guarantee fund account, because it was recognised that the extra charge would be passed on and added to the amount payable by the home-purchaser as interest.

Members will appreciate that section 7 of the original legislation provided for the payment of only one-quarter per cent. as administration fees. When section 7A was added, the Crown Law Department discovered that under its interpretation a further one-quarter per cent. should be added. The matter was referred to me by the State Housing Commission, and I requested the officers of that department to ascertain what was the intention of the Minister at the time when the interest rate was fixed.

It was ascertained that the previous Minister for Housing contemplated a charge of one-quarter per cent. only. By adding another one-quarter per cent., an actual charge of one-half per cent. would be made. That additional amount would have been passed on to the home-purchaser. As it was the intention of the previous Minister to charge only one-quarter per cent., I consider that there should be no departure from the original intention.

I have therefore brought this Bill before the House in order that the necessary amendment may be made to the legislation. The Bill will make it perfectly clear that one-quarter per cent. only in administration fees is to be paid into the guarantee fund by the home-purchaser. I need give no further explanation of the Bill. It has been brought about purely to correct a provision in the existing Act. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Hon. W. F. Willesee, debate adjourned.

## ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

### *President's Ruling*

The PRESIDENT: At yesterday's sitting the Minister for Mines made a request that I should inform the House whether this Bill was in order, and whether it required a Message from the Governor. I have examined the measure. In accordance with section 46(1) of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act, Bills appropriating revenue should not originate in the Legislative Council.

The Bill introduced by the honourable member provides for the same entitlement to enrolment and voting for the Legislative Council as now applies for the Legislative Assembly, and a considerable amount of expenditure would therefore be necessary in the adjustment of rolls and other matters concerned with electoral procedure.

The Bill referred to by the Minister for Mines, which was received in this House from the Legislative Assembly in 1958, was almost identical with the Bill now under consideration, and was introduced into the Legislative Assembly under cover of a message appropriating revenue. I therefore rule the Bill out of order as it infringes section 46(1) of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act.

The Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: Mr. President, I would like to ask a question.

The PRESIDENT: There can be no debate unless the honourable member moves to disagree with my ruling.

The Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: The Bill of 1958 did not deal with adult franchise, but my Bill does. I maintained during the second reading that a considerable saving to the Crown would be effected if the Bill were passed. It would then mean that the State would need only one electoral office, instead of two.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member is making a statement. What was the question?

The Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: That was the question. Would you consider that my Bill makes an impost on the Crown? I do not consider that it does.

The PRESIDENT: I have thoroughly examined the Bill and find that it is almost identical with a measure previously introduced, with three minor exceptions, and its implementation would entail Government expenditure. Unless the honourable member moves to disagree with my ruling, I shall move to the next item on the notice paper.

**Bill ruled out.**

## CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

### *Order Discharged*

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban—Minister for Mines) [2.48]: In view of your ruling on the previous measure, and in view of the fact that the Bill before us is consequential on the Electoral Act Amendment Bill, nothing would be gained by proceeding any further with this measure. I suggest that the honourable member move for the order to be discharged from the notice paper.

THE HON. R. F. HUTCHISON (Suburban) [2.49]: With very great reluctance I move—

That the Order be discharged from the notice paper.  
I think I am being ill-used on this occasion.

The PRESIDENT: The honourable member should not make any adverse comments.

**Question put and passed.**

**Order discharged.**

## HIRE-PURCHASE BILL

### *Second Reading*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

THE HON. G. E. JEFFERY (Suburban) [2.50]: I support the second reading of this Bill. Firstly, I compliment the officers of the Crown Law Department on their drafting of it. The Bill has one novel feature, of which I shall speak later. This feature could be described as a pioneering form of drafting, and should be very acceptable to the people of this State.

The Minister said when introducing the Bill that fundamentally it is the same as the Bill passed last year, except for the redrafting of some of the clauses; and that only in some minor form. The words now used are an improvement on the original drafting, and make some of the phrases more explicit. We were told the measure was not proclaimed last year because the various State Governments were waiting on an Australia-wide conference; and we find from a perusal of the deliberations of the conference that the only three things about which they did not reach agreement were: Firstly, the fixing of maximum rates of hiring charge; secondly, the minimum deposits and maximum hiring periods; and, thirdly, credit-sale agreements.

Obviously credit-sale agreements are tied up with minimum deposits; and if no agreement was reached in regard to minimum deposits and maximum hiring charges, it naturally followed that no agreement would be reached in regard to credit-sale agreements. I believe that much progress has been made although

it is not as much as I would have liked; but slowly and surely we are achieving those things which will bring a little order to the activities of some of the hire-purchase companies.

I feel that we could, on a national basis, fix the maximum rates for the hiring charges; but I also agree that under the form set out in the first schedule of the Bill, some of the pitfalls of entering into agreements will now be cleared up, and anyone who enters into an agreement when this Bill becomes law, will know exactly what he is doing.

The majority of members will agree that the complaints they have received have mostly been from people who say they did not realise the difference between the original price of the article and the total amount they would have to pay under the agreement, until they had actually signed the agreement and had been paying the instalments for some time.

In my opinion the maximum interest rates could be fixed along the same lines as is done under the Money Lenders Act. I cannot see any difference between the lending of money under a hire-purchase agreement and the lending of money under the Money Lenders Act. If it is immoral to charge over a certain interest rate under the Money Lenders Act, it is equally immoral to do so in regard to a hire-purchase agreement. Of course I realise there are greater risks under certain hire-purchase agreements, and there would, perhaps, be a higher maximum rate fixed. I think we should at least settle the question of minimum deposits. I also believe, being an old-fashioned type regarding finance, that a person who cannot afford 10 per cent. of the price of the commodity as a deposit, cannot afford the commodity itself. I know some people say that under certain circumstances 10 per cent. would be a rather high figure—for instance, in regard to the purchase of a home. In that case perhaps the amount could be 5 per cent.

I agree with the draftsman in regard to the maximum hiring periods. The companies are able to define the maximum hiring periods, and there is really no need for any legislation.

The first good point is that the States were substantially in agreement that, because of the needs peculiar to each State and the existing conditions, each should be left to determine its own charges, as there must be some difference. For instance, one State charges 2 per cent. on an agreement and another charges 1 per cent.

Because of the details set out in the first schedule, any person entering into an agreement should fully realise his responsibility and understand that he is receiving a fair deal. The first schedule sets out a summary of the purchaser's

financial obligations under the proposed hire-purchase agreement, and is as follows:—

The cash price of goods is	£
The terms charges are	£
Other charges are—	
For insurance for...years	£
For maintenance	£
For freight, vehicle registration, etc.	£

The total amount you will have to pay (including deposit of £....) is ..... £

The difference between the cash price of goods and the total amount you will have to pay is therefore £.....

Your instalments under the proposed agreement will be.....

I think it is most important for the difference between the cash price and the total amount payable under the agreement to be shown. The average citizen should know exactly what he is doing when he enters into an agreement in future.

Another feature I like about the Bill is that the hirer is able to ask for a statement of his true financial position every three months. I feel that that is a reasonable time, and if it were not stipulated, some people would make a nuisance of themselves and ask for a statement every two or three weeks.

Another clause that appeals to me is the one which gives the benefit of any insurance rebate to the hirer. If he decides to terminate the agreement before the stipulated period, it is an excellent idea that he should receive this insurance benefit. It will encourage people to accumulate a few pounds and so finalise their agreement earlier than anticipated.

The reinstatement of the clause giving the hirer the right of appeal against unsatisfactory practices is yet a further improvement. This provision was in the 1931 Act but was deleted from the Act passed in 1958. It is a fair proposition that if a hirer is not satisfied, he should be able to appeal so that the situation can be resolved to the satisfaction of all concerned. I do not feel that people will very often have to act under this clause, but it is a good thing that it has been included in the Bill.

Special provision has been made for farmers, which I think is justified. There are some amendments on the notice paper to which I can see no objection. This clause has been incorporated as a result of Commonwealth recommendation, and it relates to the right of a court to give an order deferring repossession of goods for a period of 12 months.

The provision relating to the purchase of furniture is also a very sound one. It allows the purchaser to obtain a statement when ordering the goods, but when it is obvious that a complete and accurate

statement cannot be furnished, then the final statement will be presented on the completion of the goods.

A further desirable clause in the Bill is that referring to the assignments of rights. Under this provision the hirer can assign the goods, provided he pays the necessary fees, and provided he has the permission of the owner of the goods. I believe all parties will be happy about this clause, because if a hirer desires to terminate an agreement he will be able to transfer the agreement to another individual.

The extension of the period during which an owner must hold repossessed goods is another good feature of this Bill. The few business-people I have had conversations with in regard to hire-purchase have had mixed feelings on this subject, but all agree that the most desirable thing is for the owner to have the transaction successfully completed. The repossession of goods and the subsequent reselling of them as second-hand purchases, cause a great deal of trouble; and with the extension of the time from 14 to 21 days, we hope that some of these people whose goods may be repossessed will be able to arrange finance and resume the purchase of the goods.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: Do you not think 21 days is a long time for domestic appliances?

The Hon. G. E. JEFFERY: It could be, but if a motorcar were the subject of the agreement, 21 days would not be too long. Taking the broad picture, only good can come from this extension of time. I realise some of the pitfalls. For instance, a motor vehicle can deteriorate rapidly; but I believe that this is a good proposition.

Another provision with which I heartily agree is that which gives a person, who has had his goods repossessed, the right to introduce to the owner a prospective buyer. I think under those circumstances the hirer of the goods will be encouraged to look after his own interests; and, at the same time, he will also be looking after the interests of the company from whom he purchased the goods.

