

Legislative Council

Tuesday, the 13th August, 1974

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

QUESTIONS (4): ON NOTICE

1. TRAFFIC

Accidents: Statistics

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

For the States of South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania, Queensland, Western Australia, and also the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory—

- (1) How many miles are there of traffickable road.
- (2) How many registered motor vehicles are there?
- (3) What are the death and injury rates—
 - (a) per 10 000 miles of road; and
 - (b) per 1 000 vehicles?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER replied:

As all of these statistics are available in the Transport, Communications and Travel chapter of the Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia there seems little point in repeating them.

2. NARROGIN HIGH SCHOOL

Library

The Hon. D. K. Dans for the Hon. R. F. CLAUGHTON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is it intended to upgrade library facilities at the Narrogin High School this financial year?
- (2) If not, will the Minister have investigated the need and urgency of any upgrading?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

- (1) and (2) A new library block was opened at Narrogin Senior High School late in 1973.

3. HOUSING

Modifications: Finance

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

Further to my question of Wednesday, the 7th August, 1974, in relation to funds for alterations and modifications to State Housing Commission homes, will the Minister advise the value and

number of requests made to the State Housing Commission for such work to be carried out since the 1st April, 1974?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

There have been eighteen (18) requests for alterations and modifications. Of these, six (6) have been approved at a cost in the order of \$3 000. The remaining twelve (12) requests are currently being investigated prior to approval and cost particulars are not presently available.

4. LABOUR DAY HOLIDAY

Determination

The Hon. D. K. Dans for the Hon. D. W. COOLEY, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) What historical significance does the Government attach to the observance of Labour Day as a public holiday?
- (2) Would the Minister name the sporting organisations who influenced the Government to refuse the Trades and Labor Council's request to shift the 1975 Labour Day holiday from the first Monday in March to the first Monday in May?
- (3) Why were the sporting organisations' interests in this matter preferred to those of the Trades and Labor Council?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

- (1) Labour Day has been celebrated in W.A. on the first Monday in March since 1949. It was changed to that date at the request of the Australian Labor Party because of uncertain climatic conditions affecting the holiday which, prior to 1949, had been held on the first Monday in May each year. Only one other State in Australia celebrates the holiday in May.
- (2) Letters were received from major sporting organisations representing athletics, basketball, bowling, cricket, golf, hockey, lawn tennis, horse racing, swimming, polo-crosse, softball, trotting in favour of March. I can arrange for the Hon. Member to peruse the letters if he so desires. The soccer organisations preferred the change to May and the rowing organisation had no preference. Two other organisations contacted did not make a submission.
- (3) As the holiday has been celebrated satisfactorily for 25 years and the workers in the community are the same persons participating in sporting and recreational functions under the auspices of the

various organisations contacted, it is considered the interests of the workers as represented by those associations as to the benefits to be gained from the holiday outweigh any advantages that a change may effect for the Trades and Labor Council.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY: SIXTH DAY

Debate resumed, from the 8th August, on the following motion by the Hon. J. T. Tozer—

That the following address be presented to His Excellency—

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

THE HON. I. G. MEDCALF (Metropolitan) [4.41 p.m.]: I should like to add my congratulations to those of the other members of the House to you, Sir, upon your appointment to the high office of President of the Legislative Council. It is, indeed, an honour to which few people are able to aspire. There have not been very many Presidents of the Legislative Council; it is one of the high offices of State and I am quite sure you, Mr President, will fulfil that role with the same dignity and ability with which you filled the roles of Leader of the House and Leader of the Opposition and, indeed, with the same demeanour with which you graced this House as a back-bencher—as you probably were once many years ago. I add my voice to those raised in this House in support of your appointment.

Secondly, I would like to congratulate and, again, add my voice to the voices of those members who have congratulated the Leader of the House (the Hon. N. McNeill) and the other Ministers who have attained ministerial office, and also to the Leader of the Opposition (the Hon. Ron Thompson) to whom I extend my very sincere congratulations. I am quite sure they will all do their best to fulfil the roles cast upon them.

I want to talk about the Constitutional Convention and general matters arising therefrom. In the spring session of 1970 a resolution was passed by both Houses of the Victorian Parliament, without opposition, to the effect that a convention should be held of members of the State Parliaments representing both Government and Opposition with a view to reviewing the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia, after which

an approach should be made to the Commonwealth Government in order to secure amendments to the Constitution.