There is a new clause which limits to 12 months the period in which prosecutions may be launched. I think that is quite sound. If a person has any grievance, 12 months should be a long enough period for him to make up his mind about it, and proceed with the prosecution.

The reference to printing is quite timely, and it could be the means of obviating a lot of complaints that have been made in the past about the small print that appears on hire-purchase agreements. Because of the small print, and the language used, it is easily misunderstood. I am not a printer, but from the look I have had of 10 point Times

type, it seems to me that it will be the means of saving a lot of trouble in the future.

I am pleased to see that in the fourth schedule those who drafted the Bill have used English which is easily understood by the general public, instead of the more sedate style of English which one is accustomed to see in legal documents. I think it would be a good idea if a lot more of this style of English were used in our legal documents; and I consider this drafting to be a step in the right direction. The use of this style could be emulated in the printing of a lot of documents prepared by the Government, so that the ordinary man in the street would know exactly what he was signing. The step taken in this instance is a courageous one, and it will be most helpful to the general public.

A glance at the fourth schedule will show that the ordinary individual is well protected even if his goods are repossessed. He will be given an opportunity to finalise the agreement, and it will be very hard for a person of average intelligence to misunderstand the various forms. Without further ado I wish to say that I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of what I consider to be a good Bill.

THE HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West) [3.21: It is amazing how much misconception there is in regard to hire-purchase, except among those who have anything to do with it in the course of their employment. I agree with Mr. Jeffery that this Bill is a step forward. It seems to be well-framed, and it contains some particularly good points. I think we should bear in mind that in the main the forms set out in the legislation are copied from the forms used by a great number of the leading hire-purchase firms. If anybody approached some of the leading hire-purchase organisations and obtained examples of the forms they use, he would find that they were almost identical with the examples given in the Bill.

There is very little new in this legislation when one looks at what the reputable organisations have done over the years. But still, even those organisations have troubles because a contract is generally completed by a salesman with a prospective purchaser. If a firm has two salesmen operating in the same district, one will finish up with a larger percentage of bad accounts than the other. If a salesman carefully explains to the person with whom he is dealing that the purchaser has to meet his payments, and keeps reiterating the need to have those payments made at the proper time, the purchaser takes care that the payments are met on the due date. But if the salesman brushes that fact aside—and many purchasers are anxious that it be brushed aside—that salesman finishes up with many of his customers in trouble through late payments.

I was interested to hear Mr. Watson interject while Mr. Jeffery was talking, and ask whether he thought the period of 21 days was too long. I agree with Mr. Watson; it is too long. A salesman who has the interests of his purchaser at heart is the salesman who is as hard as he can be. We often hear talk of the man who is hard in the business of hire-purchase, but he is the man who is doing his customers the best turn.

To leave a person 21 days before approaching him about his payments is all wrong. The hirer must be owing one payment and, by the end of the 21 days, he would be due at least for the next payment. If the amount were only £5 it would not be so bad; but even so if the original payment were £5, and the purchaser had difficulty in finding that, how much more difficult it would be to find £10, which is the amount it would be at the end of the 21 days. My experience has been that the customer is best served by the hire-purchase firm whose representative is there the day after a payment falls due. In that case the purchaser has only the one payment to meet, and he can make arrangements to meet it.

The firm which lets people go on and on until they find the amount they have to meet is beyond their ability to pay, is not doing its customers any good, because in those circumstances the customer, generally speaking, has to lose the article—in other words, hand it back. I know some people say that many firms hang back and do not collect payments because they like to repossess the goods. Five minutes' examination of that proposition shows how ludicrous it is. When a firm buys an article, it buys it at the wholesale price; and it has no interest whatever in taking the article back once it has been sold. The aim of firms is for the people to keep the articles they are buying. There I am speaking in general terms. No doubt there would be the odd firm that might try some silly business with repossessions; but it would not last very long.

I have yet to find a reputable firm which, when a customer has approached it and stated that he is in difficulties, has not gone to all sorts of lengths to assist him to keep the article. Primarily the firm's interest is in seeing that the article is kept and paid for. I warn members to be extremely careful about lengthening the period of time before repossession can take place. It is infinitely better to keep a purchaser to the lowest possible cash difference rather than to lengthen the period before repossession can take place. As I said, it might not make much difference if a person is paying only £4 each time, because he would have only £12 or £14 to meet if he fell three or four payments in arrears. But the position is entirely different in the purchase of motor vehicles where the payments might be £50 each, and a person

could easily find himself £150 in arrears. As in most contracts, the success or otherwise of a measure of this nature will always depend on the behaviour of the man who sells the goods—the man who explains the contract and completes it. For that reason, I think it is an extremely good idea that legislation such as this should be set out as clearly as this is, because people who buy under hire-purchase will be able to see exactly what they have to do; and those who sell articles under hire-purchase will know that they are held in by strict regulations. With Mr. Jeffery, I would like to congratulate those who have drafted the measure, and I have much pleasure in supporting it.

**THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH** (Suburban—Minister for Mines—in reply) [3.9]: I would like to take this opportunity of thanking Mr. Jeffery and Mr. MacKinnon for their contributions to the debate. It is extremely pleasing to be able to introduce a Bill which has support in almost every detail. It is essentially a Committee measure, and as there are one or two amendments on the notice paper we can discuss them at that stage.

**Question put and passed.**

**Bill read a second time.**

## **TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 3)**

### *Second Reading*

**Debate resumed from the previous day.**

**THE HON. W. F. WILLESEE** (North) [3.10]: This Bill deals with a changed basis for distributing funds under the Federal Aid Roads Agreement, which commenced in the 1930's. The basis of distribution was on a population-area basis—two-fifths population and three-fifths area. In addition to the new formula there is a proposition of matching money whereby additional funds will be made available through the machinery of this Bill.

After listening to various speakers, I can see that, generally speaking, the matching proposals are not being well received. It appears to me that, in effect, we are being asked to buy something which we already own, because the Commonwealth will be returning to us money which has been obtained from the people of the State in the first place.

Over the next five years, the State will receive in its own right a sum of £39,000,000; and under the matching system a figure of £10,000,000 is envisaged, spread over the same period, with £5,000,000 being provided by the State and £5,000,000 from the Commonwealth.

I fail to see that the £5,000,000 which the Commonwealth will provide is not, in fact, money which rightfully belongs to Western Australia, on the present basis of allocation. What makes the position worse

is that the £5,000,000 which the State is to provide is to be extracted from motor-vehicle owners—the private motorists. The owners of large vehicles are exempt, and the burden will fall on the private vehicle owners.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: The Bill Bow-yangs.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: In the main they are the people who use the roads the least, but they use their vehicles only for pleasure purposes. I think the proposal should have been resisted at Commonwealth level rather than for it to be introduced at State level and presented to this legislature almost as a *fait accompli*.

In support of the proposition it has been said, either here or in another place, that motor-vehicle license fees in Western Australia are lower than they are in the other States. That is not borne out by the figures which were given in reply to a question Mr. Loton asked on the 30th September last, and which appear at page 120 of the *Minutes of Proceedings* of the Legislative Council. In answer to a series of questions, he received information to the effect that the license fee for a Chevrolet V-8 sedan in Western Australia is £15 16s. and in New South Wales it is £10 10s. The Chevrolet utility is £30 in Western Australia, and £16 in New South Wales; while the fees for a Fordomatic Customline are £14 16s. in Western Australia, and £10 6s. 6d. in New South Wales.

Quite a considerable number of vehicles were mentioned; and, in almost every instance, the motorists in Western Australia paid higher license fees than did the people in New South Wales.

The Hon. A. L. Loton: The only exception being the three last.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: That is so; and I will quote them. They are as follows:—

	W. Aust.			N.S.W.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Volkswagen sedan	5	16	0	4	13	6
Volkswagen pickup van	8	18	6	6	5	0
Morris Minor 2-door sedan	4	16	0	5	0	0
Morris Minor 4-door sedan	5	0	0	5	0	0

The Minister said that the following additional fees are also payable in New South Wales:—

	£	s.	d.
Motor cars—			
Registration fee	1	10	0
Motor wagons—			
Registration fee	1	10	0
Co-ordination fee	0	10	0

So, by and large, those figures somewhat belie the impression one may gain that we, who are the motoring public of Western Australia, are paying less than the motoring public of the Eastern States.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: There is also the argument that we will be penalised unless we agree to it.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: That is so. I fail to see where that argument links up in the general investigation one would make into this Bill. I feel that the problem of matching money will be greatly accentuated if it is applied to the province I represent, namely, the North Province, which includes the North-West and Kimberley areas of the State. We have held that, since the inception of the Federal Aid Roads Fund, the North-West has never received its true and proper allocation. As an example of this I would say that had the State of Western Australia been zoned on a provincial basis, and a trust fund established for each province, whereby the bulk amount when received from the Commonwealth was distributed on the basis of two-fifths population and three-fifths area, and that as that money was expended more was drawn from the fund, the North-West area of the State would, today, have lying to its credit, many thousands of pounds. So it is somewhat anomalous when we are not receiving what we consider our right under the present Act, that a section of our motorists should be called upon to find additional money for the matching fund.

These remarks do not apply only to this Government; they apply to all Governments that have been in power since the inception of the Act. I am reminded of the phrase one learns when dealing with trusteeships, namely that corpus can never disgorge. It may well be said that Cabinets do not disgorge either; because they develop a propensity to hold, very earnestly, moneys; and however much one might advocate that they be spent in a particular way, one is always met with an insuperable bar and an unanswerable silence, which inevitably ends with the small word, "No."

The issue of which I am speaking was fought in another place by Mr. Wise, when he was Leader of the Opposition several years ago; and I know that our own leader in this House, when he was Minister for the North-West, vigorously fought in his own Cabinet for an increase in funds during the Labor Government's reign; with the inevitable answer and the inevitable result. As I said before, Cabinets do not disgorge. In view of the fact that the North-West area, particularly, is not receiving its full share of expenditure, I had intended to submit an amendment for the deletion of the matching-funds clause as it affects the North-West. I find, however, it is difficult to define a particular area which could be entirely classed only as the North-West. The 26th parallel is an imaginary line and, when considering the various road boards, we find we move down into other areas.

Because my thoughts fell down for the want of clarity, I decided it would not be possible to frame a suitable amendment



along the lines I have mentioned. I would like it clearly understood, however, that, in my view, the North-West portion of the State has never received that to which it is justly entitled under this Act; and, as far as the North-West motorists are concerned, the question of matching funds will be particularly offensive.

For that reason alone I would oppose this Bill. If the tax is to be imposed at all, it should be imposed at the point of purchase. That would be fair on all road users; and the impost would be borne in proportion to the use made of the roads by the variety of traffic that uses the roads. To tax only one section of motor vehicles—the lighter vehicles—when the benefits will be shared by all, seems to me to be unjust. To tax a particular section of motorists who use their vehicles only in a limited manner leads me to regard it as the ultimate victimisation of the individual. We also find there is to be a raising of fees for drivers' licenses; and, in this connection, I would like to quote very briefly from page 2173 of *Hansard*. The Minister, when introducing the Bill in another place, said—

To prove the good faith of the Government in this matter—

The PRESIDENT: Is the honourable member quoting from *Hansard*?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: Very briefly, Mr. President.

The PRESIDENT: The honourable member cannot do that.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: You cannot do that there here!

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: Everybody seems delighted that I am not permitted to quote from *Hansard*.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Is not your own writing legible?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: Not at the moment! The fact is that the Minister when introducing the Bill gave an undertaking by way of a variety of words that the Government, through the Treasury, would pay in the amount of money obtained through drivers' licenses. That appeared quite a worthy objective, in that the Government was also going to shoulder some of the responsibility in relation to the matching money. But it seems to me now, under this Bill, that the additional 10s. that will be charged for a driving license will not constitute matching money at all; it will merely go into the Treasury to supplement the amount of money taken out; and that, in effect, licenses are to be increased by 10s. virtually to meet this Treasury expenditure.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: It all goes into the trust fund.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: Does it? The Minister quoted the figure of the present license fee.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Plus the new one.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: He did not say so.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: That is implied.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: I would be very pleased if the Minister would clarify the position when he replies; and more pleased if the Government does what the Minister says it will. Anyhow, I cannot see that this extra amount comes within the orbit of matching money; and I am yet to be convinced it does. If the Bill passes the second reading stage, I will oppose this clause in Committee. I oppose the Bill as it stands.

THE HON. R. C. MATTISKE (Metropolitan) [3.25]: I rise to support the measure. In doing so, I would not say that I am in favour of increasing taxation in its various forms, because I feel successive Governments are too prone to increase income continuously without giving consideration to the possibilities of curtailing expenditure. I support this measure in the full knowledge that we have one alternative. The gun is at our heads, and unless we pass this legislation and derive more income from traffic fees to place us on the same basis as the other States, we will not receive the matching money referred to.

For that reason I feel we have no alternative but to pass this legislation. I point out that, although this is another of those insidious small increases, in one of the forms of taxation we have to suffer, at the same time it is a very small one, when one takes into account the actual increase per annum in the driver's license fee and in the license fees of a particular type of vehicle which may be covered by this Bill. I say that because, per annum, it is very small, and the cost per mile is practically nil.

I think too much is being made of the extra amount to be borne, rather than the principle of imposing further taxation on the motoring public. At the same time I would like to say I cannot understand the attitude of two country members who, when speaking to this measure, raised certain doubts; because I draw the attention of the House to one extremely important aspect of this Bill. Western Australia is a vast State with a very small population. As a State we are mainly primary-producing, and the nature of our cultivation is extensive rather than intensive. It necessarily follows that, outside the metropolitan area, there must be large holdings which automatically involve great mileages of road with low densities of population.

Within the metropolitan area, the bulk of the roads are financed by the local governing authorities, which raise their moneys from the ratepayers in their various districts. In other words, the

residents of the metropolitan area are virtually paying for the whole of their roads. The amount of work carried out by the Main Roads Department in the metropolitan area is very small indeed. Conversely, the amount of work done by that department in the country districts is very great.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: And so it should be.

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: As we have a low density of population in the country districts, does it not follow that the country people are deriving greater benefits than those in the metropolitan area?

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: And so they should.

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: So I fail to see why the country people should not embrace this legislation; because it will enable them to have further money spent in developing country roads, and so enhance the value of their properties and improve the return they will derive from the working of those properties.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: What is your attitude to the exemption of commercial vehicles in the city?

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: I think there are certain aspects of the parent Act which would bear a considerable amount of investigation with a view to modifying its provisions. I do feel, as other members have said, that the whole basis of taxing motor vehicles should possibly be varied. I think it was last year, or the year before, when certain amendments were made under which commercial vehicles were taxed very heavily, and the problem of the further taxing of motor vehicles, or the remitting of tax paid by commercial vehicles, is one that will require very careful consideration. I hope, when replying to the debate, the Minister will give us some information dealing with that aspect.

No-one likes taxation in any form, but we must face up to the fact that if we are to enjoy good motoring in this State, whether we be city folk motoring through the country on business or pleasure, or whether we be country folk motoring through the country on business or pleasure, we must pay for it. The fact remains that at present we do enjoy a very good road system in this State. I think up to the present time we have been extremely fortunate with the moneys we have received from Federal funds. If it were not for certain payments, possibly there would not be the opening of a very well-known bridge in about a week's time.

Let us face up to the facts. If we, with our sparse population and many miles of roads, want to enjoy good motoring, we must pay for it. Under this measure, the additional money we subscribe will be more than matched. Therefore, we should, in the long run, receive a greater benefit for the roads in this State. I support this measure.

**THE HON. W. R. HALL** (North-East) [3.32]: I rise to oppose this Bill. As was said by the honourable member who has just resumed his seat, let us face up to the facts. I will. I think this tax is an imposition. It is not long since the previous Government increased license fees. My purpose in speaking is to take up the cudgels on behalf of the vehicle-owner. After all, the person who owns a motor vehicle has been a sucking pig for every sort of tax known in the State of Western Australia.

The Hon. A. R. Jones: You mean a milking cow.

The Hon. W. R. HALL: The farmers are sitting on top of the world so far as their license fees and other things are concerned. When one goes to Kalgoorlie, farmers are to be seen along the road bringing their pigs to market from Merredin to Northam; and the only ones doing any good are the pigs in the trucks. They are enjoying a good ride in a truck instead of being shunted around in railway trucks. They have not very much to look forward to because generally the knife awaits them.

The PRESIDENT: I do not think pigs have anything to do with this legislation.

The Hon. W. R. HALL: I am just trying to point out that there must be a line of demarcation in deciding who shall pay increased taxation. We are entitled to oppose this Bill. A vehicle-owner is taxed from the time he signs his name on the dotted line when he buys his vehicle until it reaches the stage where he gets rid of it. You, Mr. President, as well as other members, know that that is true. This increase may be regarded as infinitesimal, but it has to be added to all the other charges in which a motorist is involved. After buying his vehicle, a motorist has to pay through the nose for any repair work he has carried out. He also has to pay through the nose for spare parts, as well as having to pay sales tax. In addition, he practically pays for the upkeep of the police force which is maintained to discipline him when he is on the roads; and half the time, he is not allowed to use them. On some roads he is permitted to travel at only 10 m.p.h. while on others, such as the Kwinana Freeway, he must do 50 miles per hour.

A member: They will have to keep their elbows in.

The Hon. W. R. HALL: They will not only have to keep their elbows in, but they will have to keep them off the counter.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: If they cannot see whether the cars are coming or going they should put their headlights on.

The Hon. W. R. HALL: It is true that this tax will only amount to something like £2 or £3 per year, and that it is something which is being imposed because the Grants Commission has pointed a gun at the head

of the Government and told it that it must increase revenue. Originally the driver's license fee was 5s. The previous Government increased it to 10s., and under this Bill it will be raised to £1. One would think a person required a first-class engine-driver's ticket to drive a motorcar. One does not require a bump of knowledge on the back of one's head to qualify for a motor driver's license!

When one looks at the situation, one realises that there are many people who will not be able to afford this additional tax; and they are the people for whom I am sorry. To a lot of people transport is a must. The average person buys a "bomb" as soon as he can in order to take him to work, because it saves him the trouble of rising from bed in the early hours to catch the public transport which is available. That is the type of person who will be badly affected by this impost. Worked out in gallons of petrol, or miles per gallon, the tax is not very much; but it will affect the people to whom I have referred, because of all the other costs incurred in purchasing and maintaining a car.

In other cases, ways and means have been found of extracting money from people without penalising the motorist; and that should have been done in this case. When one comes to think of it, the average motorcar is a light vehicle and does very little damage to the roads. At the present time, pick-a-back transport is using the roads from Kalgoorlie to Perth, and these vehicles weigh from 20 to 30 tons when loaded. They cost the Government of the day hundreds of thousands of pounds because of the damage they do to the half-inch bitumen surface, which will not carry such a weight. These trucks do more damage in one trip than a car would do in 12 months.