It is generally believed that the convention was the brainchild of Sir Henry Bolte—and I believe it was—who was then Premier of Victoria. He put the suggestion forward publicly and it was quickly taken up by the other States. Three points should be noted.

Firstly, Sir Henry's main concern was the question of revenue for the States. Secondly, it was to be a convention of States on an all-party basis; and there was no suggestion that the Commonwealth Government should be a party to the convention.

Thirdly, it was appreciated that whilst the States could make suggestions for constitutional review, it was the Commonwealth that had the ultimate responsibility for doing something about it, because only the Commonwealth can put forward a referendum to the people; the States are not in a position to do that. As a matter of history we know what happened. The States all agreed that it was desirable to have an all-party convention with substantial equal representation between the various Governments and the various Oppositions throughout Australia.

The McMahon Government was then in office in Canberra and the suggestion was amended so that the Commonwealth was to send observers to the convention, and then later the Whitlam Government, on taking office, became a full member of the convention. The Whitlam Government put forward the suggestion that representatives of local government should be included among the delegates to the convention. The Steering Committee agreed to that suggestion. The first plenary session of the convention met in Sydney during September, last year, and it included equal delegations of the Governments and the Oppositions of all the States of the Commonwealth, plus the Commonwealth Government, plus representatives of local government by States, plus representatives of the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory.

Twelve delegates attended from Western Australia; six from the Government and six from the Opposition. Five of them were members of this Legislative Council and two of those members have since retired.

It was a unique occasion, as I think those members who were present would agree. However, in a sense, it was not quite unique, because a similar meeting had occurred approximately 70 years before in exactly the same place. All State Premiers, all Leaders of the Oppositions, the Prime Minister, and the Leader of the Federal Opposition were present.

Although the meeting was not quite a unique occasion it was, nevertheless, an historic occasion. It was made even more historic because the delegates were meeting in the Legislative Council Chamber of the Parliament of New South Wales where the original convention debates had taken place and where Deakin, Forrest, and others had sat and spoken 70 years before.

Sir Paul Hasluck opened the convention at an impressive ceremony in the Sydney Town Hall, and then the delegates adjourned to the rather quaint building which comprises Parliament House in Macquarie Street. It was curious to see all the political leaders of Australia thrown together in such a context. It was a rather mixed-up group, one might say. They had probably never contemplated that they were to meet in such a situation and it was quite apparent that adjustments had to be made in their manner of address to one another. Some very good speeches were made, and there were some very bad ones. There was also a good deal of politicking going on.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Too much.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: Mr Whitlam gave a dinner party in the middle of the convention for the State Premiers. All Premiers attended except Mr Bjelke Petersen and it was alleged, next morning, that "a deal" had been done at the party. It had nothing to do with the convention. However, people were speaking about "the deal" with bated breath but as far as I am aware nothing came of it. *The Bulletin* carried on its front page a picture of a semi-recumbent Mr Whitlam sitting in one of the front benches almost asleep. On the picture was the caption, "It was a terrible bore, wasn't it Gough?" In fact, it was not a bore but an interesting experience as far as I was concerned and one would be less than realistic to think that all those Parliamentarians were gathered together without some politicking going on.

The convention proceeded to pass the first motion which was to the following effect—

"That this Convention recognizing that the Parliaments of the Commonwealth and the States have decided that the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia should be reviewed, resolves—

- (a) That this Convention identify the areas of the Constitution in need of change; and
- (b) That the areas so identified be referred to Standing Committees of this Convention

for investigation and report, in the light of the deliberations of this Convention and in accordance with such instruction as may be given by the Convention, to the next meeting of this Convention."

Thereafter, in order to avoid what could easily have been an acrimonious dispute about these items on the spot between so many people of different political complexion, the convention, instead of debating the topics, allowed speeches to be made and simply took note of a number of topics which were discussed and which had been suggested by the State and Commonwealth delegates and by private people and placed on the agenda.

These topics were referred to the Standing Committee of the convention for investigation and report, and included such items as—

The uncertainties concerning the power of State Parliaments to refer power to the Commonwealth Parliament.

The operation of the power to alter the Constitution by referendum.

Alternative methods of initiating alterations and altering the Constitution.

Additional powers which might be conferred on the Commonwealth to enable the Commonwealth to exercise adequate powers to manage the Australian economy.

The financial provisions of the Constitution with particular reference to—

- (a) the limitations on State taxing powers
- (b) the Financial Agreement
- (c) powers and procedures in relation to grants (Section 96)
- (d) taxation of the property and operations of Commonwealth and States and
- (e) the position of local government in relation to Commonwealth and State taxation and immunities.