A few days ago, going to Kalgoorlie, I passed ten of these trucks in one day; and their weight would be about 30 tons. I wonder how much tax this State is receiving from those trucks?

The Hon. J. J. Garrigan: Nil.

The Hon. W. R. HALL: Very little, if anything at all. Despite this fact, we have no trucks in the other States doing the same thing. These trucks are also running parallel with the railways. Some vehicle-owners who will have to pay this tax would only travel 20 miles per week on the roads. It does not matter whether a person leaves his car in the garage or not, it will cost him an extra £1 or £2 per week in depreciation alone. Everyone who owns a motor vehicle realises that when he tries to sell it,

I do not know of one reason why this Bill should be supported because of the principle it contains. The motor-vehicle owner is taxed enough at the present time without having to pay more tax. For that particular reason, I oppose the Bill.

**THE HON. R. F. HUTCHISON** (Suburban) [3.41]: I wish to say a few words in connection with this Bill because I am a rebel, too. The imposition of this tax on motorists shows up the attitude of the Government. The Government made a great song about the lifting of some of the entertainments tax. I am not against that, but I am against the principle of giving with one hand and taking with the other.

It is the worker who will be penalised by this tax; and more so than by any other legislation which the Government has so far brought down. It is time that the Commonwealth Government called the Grants Commission to order. That is the Government which should do it. The Grants Commission has placed a gun at the head of this State, which is still pioneering its vast territory. This State should be helped instead of being kept the poor relation of the Commonwealth. It is about time the Commonwealth Government did the right thing and saw that this State was more equitably catered for and looked after by the Grants Commission.

I am sure that if the Labor Party were in office in Canberra, something would be done quickly. A motorcar is not a luxury any longer. Factories are springing up all over the metropolitan area, and the workers require transport to reach their places of employment. I know for a fact that many breadwinners are finding it difficult to keep their cars on the road, and it will be almost impossible for them to pay this additional impost.

This Government imposes higher taxes on the people who can ill afford to pay them. That is absolutely wrong and unjust; and it is about time somebody made the Government a little more responsible than it is now.

How can we justify the exemption of heavy transport? Why should operators in the heavy transport industry not have to pay the increased taxes? People on pensions, and other people have to bear the burden; and they have to do with less and less because the cost of living is rising.

This is one of the most unjust propositions that has been brought before the House. The motorist, not the one with plenty of money, who owns a large limousine which he uses for pleasure, but the one who uses his vehicle for the purpose of earning his daily bread will have to pay this tax.

*Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.5 p.m.*

**The Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON:** Before afternoon tea I was dealing with the position of the motorist to whom an increase to £1 in the license fee is quite a penalty. This tax is too heavy. Some years ago the Hawke Government increased the motor-vehicle license fees; and there was

quite a lot of dissension at that time, but we realised that some adjustment had to be made. I think, however, that this is a savage impost which has been brought forward within a very short time of the previous increase. The Government has brought this Bill down while at the same time it talks about relieving people in regard to other taxes.

So far as the entertainments tax goes, I am very sympathetic to relief being given to live shows; and I have advocated that relief should be given to them. But I do not think the Government should be sympathetic towards one section of the people, and at the same time savagely impose a tax such as this on another.

The question of the roads that we need in Western Australia should not come into this debate. We should be granted more money for roads than is granted to any other State because we have such a vast territory; and, as Mr. Mattiske said, we have a small population. The people in the outback of Western Australia—in places where it is hot and dry and there are few amenities—deserve, at the least, good roads, because they are the only means of communication in our vast areas. I do not think we should be heavily penalised on account of our small population.

There should be sufficient men in authority to get together and relieve this position in some way. I oppose the Bill because it is hitting at the small-income group. This seems to be a favourite pastime of the present Government. I also protest against the Bill because I think it will impose a hardship which is not appreciated by those who are introducing the legislation. It might have repercussions. It is most difficult for the working man in Western Australia, with the distances we have, to maintain in a reasonable way, his standard of living, without having this kind of tax imposed on him.

**THE HON. J. J. GARRIGAN** (South-East) [4.9]: I strongly oppose the measure. The Leader of the Opposition has given a good resume of what the members of the Opposition think of the Bill; and I will not waste the time of the House by reiterating what he and others have said. But this increase does come as a great blow to the motorists of Western Australia; and not only to the people of the great outback, but to every person who owns a motor vehicle, because the tax will be imposed on them. It has already been said that the Federal Government should give us more assistance. However, as I have remarked, Mr. Strickland gave a good resume of that position.

I am strongly opposed to the increase of 100 per cent. in the driver's license fee. Many people in Western Australia own one motorcar which is driven by three or four members of the family; the car is

used for work, for social life and for other things. I think it is the worst thing in the world to increase the driver's license fee. We cannot get rid of a marriage license quickly enough; but this license we cannot do much about. I take strong exception to the increase in the driver's license fee because it will affect every man and woman who holds a driver's license in Western Australia.

**THE HON. J. M. THOMSON** (South) [4.11]: Like the other speakers who addressed themselves to this measure, I am strongly opposed to increases in taxation at any time, because I am one of those who have to pay. Being at the paying end of this piece of legislation, I should not be very favourably disposed towards it, but I think we have to be realistic.

On this occasion the Grants Commission has, rightly or wrongly, come in for a tremendous amount of criticism. However, the fact is that this State has, on many occasions, had every reason to be grateful for the assistance it has received per medium of the Grants Commission. But on this occasion that is not the case; consequently the Grants Commission is getting a thrashing. If we do not do as the Bill requires us to do, we will miss out on a vast sum of money; and I think that every fair-minded person in Western Australia—particularly those who drive motor vehicles—would say we were missing out on something that would be of benefit in the long run if we did not do what was required.

Difficult though it is to get past the personal aspect in these matters, I point out that under this Bill a vast amount of money will be expended on roads in the country, including roads in country towns. That is something which has been overlooked during the debate. Some country local authorities will, if the Bill passes, be able to proceed at a far greater pace with the bituminising of the roads within their townships than they can at present. I am sympathetically disposed to the person who is on a low income, and who will be called upon to pay an increase of 100 per cent. in his driver's license fee; but this Bill concerns matching money, and if we do not agree to the measure we will not receive the sum of £5,000,000 from the Federal Government.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison interjected.

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON: The honourable member has had her go; what about letting me have mine? The question of the licensing of the heavier vehicles has come in for comment. Let us not forget that the owners of those vehicles pay large sums now; and they contribute towards the cost of the roads to which they do considerable damage.

I support the measure, not because of my desire to see an increase in taxation—on the contrary, if we could reduce taxation I

would be only too pleased to do so, and would use my vote in that direction—but because if we defeat it we will be denying ourselves the benefit of £5,000,000 which can well and truly be spent and faithfully applied in the country districts. I support the measure.

**THE HON. L. A. LOGAN** (Midland—Minister for Local Government—in reply) [4.15]: We were told in this House, yesterday, that democracy was no longer with us; but the Leader of the Opposition in another place, when questioned by the Minister for Transport as to what he would have done had he still been in office, admitted that he would have chased some of this money.

**The Hon. H. C. Strickland:** But not by this means.

**The Hon. L. A. LOGAN:** He would have chased some of this money; and members ask by what means he would have chased it. By what means could the money be got? Dr. Hislop mentioned one method last night, but that was ruled out; and another member referred to loan money. What Government would dare to use its limited loan funds today to contribute to a fund which would go back into roads? No Government would dare to take £400,000 out of its limited loan funds for that purpose, thus reducing the amount available for schools, hospitals, and so on. From where are we to get the extra money? No-one has told us, except Mr. Strickland, who mentioned loans.

**The Hon. H. C. Strickland:** And Consolidated Revenue.

**The Hon. L. A. LOGAN:** There is insufficient in Consolidated Revenue now. We could be heavily penalised if we used money from Consolidated Revenue for this purpose. I do not deny that this measure contains a bad principle; and I feel that Mr. MacKinnon, Mr. Jones, and Dr. Hislop attacked the question in the right way. Their contribution to the debate was fairly sound in that respect; but do not let us run away with the idea that this is a new principle. It has operated in Western Australia for a considerable time. How often do we find the Main Roads Department saying to a local authority, "If you put a pound in we will do likewise, in order to bituminise your main street?"

**The Hon. H. C. Strickland:** But they do not raise the driver's license fee in order to get the money.

**The Hon. L. A. LOGAN:** They rate the ratepayers in the area for that purpose; and most of them are car drivers; so the principle is not new in this State. However, I believe it is wrong when it is on a Commonwealth basis; because this money has already been raised by taxation. I think it would have been far better for the Commonwealth simply to have given us £5,000,000 over five years, rather than make

further demands on this State. However, it is a *fait accompli* and there is nothing we can do about it.

Whether members think this State is financial enough to lose the opportunity of receiving all this extra money is up to them; but I do not think Western Australia can afford to lose it. We must grasp every opportunity of getting this extra money into the State and applying it purely to road purposes.

Mr. Diver asked what would be the position in regard to traffic engineering, and the money which would be paid into the metropolitan road trust fund. The basis upon which the 10s. will be spent is a roads-needs basis; a State-wide basis, and included in that will be assistance to local authorities in regard to traffic engineering. Some of that is being done now in some centres.