The trade and commerce power, with particular reference to overseas and interstate trade, corporations, industrial relations and freedom of interstate trade.

The External affairs power, paramountly of Commonwealth legislation and exclusive powers in relation to Commonwealth places.

Additional legislative powers which might be conferred on the Commonwealth, including energy resources, family law, defamation, shipping and navigation.

The place of local government under the Constitution—and a number of other matters.

All these topics were referred to the various Standing Committees of which there were four in number known as "A", "B", "C", and "D". Since then the committees held a number of meetings and sub-committees were formed to divide up the very detailed and painstaking work entailed in the consideration of all these topics. I understand that a further meeting of the full convention is scheduled to take place in Adelaide early in November, at which the committees will report on progress and the committees' recommendations will be considered and debated.

Although the constitutional problems which the convention has faced up to date are very technical and very diverse, in a general sense they all illustrate the problems of centralism and State rights. This is a basic philosophical clash, and it became apparent in the consideration of most of these topics. This is a clash of power between Commonwealth and State Governments. Whilst the States have the residue of powers under the Constitution, and the responsibility that goes with those powers, the Commonwealth alone has the financial wherewithal to exercise the powers effectively.

No-one should doubt that the residue of powers lies with the States; the Constitution was framed in that way. Before Federation, the States were self-governing communities. They were not colonies ruled from Downing Street, as someone has incorrectly stated. They had power to determine their own Constitutions, since the passing of the Colonial Laws Validity Act by the Imperial Parliament in 1865. In fact, they had determined their own Constitutions and exercised customs and excise powers, and the defence power in a minor way. They also participated in extra-territorial agreements, especially in fishing and similar matters. There was one fetter only on the constitutional sovereignty of the States, and that was a provision that any legislation passed by the States must not be repugnant to Imperial legislation. If it was repugnant, it was void.

The States agreed voluntarily to join together in what was called one indissoluble Federal Commonwealth. Western Australia hung back, but later agreed to join the Commonwealth just before the date of commencement after a referendum had been held in Western Australia. The referendum decided, by a comparatively small majority, that Western Australia should join the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth was given certain powers as set out in the Constitution, which was then passed by an Act of the Imperial Parliament at Westminster. It had to be done that way as there was no other way to form the Commonwealth of Australia. The Imperial Parliament at Westminster possessed full sovereign powers and it was the source of all law in the imperial domain, and indeed, in legal theory, the Imperial Parliament at Westminster is still today the source of law and sovereignty.

In 1931 the Imperial Parliament passed another important Statute known as the Statute of Westminster. This Statute purported to confer complete sovereignty on the dominions, including the Commonwealth of Australia. The States, however, were rather concerned at the passage of the Statute of Westminster and they secured the introduction of a provision to the effect that in any matter which was within the exclusive jurisdiction of the States, the Commonwealth could not intervene; and further, that the Commonwealth was not empowered to amend the actual Commonwealth Constitution—that had to be amended in accordance with the referendum power set out in section 128.

The States also secured a provision that the Commonwealth should not be required to agree with any legislation of the British Parliament which was within the exclusive authority of the States, so the Commonwealth could not block State legislation. So this Statute, which greatly enhanced the Commonwealth's general legislative authority, nevertheless did contain safeguards to prevent the Commonwealth encroaching on the powers of the States. However, Mr President, as you well know, if the Commonwealth was unable to make direct inroads into the States' powers, it achieved the same purpose by other indirect methods by reason of the wartime provision of income tax which continued after the war in spite of court challenges by South Australia and Victoria, and by dint of the Financial Agreement of 1928 and the use of section 96, which empowers the Commonwealth to make grants to the States on such terms and conditions as the Commonwealth deems fit.

The Commonwealth became the dominant financial partner as it produced the major part of the revenue and was, therefore, able to call the tune. The High Court of Australia has assisted the cause of Commonwealth domination greatly over the years since Federation as it has generally speaking adopted a view more favourable to the Commonwealth. Of course, the Commonwealth's financial domination has been a source of great concern to State Premiers of all political colours. A former State Labor Premier, and former member of this House (the Hon. Frank Wise) protested strongly against this in 1946. He

wrote a letter to Mr Chifley—the Prime Minister at the time—objecting to the Commonwealth's continuing to exercise its uniform taxation powers to the exclusion of the States. He wrote in strong terms, and he never received a satisfactory reply.

Throughout his career as a member of this House, the Hon. Sir Keith Watson continued to object to the Commonwealth's failure to hand back taxing power to the States and he launched strong objections to various Commonwealth Treasurers, as well as to the Prime Minister of the day (Mr John Gorton) and his then Treasurer (Mr McMahon). Many Treasurers of our State raised the same objections, but they were all voices crying in the wilderness. It is true to observe that the Commonwealth has had centralist tendencies which have caused it to try to obtain more and more power.

This tendency was restrained by many Commonwealth politicians who held a genuine belief that the States had a role to play in a system of co-operative federalism. Suddenly, this gradual process towards centralism has turned into a mad downhill or onward rush since Labor came to power in the Commonwealth Parliament in 1972. We have seen the quickening of the tempo of centralism because of the different attitudes of Labor leaders. Mr Whitlam said—

I am, I always have been and I never will be less than a confirmed and avowed centralist or unificationist.

Senator Wheeldon has said that it is the Federal Government's policy that State Governments should be abolished. He also said that it was true that there was a tendency for the Federal Government to transfer power away from the States and that he supported that policy. The Commonwealth Government proceeded willy nilly on its centralist course. Even though there was a convention sitting and dealing with the question of the extension of Commonwealth powers and the rationalisation of State and Commonwealth finances, Mr Whitlam was not prepared to wait. He introduced his Seas and Submerged Lands Bill which contains a declaration of Commonwealth sovereignty; his Petroleum and Minerals Authority Bill to expropriate mining tenements granted under State laws; his Financial Corporations Bill and many others, including questions which the public has answered in the various referenda which have been held in the last 12 months. The Labor Government is purporting to legislate in many areas of very doubtful constitutional validity, where Commonwealth power is extremely doubtful, to say the least. Where the Government cannot find any shred of power, it attempts to achieve its purposes by administrative action, by allotting funds to various projects and purposes administratively but without legislative authority other than Supply

Bills. It is even entering such areas of State responsibility as education, health, environmental protection and the arts.

To underline the determination of the Commonwealth Government to crush the States, one of the new Commonwealth Government's first administrative acts was to forbid Commonwealth departments to supply information on matters of mutual concern to State Government departments. That is not a very good example of co-operation. I have here a letter from the Commissioner of State Taxation. I had written to him and complained about a pensioner who was not being allowed a tax exemption. The Commissioner of State Taxation informed me that the Commonwealth Government had ceased to supply information to the State Government and therefore unless the department received the information direct from the pensioner, it could not get it from the Department of Social Security. The letter from the Commissioner states—

If the foregoing is the case, may I suggest that your enquirer write to me explaining the situation in detail, advising that they are a pensioner and submitting to us some confirmation of that fact, which may be obtained from the Social Security Department. (Unfortunately, under the new arrangements with the present Commonwealth Government, the Department will now not supply to us any details, as it did previously, and therefore we must ask the pensioners to obtain this verification themselves and submit it).

This is part of the new Commonwealth Government's policy of not co-operating with State Government instrumentalities.

The Hon. G. W. Berry: It is even hard for the pensioners to obtain the information also.

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF: I did not know that. There are other examples of this lack of co-operation and I believe that the public is entitled to expect better co-operation than it is receiving from its elected representatives. The public may be excused for thinking—perhaps erroneously—that public servants are the servants of the public. It may be excused for believing that it should not be the victim of the desire of one Government to crush another. A Government has no right to withhold services to the public because of its political rivalry with another Government. People believe that they employ Governments, which in turn employ public servants, and that they are entitled to the services that are provided. This is not a clash between two rival Governments answering to two different sets of people; this is a clash between Governments answering to the same set of people. What about the people in between? If one Government usurps its responsibilities and deprives people of proper services, are not the people entitled to become angry? Here we

have a situation where the Federal Government is pretending it is not a Federal Government; it is claiming to be the only Government—the Australian Government. It has forbidden its employees to co-operate with the other organs of government. In union circles, this would be called a demarcation dispute.

At the 1967 Law Convention in Adelaide, two learned speakers said that the Constitution had created a dog which had got out of the kennel and taken over the house and put its former masters in the kennel. The dog is now trying to remove the kennel altogether. One could well ask, "How long will the people suffer such Government?" I have no objection to the Commonwealth providing funds, so long as the funds are given to the States which have the expertise, the local knowledge and the ability to perform their duties and administer the funds.