Although it might look at first as though we are giving a lot of money away, I think that in the ultimate much of that 10s. will find its way back into country districts. It is perhaps unfortunate that Mr. Loton, when asking for the figures in respect of New South Wales, did not include some of the other States as well. I have them all here and will give them to members. At page 93 of the 26th report of the Commonwealth Grants Commission we have a table of motor taxation, 1957-58. The tax on private cars of 29 power-weight units in New South Wales is £6 2s. 6d. plus £1 5s. registration fee. When the answer was given to Mr. Loton that was not mentioned—

**The Hon. A. L. Loton:** Yes, it was.

**The Hon. L. A. LOGAN:** It is less, of course, a concession to primary producers of only 10 per cent. on commercial vehicles. In Victoria it is £6 12s. 6d.; in Queensland £9 6s. and in South Australia £8 10s., while in Western Australia at the present time it is £5 7s. 6d.—

**The Hon. A. L. Loton:** I suggest you have another look at the figures.

**The Hon. L. A. LOGAN:** I have the Grants Commission figures here. I will put them forward in order to make it easier. For the 41 power-weight units the figures are, New South Wales, £6.75; Victoria, £9.225; Queensland, £12.6; South Australia, £11.5; Western Australia, £8.2 and Tasmania, £9.225. For the 46.3 power-weight units the figures are New South Wales, £7.825—that is plus £1 5s. in New South Wales and Tasmania—Victoria, £10.418; Queensland, £14.1; South Australia, £13.0; Western Australia, £9.26; and Tasmania, £10.418. For the 61 power-weight units New South Wales is £9.675; Victoria, £13.725; Queensland, £19.2; South Australia, £17.5; Western Australia, £12.2; and Tasmania, £13.725. For commercial vehicles of 29.5 power-weight units New South Wales is £6.5; Victoria, £8.7; Queensland, £9.3; South Australia, £8.0; Western Australia, £7; and Tasmania, £8.575. For the 41

power-weight units New South Wales is £6.5; Victoria, £12.3; Queensland, £12.6; South Australia, £14.0; Western Australia, £9.7; and Tasmania, £10.675. For the 63 power-weight units New South Wales is £14.0; Victoria, £18.9; Queensland, £19.5; South Australia, £22.0; Western Australia, £17.0; and Tasmania, £16.45. For the 79 power-weight units New South Wales is £32; Victoria, £29.625; Queensland, £24.0; South Australia, £29.0; Western Australia, £29.6; and Tasmania, £22.925.

I have already said that in New South Wales and Tasmania there is £1 5s. registration fee to be added to the figures; and the concessions are entirely different. New South Wales gives a 10 per cent. concession on commercial vehicles, and Victoria a 16½ per cent. concession on private cars and 37½ per cent. on commercial vehicles. In Queensland there is a reduction of £1 where the road capacity of a commercial vehicle is more than four tons. In South Australia there is 50 per cent. on commercial vehicles; and in Western Australia 50 per cent. on private and commercial vehicles; while the figure in Tasmania is 40 per cent. on commercial vehicles. It therefore seems that all we are doing is to raise the license fee to a basis comparable with that of other States; as is borne out by the figures I have given.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: What about the driver's license?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Western Australia is already in line as regards the heavier vehicles, so it was not thought right that we should make their fees higher than those in the Eastern States. Mr. Willesee is worrying about the 10s. from the driver's license fee and, he said it would not be paid into the trust fund; but in clause 7 he will see where the 10s. fee is increased to £1; while the next subclause says that all fees paid pursuant to paragraph (a), which raises the 10s. to £1, in regard to licenses and renewals thereof, shall be paid to the credit of the central trust fund.

Instead of endeavouring to claim the whole of the increase with regard to the vehicle license fees, it was felt that we would have to find some other method; and, after all, the license fee of £1 is pretty well in line with the fee in the Eastern States. In New South Wales the driver's license fee is £1, and in Victoria it is 10s.; but in view of their vehicle license fees they can afford to keep it at 10s. In Queensland the fee is 7s 6d. private, and 12s 6d. commercial; and in South Australia it is £1. In Tasmania it is £1; and that is now to be the fee here.

The Hon. R. Thompson: What is it in the Northern Territory?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I do not know. That is not included.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It is 10s.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I was asked whether local authorities could pay this extra money into a special fund to

endeavour to counter a debit in their general fund. I have not been able to get the answer to that, but on general banking principles I do not think it could be done. However, I will make further inquiries. Most members who have spoken in opposition to the Bill have been opposed to the increase in drivers' license fees.

Those who are supporting the measure—I hope there are some—have also said that they object to any increase in fees. As I said earlier, we could have done one of two things; we could have refused to accept any of this money to be made available from the Commonwealth; or we could have raised additional funds to match it. Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Lavery, and one or two other speakers, referred to the hardship that would be suffered by pensioners. No doubt there may be some who will be placed at a disadvantage if this Bill is passed. However, I do not know how we can separate one from another unless we submit them to a means test; and I know the objection members have to that. Nevertheless, I will discuss this aspect with the Minister for Transport to ascertain whether a rebate can be made to those pensioners who will suffer any hardship as a result of the increase in registration fees and the driver's license fee.

Mr. Willesee said that had an account been kept by the North-West of the amount received under this tax, the North-West would have been in considerable credit. I cannot say whether he is right or wrong, because I have not been able to study the figures, but I think the North-West may have been.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: This year that area paid £280,000 in tax.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: From an area point of view, the North-West would probably be on the credit side. Of course, under the previous formula Western Australia stood to gain because it was based on two-fifths area, but now, of course, that has been reduced to one-third.

Mr. Bennetts said he was amazed at the imposition, and that local authorities were hostile because they were to receive only 30s. for each £1. I doubt whether I could find anybody in this House or anywhere else who could take 30s. out of a pot after placing only £1 in it, but that is what the local authorities will be doing. They will get 30s. back for each £1 contributed.

The Hon. L. C. Diver: The State will be getting £1 back.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Yes, 10s. of which will be received by the local authorities. The provisions in the Bill relating to how the money shall be spent are fairly based. It will be on a State-wide basis. It could be that the road leading from the main road into Onslow, which Mr. Willesee so badly wants and which I consider to be necessary, could be classed as a road-need under this legislation.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: I will accept that as a promise.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I agree with the honourable member that that road should be constructed. It could be classed as an urgent road. Mr. Jones, as well as myself, has been asking for a road to be put down at the back of Miling. We consider that it is a road that could well be brought under this proposal as a road-need. I think it will be found that a great deal of the money obtained from the extra 10s. will find itself back in the country areas.

I have endeavoured to cover most of the points raised, and I hope I have answered them to the satisfaction of members. Most of the opposition to the Bill is because it provides for an increase in fees. However, this is not a taxing measure for the benefit of the Government; it is to enable moneys to be raised for expenditure on roads in Western Australia. Despite the fact that we are often told by visiting authorities from the Eastern States that we have an excellent road system, there are still many thousands of miles of roads in this State which are not good; and, in fact, there are many miles of roads in the metropolitan area which are in a bad condition.

If we receive all the money that it is possible to receive in the next five years—approximately £50,000,000—and it is spent wisely, at the end of that period we may be able to say, "We have a road system of which we can be proud." When we work out the proposition over all, it is not so bad as it may appear on the surface. Therefore I hope that all members of the House will support the measure.

**Question put and a division taken with the following result:—**

**Ayes—14.**

Hon. C. R. Abbey	Hon. A. L. Loton
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. G. C. MacKinnon
Hon. L. C. Diver	Hon. R. C. Mattiske
Hon. A. F. Griffith	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. J. G. Hilslop	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. A. R. Jones	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. L. A. Logan	Hon. F. D. Willmott

(Teller.)

**Noes—11.**

Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. J. D. Teahan
Hon. J. J. Garrigan	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. R. F. Hutchison	Hon. W. F. Willesee
Hon. G. E. Jeffery	Hon. F. J. S. Wise
Hon. F. R. H. Lavery	Hon. W. R. Hall
Hon. H. C. Strickland	

(Teller.)

**Pairs.**

<b>Ayes.</b>	<b>Noes.</b>
Hon. J. Murray	Hon. G. Bennetts
Hon. H. L. Roche	Hon. E. M. Heenan

**Majority for—3.**

**Question thus passed.**

**Bill read a second time.**

*In Committee*

The Chairman of Committees (the Hon. W. R. Hall in the Chair); the Hon. L. A. Logan (Minister for Local Government) in charge of the Bill.

**Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.**

**Clause 3—Section 11A added:**

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I move an amendment—

Page 3, line 11—Delete the word "fifty" and substituted the words "one hundred."

By this amendment I seek to have local authorities outside the metropolitan area reimbursed with £1 for each £1 they pay into the fund. The 10s. which is to be paid from the Commonwealth moneys for each £1 subscribed by the local authority, will have no strings attached. Each local authority will be able to spend that money on roads within its own district. It is only fair that if a country road board is subscribing £1—and this has to be paid into the fund if the Bill is passed—

The Hon. L. A. Logan: No, it does not.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Where will the Minister obtain the funds to match the money to be received from the Commonwealth then?

The Hon. L. A. Logan: The word is "may"; if the honourable member will read the Bill.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: In that case, the Minister is not seriously chasing a matching grant from the Commonwealth. If it is left to the discretion of local authorities to subscribe this amount, they may decide not to subscribe. I know some local authorities that do not even own a shovel, so I do not know how they will spend this money. However, we realise that they will probably hire equipment to undertake any road works. If a country road board subscribes £1 of its own funds in order to receive another £1, surely it is entitled to have the benefit of the expenditure of that money. Fifty per cent. of the money is to be retained in the fund. Where is that to be spent?