As I have been saying, centralism has been greatly accentuated under Labor. What can State Labor members do about this in the face of Labor policy and platform? Here is a report which appeared in *The West Australian* on the 14th July, 1973, which states—

Surfers Paradise, Friday.—The W.A. Premier, Mr Tonkin, and the MHR for Perth, Mr J. Berinson, fought a losing battle today on the issue of centralism.

They combined at the ALP federal conference to oppose a move for State Governments to refer certain legislative powers to the Commonwealth.

Mr Tonkin claimed that the move would probably destroy State Labor Governments. Mr Berinson described the proposal as dynamite.

But the conference voted 40 to 7 to endorse the move, which tightens the Federal Government's centralist powers.

The resolution was moved by the Attorney-General, Senator Murphy, as chairman of the legal and constitutional committee, and was supported by the Prime Minister, Mr Whitlam.

The decision was incorporated in the party's platform and is binding on State Labor Governments . . .

As a result of the decision, Labor policy now provides for the States to refer to the Commonwealth such legislative powers as will help to achieve the party's objectives.

Mr Perry referred the other day to a speech made by Mr Whitlam in 1957 and which is contained in a booklet. The speech was the Chifley Memorial Lecture and the title of the lecture was "The Constitution versus Labor". The speech was written by Mr Whitlam and contained his plans for

taking all power into the hands of the Canberra Government. Among other things, he had this to say—

Much can be achieved by Labor members of the State Parliaments in effectuating Labor's aims of more effective powers for the National Parliament and for local government. Their role is to bring about their own dissolution.

What can State Labor members do about such a situation? Do they have to sit in the Houses of Parliament and preside over their own dissolution? Centralism is the philosophy which underlies the desire of the Government to usurp State powers, to isolate, starve, bankrupt and abolish the States. Centralism is the philosophy behind Labor's desire to retain total Commonwealth financial power and State Labor members must support this policy.

The centralists seem to fail to realise that if they push too hard they will get an equal reaction in the opposite direction. The issue is not confined only to Western Australia but also affects Queensland and other parts of the Commonwealth. In the 1930s, the people of Western Australia revolted against financial domination of the States by the big cities of the east. Members will recall the secession campaign in respect of which my predecessor in this House, the Hon. Sir Keith Watson, was a leading figure. I think he was one of those who presented the petition to the Imperial Parliament in Westminster in 1934. In the interim period between the 1930s and the 1970s, secession became a completely dead issue but in the 1970s we have seen a revival of it with secessionist candidates standing for parliamentary office. The deep underlying reason behind the secession campaign probably is not a belief in the virtue of going it alone but rather that people resent the growing political domination of their lives emanating from Federal Labor Governments which, largely, represent the populations, rather than the wealth, of the big cities of the east.

There is a subtle difference. In the 1930s the local people were frightened that the wealthy people of Melbourne and Sydney were going to dominate them, destroy their businesses, and prevent their development. Now, there is a fear that they are outnumbered by the big populations of the East. The rebirth of the secession issue can be simply explained as a backlash against centralism. It is a clamour for State rights. It is a strange thing to read the books and periodicals of the time when secession was an issue in the early 1930s. The same terms such as "centralism" and "State rights" are contained there. Let no-one think they are new terms; they were being bandied around in the 1930s, just as they are now. Centralists would do well to heed this backlash, because

where people are utterly frustrated with Government, they turn to more violent outlets or to apathy or sullen resentment. If they cannot beat an overpowering Government, they will despise it and refuse to co-operate with it.

At the first convention meeting in Sydney, the issue of secession was raised by one of the Western Australian delegates, Mr Manning. He endeavoured to amend one of the topics in order to introduce the question of secession. He was ruled out of order by the chairman, partly because he raised it at a late stage of the sitting. The chairman referred to the preamble of the Constitution which refers to "one indissoluble Federal Commonwealth" and said that a constitutional amendment would be required if the convention were to permit a secession of States. Whilst agreeing that a constitutional amendment would be required I point out that it must not be thought that secession, if it became a political possibility, could be brought about by any simple method. Unless it were possible to achieve it by a referendum under section 128 of the Constitution—that is to say, by an affirmative vote of a majority of the people in a majority of the States—it would be necessary to secure the passage of an Imperial Act. It is quite clear that the Imperial Parliament at Westminster still remains the ultimate sovereign power as far as the Australian Constitution is concerned.

I have referred to the tangible safeguards contained in the Statutes of Westminster which give the States the right of access and confirm the authority of the Imperial Parliament. But there are conventions of another sort which would in such a case require the Imperial Parliament to obtain the consent of the Commonwealth and possibly even the consent of all the other States. So, although secession is legally possible, the likelihood of the legal possibility being realised is somewhat remote. On the other hand, one should take note of the phrase "One indissoluble Federal Commonwealth", particularly the word "Federal". Federal means a combination of Federal States; it does not mean one indissoluble central Commonwealth or one indissoluble central Government. Any action which tends to abolish the States, therefore, is a fraud on the Constitution.

But the political difficulties which surround the legal possibility of secession will have little effect on the backlash against centralism. Centralism is the expression of an abhorrence by the ordinary man in the street of being governed by people who live in a remote place, where he has no chance of influencing their decisions and very little chance of making contact with the administrators. It is the fear of "Big Brother" and it is a very real fear. I believe it contributed to the overwhelming defeat of the State Government at the last election in Western Australia.

Mr Whitlam and the Labor Party do not appear to hear or heed this anti-centralist backlash, so it will continue to grow; because if something like this is ignored it will flourish. I would not hazard a guess at what form it will ultimately take.

So the centralism issue is peculiarly highlighted in the convention debates, but I look to the convention as one does to talks in industrial disputes. So long as both sides are talking, even though they are in dispute, there is hope of a settlement.

As I have said before, in the interests of democracy and of government close to the people State and Commonwealth Governments should be co-operating. But how can one party co-operate if the other will not? Co-operation is a mutual process. The party that refuses is failing in its obligation to the people to provide a good means of government within the constitutional framework of government. Instead we have the spectacle of the Commonwealth Government hellbent to destroy the States; accusing the States of failing to carry out their obligations to provide funds for State purposes; and refusing itself, to provide funds for State purposes. So the Commonwealth Government says "We have to intervene; you are not doing your job; you are not carrying out your constitutional responsibilities." This is what the Commonwealth Government is saying after having deprived the States of their legitimate funds with which to perform their duties and meet their responsibilities. Is not that a fraud? I believe it is the confidence trick of the decade, and I accuse the Commonwealth Government of it. Having deprived the States of their legitimate funds with which to carry out their job the Commonwealth Government says, "You will not do the job so we will have to."

I would not care to hazard a guess at the future of the Constitutional Convention. It may break up in disagreement and go into recess; or it may produce reports which will give some ray of hope here and there. It will, I believe, do some good; I certainly hope it will.

But whatever the decisions and recommendations of the formal sittings of the convention may be, they will be of little use unless they result in a practical political solution. By this I mean that in the long run there must be some kind of political compromise between the advocates of central power in Canberra and the rights of peripheral groups—such as Western Australia—to govern themselves. There will be political bargaining which will come after the convention if the convention is to succeed. The bargain will be between the States with their powers on the one hand and the Commonwealth

with its money on the other, and some kind of sensible compromise must be reached.

Mr Snedden has already said, "I believe there would be great value in the appointment of a working party to examine a proposal that a predetermined share of the revenue collected by the Government should go to the States". This occurs on page 124 of the *Convention Hansard*.

Mr Whitlam has totally rejected this proposition. I notice with interest that the State Premiers are apparently about to put up to Mr Whitlam a further suggestion along these lines. When I refer to the State Premiers I include, of course, the State Labor Premiers who are just as keen to arrive at some sort of arrangement for financing their States, and it will be interesting to see whether anything more comes out of that. At this date and time, however, Mr Whitlam has rejected any proposition for sharing the tax revenue. Yet this is the root problem of the convention on which most of the others turn. If the contending parties were willing to try to solve this they could find a suitable formula, I believe, without too much difficulty. At that stage when the States finances were secured, the States could refer such powers of a national kind as should reside in the Commonwealth. But there is quite a long road ahead before this stage is reached, because the Commonwealth believes that it holds all the trump cards and can win without making any concessions to the States. It is proceeding on a dangerous course of ignoring the people of the outlying States whose desire, not unnaturally, is to control their own destiny and not be controlled by the representatives of the big cities of the east.

Legislation is for people—for all people—not merely for sections of them. If laws are made for people and they are remote from the aspirations and desires of those people such laws will be resented, rejected, or ignored by them.

Decentralised Federalism is a better form of government than a centralised bureaucracy. Centralised control as a political philosophy is as out of date as the moguls. There is a growing wish by people to think and do things for themselves—to govern themselves and to determine their own destiny.