The Hon. L. A. Logan: I have told you.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I cannot follow the Minister. As far as I can ascertain, that money is to be spent in the metropolitan area. On page 6 of the Bill the specific roads on which the money is to be spent are set out. Out of the £350,000 which the Minister hopes to receive from the Commonwealth, an amount of £120,000 is to be set aside for administration purposes.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: That is not right.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: That is stated in the Bill. We should ensure that for every £1 raised by country local authorities, the full matching amount will be given to them.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I oppose the amendment. Under the existing legislation 10 per cent. of all moneys collected in respect of license fees in the metropolitan area is paid over to the Police Department for its work of collecting the

money. Despite the increases in fees in recent years, the Police Department has still received 10 per cent. of all moneys collected. Of the remainder, the Main Roads Department receives 55 per cent., and the local authorities 45 per cent.

It has been agreed that the maximum amount to be set aside for the cost of collection and administration shall be £120,000 per annum, irrespective of the amount collected. The local authorities are to receive 50 per cent. of the amount, and the Main Roads Department the other 50 per cent. This amount of £120,000 applies not only to the costs of collection and administration of the fees referred to in the Bill, but to the other costs involved in the Act. This is the only State in which this arrangement applies. In the other States all the money is paid to the Police Department.

In this State, up to the present, 10 per cent. has been paid to the Police Department. Now that the cost of collection is fixed at £120,000 per annum, the local authorities are to receive 50 per cent. of the amount, and the Main Roads Department the other 50 per cent. I cannot understand local authorities in the metropolitan area objecting to this provision. I do not believe they are.

Out of every £1 contributed by the Commonwealth Government, ten shillings is to be paid over to the country local authorities, and the other 10s. is to be paid into the central road trust fund, which is to be expended on roads on a State-wide basis.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: At whose discretion?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: At the discretion of the Minister, on the recommendation of the Commissioner of Main Roads. Probably, the road in Onslow could be included in the road-need category. Mr. Jones has been pressing for the construction of a road near Miling, and that could be classed in the same category. I have already stated that the Main Roads Department will assist local authorities by providing technical advice on road engineering. Looking at the over-all plan and at what the Main Roads Department will do with the money, all the roads in the State will benefit, including those in the North.

The Hon. L. C. DIVER: I am satisfied with the explanation given by the Minister. The roads in the North-West could be placed at a disadvantage if the amendment before us were agreed to. Many of the roads in the North-West are in dire need of improvement, and on this basis they will be given high priority. I am prepared to leave it to the discretion of the Commissioner of Main Roads to decide the roads on which this money is to be spent.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The Minister referred to the road at Onslow, which forms a junction with the North Coastal Highway. I point out that north and south-bound traffic, to reach Onslow, has to branch off the road at a point about 10 to 12 miles from Onslow.

The Minister said that the money in the fund could be allocated to improving that road, but I would have been pleased if he had said that the funds would be allocated to that road. My reason for moving the amendment is to ensure that the Ashburton Road Board will receive all the money to which it is entitled. If that local authority raises several thousands of pounds as a contribution to the matching grant, it is entitled to receive the full matching grant. Mr. Diver said that the roads in the North-West are in great need of repair and that they will have a high priority. So they should.

Last year the amount derived by the State from the petrol tax under the old formula was £7,200,000. Of that amount, the area lying north of the 26th parallel was responsible for bringing into the State £1,440,000, which is one-half of the amount on the area basis. In other words, this area represents slightly in excess of half of the State. That is how the formula has applied since 1928. Last year, for the first time, the amount spent on roads north of the 26th parallel exceeded £1,000,000.

If we work out the amount which that part of the State was responsible for collecting under the new formula—one-third based on area, one-third on registrations, and being one-third on population—we will find that it brought in £1,300,000.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: You are working on the wrong formula.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I am giving these figures as an example of what the North brings into the State under the petrol tax formula. If any priority is to be given to road construction, the roads in the North should be given a very high priority because the North has earned a great amount for this State.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: What about the area from the rabbit-proof fence to the South Australian border?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The money brought in by that area was responsible for such projects as the Narrows Bridge and the Kwinana Freeway. That area will continue to bring money into the State.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: Do you suggest the money should be spent in that area?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: No. I suggest it would be fairer to give the country local authorities their full share of the matching grant so that the entrance road to Onslow could be properly constructed.

Amendment put and negatived.



The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The Minister raised the point as to why the metropolitan roads boards are not happy with the proposed formula. It is because they are to get only 25 per cent. of the funds, and not 50 per cent. as was indicated. They will receive 50 per cent. of half of the money paid into the central road trust fund. That is stated in paragraph (b) on page 3 of the Bill.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: That is not 25 per cent.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: If they contribute £100, they are to get fifty per cent. of one half of £100; and that is £25. I suggest that that is why the metropolitan road boards are not satisfied.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I am afraid that the honourable member's thinking is not too clear today. I have already said that all the money from the metropolitan area is pooled into a fund. Out of that, £120,000 is taken. Then 50 per cent. of the remainder is paid into the trust fund for the benefit of the local authorities, and the other 50 per cent. is for the benefit of the main roads fund.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4 put and passed.

Clause 5—Section 13 amended:

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Proposed new subsection (2) of section 13 is most unjust and unfair. It costs very little for a local authority to carry on such a process as is contained in this subclause; and we are getting at the motorist from every possible angle. In this case if a motorist's car is smashed up, or is uneconomical to run, or if it is ordered off the road by the police—a thousand things could happen—he is to be penalised 10s. if he wants to hand in the license. When speaking to the second reading, I said that I intended to move several amendments if the Bill reached the Committee stage. This is one of them. I move an amendment—

Page 5, lines 5 and 6—Delete the words "ten shillings" and substitute the words "two shillings and sixpence."

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The amount of money to be received under this provision is not expected to be very great. All it does is to put a charge on the motorist who gets a refund because of cancellation of a license. If the Act is read, it will be found that the charge will be made, and the local authority may deduct it from the amount to be refunded.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: That depends on whether the secretary likes you or not.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: My interpretation of it is that it depends on the amount involved, although I may be wrong. Mr. Strickland said that it was mandatory for the local authority to make this charge, but the word in the Bill is "may." Although there is not much work involved in the transfer of a license, surely we should expect to pay for the small amount that is involved.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: You are lucky to get a refund at all.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Yes. There is just as much work, if not more, involved in a refund as in a transfer; and surely some payment should be made towards administration costs. The amount will not be great; but it is extra money that will be paid into the trust fund to try to build it up. I hope the amendment will not be agreed to.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I am afraid the Minister is intending to mislead the Committee. He said that the local authority may deduct it. If subclause (2) is read it will be found that the local authority "shall" make the charge and "may" deduct it from the refund. The authority must charge 10s. for the refund.

The Minister was again attempting to mislead the Committee when he said the money is being charged for administration purposes. It is being charged for the sole purpose of building up the fund to enable more to be gained from the Commonwealth Government.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: That is what I said.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: That is not for administration purposes. The Minister corrected me earlier in regard to this matter. An amount of £120,000 is to be taken from the overall license fees for costs of collection and administration. If I remember rightly, the Minister said that the old system used to be 10 per cent. for the Police Department; but now the amount has been fixed at £120,000 annually. Therefore this charge for the refund has nothing to do with administration. It is merely a method of squeezing some more out of people in order that another 10s. might be gained from the Commonwealth. I feel that the refund should be made for nothing; and as the Minister has said that not very much will be gained from this source, why chase the few who will be affected by it? I support the amendment.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: There is one point to be remembered. When there is a refund of a license fee we lose the license, or portion of it. Therefore we do not have the benefit of that amount. This is not a very great amount but it has to be made up from somewhere. Every £100 which is taken out of this fund means £100 less to be gained from the Commonwealth. That is the most important point to be remembered.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: You can use any money you like.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Yes. We could use loan money if we liked; but what Government would do that?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I thought I had made my point clear to the Committee. The benefits we are gaining through this scheme will be enjoyed by the whole State. Therefore the burden should be borne by

the whole State and not just one section of the community. It is for the purpose of gaining some equity in the matter that I have moved my amendment. If a fee has to be charged, 2s. 6d. is sufficient.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 6 put and passed.

Clause 7—Section 23 amended:

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: I move an amendment—

Page 9—Delete paragraph (a), lines 3 to 6.

I am opposed to this increase and have moved this amendment to test the feeling of the Committee. I do not believe that at heart there is anyone who supports this increase in the driver's license. If my amendment is agreed to, there will be no material effect on the purpose of this Bill. This is, I believe, the worst feature in the Bill.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: To say that it does not make much difference to the scheme is ridiculous because, for a start, it will cost us £115,000 in cold blood. That is not much when you say it quickly! Much has been said about the Government being able to find the matching money from somewhere else. The Government is already finding £115,000 from Consolidated Revenue to match the £115,000 it will get from the increase in license fees, which makes a total of £230,000. If the amendment is agreed to, we will get that much less from the Commonwealth, and so I hope the amendment will not be accepted.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: I do not believe the amendment would defeat the scheme. The £115,000 that the Government is to find is money which has already been extracted by way of license fees; and the additional money is mythical money. A sum of £115,000 spread over the entire State is not much when one considers the condition in which our roads are kept. It does not justify this increase.

The Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: I agree with Mr. Willesee. I object to this part of the Bill; and I wonder whether the Minister has considered what the position will be in a home where there are perhaps three or four drivers but only one vehicle. Those people will be paying £4 a year for motor-drivers' licenses. I think that is an imposition.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: To be consistent I must support Mr. Willesee. This imposition will seriously affect the pensioners. I know of one man in particular who rendered great service to this State by assisting youth organisations. He is now in a position where he cannot move from his home unless he is taken by car. We have tried to get extra assistance for him, but without any success. Only £8 14s.

a week goes into the home, and the car is a necessity because he requires medical attention four times a week. The amount of 10s. extra for a motor-driver's license fee does not sound much, but to people like that it is a heavy impost. I support the amendment.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: On the last occasion that the motor-driver's license fee was increased by 100 per cent., the money went into Consolidated Revenue; but on this occasion the extra money will be used to get an extra grant from the Commonwealth. If the amendment is agreed to, it will mean £115,000 that the Government will not get, plus £115,000 that it will apply out of Consolidated Revenue; and thus it will mean a loss of £230,000 to the State in matching money. I hope the amendment will not be agreed to for the reasons I have already given.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: Further reiteration would be valueless but I intend to divide the House on the issue.

Amendment put and a division called for.

The CHAIRMAN: Before the tellers tell I give my vote with the ayes.

Division taken with the following result:—

#### Ayes—11.

Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. J. J. Garrigan	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. W. F. Willesee
Hon. R. F. Hutchison	Hon. F. J. S. Wise
Hon. G. E. Jeffery	Hon. J. D. Teahan
Hon. F. R. H. Lavery	(Teller.)

#### Noes—14.

Hon. C. R. Abbey	Hon. G. C. MacKinnon
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. R. C. Mattiske
Hon. L. C. Diver	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. A. F. Griffith	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. L. A. Logan	Hon. F. D. Willmott
Hon. A. L. Loton	Hon. A. R. Jones
	(Teller.)

Majority against—3.

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 8—Third Schedule amended:

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: This is the vital clause affecting the schedule which prescribes the fee and arranges for additional fees. This is the clause in which additional fees for commercial vehicles should, in my view, appear. As it is the crux of the Bill, in so far as finance is concerned, I think one or two relevant observations should be made.

In introducing the Bill, the Minister said that increased license fees will overcome objections by the Commonwealth Grants Commission, which has stated that our fees are below those obtaining in the standard States; and that was the reason for reducing the grant. I would like the Minister to tell members when that statement was made by the Grants Commission. It has not been made since 1957, when motor-vehicle license fees were increased somewhat. Last year this State

got a weighted credit in its income for road finance—a sum of £76,000. We were not penalised at all; so what is all this nonsense? In the Grants Commission report which has just been received it will be found that there is reference to motor-vehicle license fees, and to the new arrangements with the Commonwealth for a matching grant.

The Grants Commission has said that it does not intend to make any adjustment for this year in the light of the new circumstances. So do not let us be misled into the idea that we are going to be penalised if we do not make these increases, because such is not necessarily the case. There is no mention of it in the Grants Commission report, either for this year or last year.

The Leader of the Opposition in this House gave a very clear outline of the position, but it was passed over quite airily by the Minister in his reply. There is no need for us to make an application to be a party to the agreement which involves the matching grant; and if these figures are analysed, as he analysed them, and as others have done, it will be seen that it is a very doubtful privilege. There is no need for us to be included in this matching grant proposal; and, even if there were, there is no need for the extra revenue to be obtained from a sectional interest—the private motor-vehicle user—while the heavy haulier is exempt. There is also a continuing exemption for primary producers. On the one hand they pay no increase, and on the other they will still enjoy this 50 per cent. reduction on vehicles used essentially for farming pursuits.

This is so full of inequity that the amendment to the schedule should not be entertained by this Committee. I represent a far-flung province—one which depends on the use of motor vehicles, as do most country provinces—and I cannot understand other members who represent similar provinces agreeing to a principle that entirely absolves from extra payment the heavy haulage and commercial vehicles which use the roads to an enormous extent.

Those who supply bluemetal for the making of roads claim that the use of their vehicles makes for better roads. They certainly supply the material for this purpose; but they also make a profit, of which there is no secret. They are enormously flourishing concerns. I object to the argument that it will increase the cost of living and so on because it is possible for them to pass it on. That is no argument for levying such a tax. These people pass on all sorts of costs, including taxation; as is the case with the many millions of pounds of sales tax that is passed on to and paid by the purchaser.

I oppose clause 8 which affects the third schedule and, in turn, places this sectional tax on those who can ill afford to bear it. This is the one which will show the *bona fides* of those who are prepared to say, "Let the sectional interests—the private vehicle owner—pay the added 25 per cent. impost, and let the others go scot free." There is no equity in that, any more than there is a necessity to raise this money from those concerned for the matching grant. This was quoted by the Leader of the Opposition in this Chamber when he referred to the fact that the Federal Minister said that the money need not be obtained in this fashion.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: If members want to defeat the object of the Bill, they will vote against this clause. It is one of the three or four methods by which money is to be raised. The intention of placing this impost on privately-owned vehicles is to bring their charges into line with the charges in the Eastern States. The charges on the heavy haulage trucks here are considerably higher than those of the other States.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The Grants Commission did not draw attention to that.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I am not talking about the Grants Commission.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: You were. You used it as a reason, not even as an excuse.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I am talking about the average of motor-vehicle license fees in this State and the others. Surely the proposition to increase these fees is fair enough in order to bring them into line with those in the Eastern States.

The Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: The fees on private motor vehicles are already in advance of those in the Eastern States.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: They are lower at the moment. I do not think we need bring the Grants Commission into this.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: You did it. You used it in your introductory speech as a reason, not even as an excuse.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I may have done, but I am now dealing with license fees.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Have a look at page 65 of last year's report.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The Grants Commission has nothing to do with it. We have to raise this money to match the Commonwealth grant. Mr. Holt probably did say that it could be raised from loan money.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: He explained how free the States were in the method to be adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Minister should be allowed to proceed without interjections. If the Minister will address the Chair it will be far better.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I have said if members want to defeat the object of the Bill, they will vote against this clause.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I am sure that was a wholly unsatisfactory reply. It is not a question of whether it is meritorious to retain this Bill or defeat it. The question involved is whether it is incumbent on the Government to raise the money in this way. This will not interfere with the contract in regard to the matching grant, and it will not interfere with the revenue for roads. As the Minister indicated, this imposes a sectional tax; a heavy burden is being placed on those least able to bear it. This provision is the whole crux of the matter and should not be entertained for a moment, because the Commonwealth Government itself made it clear through the mouthpiece of two of its Ministers that it was in the State's hands.

But this is not the way to raise the money; to impose a sectional tax. If this burden is to be imposed let it be imposed in its broadest sense, because if anyone is to derive a benefit from money to be spent in the State it is not a sectional interest at all but the entire State.

The Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: That is why it is such an imposition.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: So I plead with those who normally oppose sectional taxation to support me.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: There is a certain amount of bulldozing going on in relation to the Commonwealth. I attended a deputation on behalf of Bell Bros. to the previous Minister for Works in an endeavour to have the axle load weight increased. Bell Bros. had a special type of body built at considerable cost for the cartage of super, and so on, but they were not permitted to undertake any carrying which exceeded an 1,800-lb. axle load.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: What did the previous Minister do about it?

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I am not concerned with that. I do not say that all that was done by the Labor Government was right. Mr. Wise should be thanked for drawing attention to the fact that this is purely sectional taxation. Having listened to Mr. Wise's speech, I certainly do not envy the Minister his job. Mr. Wise has shown that there is a fair bit of skulduggery going on, and we owe him our gratitude.

The Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I do not think we should rush to sudden conclusions about things. I would like more time to study the Grants Commission report. At page 71 we find the following:—

177. The Commission's calculations show that, in 1957-58, if the claimant States had raised taxes at the average rates and with the average exemptions applied in the non-claimant

States, South Australia would have raised £995,000 more, Western Australia £713,000 less, and Tasmania £385,000 less than was actually raised.

So our taxes in general were well above the average level. To continue—

178. In making this comparison, the comparatively small revenue from licence fees is left out of account, because these fees are usually levied for special purposes or to meet needs peculiar to a State. Differences in motor-tax fees and charges are also left out of account, because as explained in the 24th Report (paragraphs 69-70), motor tax is regarded as a special-purpose tax and is taken into account in making budget corrections for the impact of road finance on the budgets. However, in determining the adjustment which should be made for Western Australia, the relatively low level of motor fees and charges in that State has been borne in mind.

It must have some impact.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Let us concentrate on this particular matter; not on many other sorts of taxes. I would refer to page 50, paragraph 121, of the Grants Commission report. I said that the Commonwealth Grants Commission had no intention of making any adjustment on this occasion in regard to motor-vehicle license fees; and reference was also made to the fact that the money did not have to come from this source. On page 50, paragraph 121, halfway through reads as follows:—

The arrangement for "matching" grants provides that the Commonwealth will make available to each State each year, on a £1 for £1 basis, up to a specified maximum, an amount equal to the excess of the allocations by the State for road purposes from its own resources in any year over the amount allocated in 1958-59.

Then come the words—

These State resources are not specified in the legislation.

That is the crux of my argument. It is no use endeavouring to imply or state that the Commonwealth has asked the Government of this or any other State to raise funds for the matching grant in this manner. That is the point. The Grants Commission says so.