In Western Australia we need our own clear-cut economic policy tailored to this State, which we should think out on a State basis—as should the other States—after which there should be co-operation to make the Federation work.

We must be responsible for our own destiny as a State, or we will be relegated to a series of counties—as is the case in the United Kingdom—ruled from Canberra. This is too large a country for that, and such a system is not working well even in the U.K.

Recently we saw a move in the right direction when the State Premiers held an historic conference in Sydney, without the Prime Minister being present, at which they made an offer to co-operate in the fight against inflation. There should be regular meetings of the State Premiers—in fact, there is a case for the formation of a Standing Council of Premiers with their permanent secretariat and representation in Canberra. Meetings should be held at regular intervals to discuss questions of Federal concern and to rationalise points of view and provide assistance on common problems. This is the role the Commonwealth was supposed to fill. This is the role it was expected to fill on Federation—the role which in 1900 the States hoped would be assumed by the Commonwealth. But the Commonwealth is not fulfilling this role. It is, therefore, now up to the States to accept their responsibilities in a united manner and take over the role which the Commonwealth Government—obsessed with its own power and importance—has neglected to fulfil.

This is the real challenge to the States today. If they accept this challenge and assume this role of leadership, not only will they force the Commonwealth to come to its senses but they will have responded in a statesmanlike way to the need for good government and will have earned the gratitude of a somewhat disillusioned but still hopeful populace. I support the motion.

THE HON. J. HEITMAN (Upper West) [5.24 p.m.]: Like most other members I too would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your elevation to the President's Chair. After the service you have given to the Parliament of Western Australia over the years such an honour is well deserved. I would also like to congratulate Mr Neil McNeill on his appointment as Leader of the Government in this Chamber, and to also add my congratulations to Mr MacKinnon and Mr Baxter on their appointments to the Ministry. My congratulations also go to Mr Ron Thompson on his elevation to the leadership of the Opposition and to his Deputy Mr Stan Dellar.

From year to year we are given the opportunity in this Parliament to select men whom we feel are competent to fill such positions and, so far as I am concerned, I feel that this year we have done exactly that—we have shown our confidence in those who have taken up their respective jobs.

We have heard recently a great deal about the plight of the farmer, and I would like to talk about this tonight. Over the last few months a good deal has been said as to how well off the farmer is; that he has never had it so good; and that sort of humbug.

I would point out, however, that since 1971 we have had three upward valuations of the Australian dollar and with the downward trend of the American dollar this has

made a 25 per cent difference to all exports; and as Australia and Western Australia are pretty big exporters this has made a great difference to the income from primary production that has been exported from Australia.

I would like to mention that the cray fishing industry has exported 13 096 tonnes, valued at \$31 006 000. If the industry had had the benefit of the 25 per cent increase its income would have been worth a further \$7.750 million. Let us now consider the question of wool exports. The total amount of wool exported was 701.1 million kilos. I do not have the exact figure for this, but on the recent value of exports at 200c a kilo, it would be worth something like \$350 million.

The total amount of wheat exported was 11.977 million tonnes. As we are all aware the price of wheat was fairly high this year, but if there had not been that upward revaluation of the dollar the wheatgrowers would have received \$295 million more than they will receive.

In considering the question of telephone rentals in the country districts we find this aspect alone has cost the country people something like \$20 million. The distance in connection with the free installation of telephones has been reduced from 15 kilometres to 8 kilometres and this has cost the people concerned a further loss of \$8 million. At one time we all know that depreciation of machinery was allowed as a taxation deduction, but now it is not allowed and this constitutes a further loss to the people of \$10 million. Apart from this deductible expenses have been reduced and this has meant the loss of \$17 million.

In the case of most industries we know that where there are works involved these constitute taxation deductions; but this is not so in the case of a farmer who may have to provide his own water supply by putting down a bore or sinking a dam. This is not now an allowable deduction although at one time it was, and, as I have said, the total loss here is \$17 million. I would further point out that the increase in private company tax has cost the people concerned \$1 million. The sales tax on freight and inflation will be in the vicinity of \$12 million; though I am not too sure of this because I have not the exact figure with me. It has been said that one does not pay sales tax on freight but that is not true. The further north one is the more sales tax one pays on freight; and in primary producing areas the people concerned are paying a 20 per cent increase on duty.

The Hon. T. O. Perry: That is correct.