The Hon. L. C. DIVER: I think it is a dead-heat.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The Commonwealth Ministers say so. One cannot overrule the words in paragraph 121 of the Grants Commission report of 1959, which say that there is no provision imposed upon the State; and the State's resources for this money are not specified in the legislation. That is the important

point. The money should not be found by levying a special tax on a section of the people.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Nobody has denied what the Commonwealth Government or the two Ministers said in regard to the source of this money. The Commonwealth Government said that the State had to find the money. The State has three sources of income—loan funds, Consolidated Revenue and trust funds. I have already said that we are taking £115,000 out of Consolidated Revenue to assist the fund; and I think that is a generous action on the part of the Government.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Levy the tax in equity, and you might get it.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I have already said that loan funds cannot be used as there would be a hue and cry throughout the State. It is not possible to use trust funds, so the Government used its own discretion as to how it would find the money. Is there anything wrong with that?

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It is a sectional tax.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: It was just as bad when the previous Government raised the fees for heavy vehicles to an amount greater than that paid in the Eastern States.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: They wear out the roads, too.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: How do we compare with the Eastern States in railway freights?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I am not dealing with railway freights at the moment.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: You are looking for money.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I made reference to the Grants Commission in one small paragraph, and what I said has been taken out of its proper context. This State is doing what is required by the Act which was passed by the Commonwealth Government. In order to find the necessary money, the Government proposes to increase motorcar and commercial vehicle license fees, and bring them into line with those in the Eastern States. The Government has not included heavy-duty vehicles, because the present license fees are higher than those paid in the Eastern States.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Only in some instances.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: They are up to the average; and that is all we are doing with the others. There is nothing unfair about that. We have increased the driver's license fee from 10s. to £1; and we are matching the additional amount to be raised with a grant from Consolidated Revenue. All in all, we will obtain about £400,000, which is not a great amount. I cannot see anything unfair in the method which the Government intends to use to raise the necessary money in order to

obtain the Commonwealth matching funds. No doubt if the Labor Government had still been in power, it would have found this money.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Not in this manner.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: There is no other way. Nobody has suggested any other way.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: We cannot impose taxation; we are sensitive about that.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: No suggestion was made in another place. We had to act quickly in the manner in which we have in order to raise this money so that it would be matched by the Commonwealth grant.

The Hon. A. R. JONES: Last night, when speaking on the second reading debate, I think I made it perfectly clear how I felt about this tax. I also made it clear as to where I placed the blame—on the Federal Government, which requires the State of Western Australia to find this money. Motorcar and utility owners will be required to pay additional license fees in order to bring these fees into line with those in the Eastern States. At the present time, the owners of heavy trucks are paying the same license fees as apply in the Eastern States, and they should not be called upon to pay any more. None of us would be inclined to tax people who do not own motor vehicles and therefore do not use the roads, even though they might travel in public transport.

Therefore in fairness to the Government we should pass the Bill, because the motorist will obtain the greatest benefit from the improved roads. As I said last night, it would be more equitable if the money were raised by means of a petrol tax. The man who travelled 3,000 miles per year would pay a certain amount; and the amount paid by a person who travelled 30,000 miles would be larger.

Had the Commonwealth Government not relinquished a halfpenny a gallon tax on fuel, it would not have been necessary to increase the license fees of light cars and utilities; and the retention of the halfpenny tax would have been a fairer and more equitable way of raising the money. I am hopeful that later on these increased license fees can be reduced, and that the increases will be limited to the time this money is being made available. I appeal to the Committee to support the Minister even though the argument submitted by Mr. Wise and the other members who have spoken has been reasonable. If circumstances had been different, I think we might have had to accept what they said.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Mr. Jones reminds me of those Western Australian members of the Federal Parliament in Canberra who spoke against the new formula and voted for it, to the detriment of Western Australia. The Minister

repeated his statement that nobody suggested an alternative means of finding this money. I say without hesitation that Consolidated Revenue funds can be used.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: We are using £115,000 now.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: There is a way of improving Consolidated Revenue funds which would please the Grants Commission considerably—by raising rail freights to the level of those which apply to the Eastern States in regard to wheat alone. An adjustment of rail freights in Western Australia would bring in an enormous amount of money. As the Grants Commission has stated, the Western Australian Government Railways are a tremendously heavy burden on the State for the reason that freights are out of step with those charged in the Eastern States. The losses from the Consolidated Revenue Fund amount to £5,000,000 or £6,000,000 per annum. Therefore, if the Minister desires some other alternative, the Government has a way open to it without even approaching Parliament. It can readjust rail freights to bring in an extra £400,000 and apply them to this road fund.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: It is necessary to have the fact recorded that Western Australian heavy-vehicle motor licenses are lower, on the average, than those of the other States, in spite of what the Minister has said. In table A at page 93 of the 26th report of the Grants Commission we find the following information regarding motor taxation in respect to commercial vehicles:—

Commercial vehicles of 29.5 power-weight units.

State	Motor tax.
Western Australia	£ 7.0
Tasmania	8.575
South Australia	8.0
Queensland	9.3
Victoria	8.7
New South Wales	6.5 (+1.25)

Commercial vehicles of 41 power-weight units.

State	Motor tax
Western Australia	£ 9.7
Tasmania	10.675
South Australia	14.0
Queensland	12.6
Victoria	12.3
New South Wales	6.5

Members will notice that in the first group all the States are above Western Australia. In the second group, the only one below Western Australia is New South Wales. That is the position all the way through in connection with power-weights. It is not true to say that Western Australia is higher than the average of the other States; it is lower. Therefore there is room for these types of vehicles to be weighted as the private vehicle is to be weighted with the 25 per cent. increase which this schedule provides for.

By way of interjection I think that Dr. Hislop said there was no equity in any form of taxation. I can suggest many inequities in this State which form a field for the collection of this amount; and I would quickly have a review of the water costs and charges in respect to the irrigation areas of the State. An increase in those amounts would, except for partisanship on the part of those belonging to the districts concerned, receive the support of everybody in this Chamber. It is not a matter of imagination or ingenuity to find a way, but of realistically approaching the whole picture.

On the figures submitted by the Grants Commission in the tabulation of heavy-duty motor-vehicle licenses, there is no answer—and none has yet been given by the Minister—to the proposals that these vehicles should also pay the added impost. We are still in the position of not having had an answer to the question asked in connection with the levying of this tax in a sectional manner.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Because the Minister has not one to give.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I am prepared to debate the matter until the Minister will reply, or attempt to reply, because I think this question has not been fairly placed in so far as the inequities are concerned.

Clause put and a division called for.

The CHAIRMAN: Before the tellers tell, I give my vote with the noes.

Division taken with the following result:—

Ayes—14.

Hon. C. R. Abbey	Hon. A. L. Loton
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. G. C. MacKinnon
Hon. L. C. Diver	Hon. R. C. Mattiske
Hon. A. F. Griffith	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. A. R. Jones	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. L. A. Logan	Hon. F. D. Willmott

(Teller.)

Noes—11.

Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. J. J. Garrigan	Hon. R. Thompson
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. W. F. Willesee
Hon. R. F. Hutchison	Hon. F. J. S. Wise
Hon. G. E. Jeffery	Hon. J. D. Teahan
Hon. F. R. H. Lavery	

(Teller.)

Majority for—3.

Clause thus passed.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I wish to move a new clause, 8 (c).

The Hon. H. K. Watson: Is it on the notice paper?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I gave notice that I would be moving it. I have a copy of the proposed new clause here.

The CHAIRMAN: There is nothing before the Chair. The honourable member is a bit late in moving a new clause. However new clauses have been taken before without their being on the notice paper. I shall take it.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: This will be new clause 8 (c).

The CHAIRMAN: Clause 8 has already been agreed to. The Committee has agreed that clause 8 stand as printed. The honourable member is not in order in proposing to add a new provision to clause 8.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Recommit the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: The honourable member can move for a new clause, although it is a bit late. New clauses are acceptable after the clauses in the Bill have been dealt with.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I will move it that way.

The CHAIRMAN: This will be proposed clause 9.

### *Point of Order*

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The question was put to the Committee that clause 8 stand as printed, and the Committee divided. The proposed amendment, according to the copy I have, produced by the honourable member seeks to add a new subclause (c) to clause 8. I suggest the honourable member is out of order.

The CHAIRMAN: I have already told Mr. Thompson that such an amendment is out of order because we have already dealt with clause 8. But he can move it as clause 9 if he so desires. That is the ruling from the Chair.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: May I ask that proposed clause 9 be circulated to one or more members of the Committee?

The CHAIRMAN: I think Mr. Thompson should give his amendment consideration, and bring it up on recommitment. According to the copy I have, it deals with the increase.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Could I put forward a new clause?

The CHAIRMAN: If the honourable member ties it up with clause 8, it will have to be included in part I of the third schedule. Therefore the honourable member would have to do it by recommitment.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: If you, Sir, rule that way, I shall move that clause 8 be recommitted.

The CHAIRMAN: The honourable member can do that on the motion for the adoption of the report. The honourable member can do it today if he wishes, because the Bill has not been amended.

### *Committee Resumed*

Title put and passed.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

*House adjourned at 6.13 p.m.*

# Legislative Assembly

Thursday, the 5th November, 1959

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

### WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT

#### *Financial Details*

1. Mr. W. A. MANNING asked the Treasurer:
  - (1) Since the inception of war service land settlement in this State, what amount of money has been received from—
    - (a) sale of crops;
    - (b) sale of wool;
    - (c) sale of other produce, grown on properties acquired or developed by the War Service Land Settlement Board before allotment, and on abandoned farms after abandonment?
  - (2) As a result of such sales, what profit or loss was made?
  - (3) If a profit was made, for what purposes was it used, or how was it disposed of?