Mr HEITMAN: There is no exemption of sales tax of carbonated beverages containing 5 per cent of fruit juice, and this is costing the industry \$2.5 million. The concessional rates for country newspapers has been abolished and this has meant a loss of \$3 million to the industry. At one time some aid was given

in connection with country air services. This has now been abolished and has created a further increase of \$2 million to be paid by the country people. Apart from this the dairy subsidy for one year has cost that industry \$9 million and the free milk for schools has meant an added cost of \$12 million. The meat levy that was imposed two years ago has added a further burden of \$18 million to the industry. At one time the freight on fuel was subsidised to the country areas. This has now been cut out and on dieselene alone which may be used for farming tractors the industry will face an added cost of \$20 million.

The stabilisation of petrol will cost the industry another \$3 million. The concessions on interest rates have been abolished and this will cost the industry \$46 million. As from next December the superphosphate bounty will be cancelled and that will cost the industry \$57 million. In my opinion, this is one of greatest subsidies that has been given to the rural community, because it has helped Australia to such an extent in the production of wheat, wool, and meat that the extra taxation on these commodities raised by the Federal Government would be something like \$156 million.

Not only has this assistance been taken away from the farmers, but recently the price of super has gone up \$18 a ton; so they have been pretty hard hit.

The brucellosis and TB eradication assistance has been withdrawn and this was worth another \$6 million to the industry. Then, there was another export meat levy to pay for the cost of inspectors. This is costing the industry another \$12.5 million. There is also a differential of duty on brandy and other spirits, and this costs the industry \$1 million.

In all, the industry is losing something like \$260 million, without the revaluation loss of 25 per cent which the primary producers of Australia have had to bear. Let us consider the first advance on wheat, which is \$1.20. This has been increased by 10c over the last 20 years—a tremendous advance for the farming community with all the costs it has had to bear!

The Hon. R. Thompson: When was the 10c increase made?

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: In the last three years.

The Hon. R. Thompson: It had not been increased for 13 years?

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: It was the first time for 20 years. We hear about the community subsidising the Australian farmer with the home consumption price of wheat. Let me say that at the present time the home consumption wheat runs into something like 93 million bushels and the Australian farmer sells that for \$1.93 a bushel; and everyone knows that at the present time the overseas price for wheat is between \$3 and \$4 a bushel. So the

Australian farmer is subsidising the Australian consumers of bread and flour, and anything else in the wheat or cereal line, to the extent of something like \$100 million a year. We do not hear much about this, but in 1952 the same thing happened. From 1950 to 1953 the Australian farmer subsidised the community of Australia to the extent of something like \$320 million for bread so that the export price would not have to be paid by them.

We never hear the consumers mention anything about this. They do not seem to realise that they gain more than they lose.

With regard to wool prices at the present time, because of the inflationary trend right throughout the world and because no-one seems to have the money to buy wool, some wool sales have had to be cancelled. Last year the price was around the 200c a kilo mark on the farm, but this year the farmer would be very lucky to get 100c a kilo. This is a tremendous drop in the price, and with the shearing rates up from 43c a sheep to 91c a sheep, members can imagine what the farming community has to bear at the moment.

I thought it would not hurt members to know something about the situation, because we have heard a great deal recently about the Forrest Place incident and how farmers were incited and abused. The idea was to get the town people to hate the country people, because it was felt this would help the Labor Party a great deal. However, I think the whole plan failed really because there were not many farmers present. At the same time if those who were insulting the farmers had only known the true position in the farming community today I am sure they would have acted differently.

Although many farmers have received this year more than they have ever received before from a first wheat payment, because it was a wonderful season, the fact remains that most farmers today are trying to get carry-on money from the banks until the next wheat payment. This has been necessary because of the inflated price of everything they must buy.

With reference to the Forrest Place meeting, a friend of mine, who is a keen photographer, placed himself and his camera in an advantageous position in Forrest Place. With his zoom lens on his movie camera he took a very good couple of hundred feet of the meeting, and it is quite interesting. I have seen the film twice. He also had a tape recorder with him so that it is possible to listen to the sound effects as well. It is good to look at that film and compare it with the newspaper reports, and also with what has been said here. According to the film, when the Prime Minister descended from the dais, he had Sergeant Bert Hutchins with him and two men on horseback in front of him and another two behind him,

with just enough space for him to walk out and shake hands with all and sundry. If he had jumped into his car quick and lively he would not have been in any trouble at all. The film shows the Prime Minister taking his time about getting into his car, and by that time the crowd was around him, but not a punch was thrown at him at any time after he left the dais.

A member: Have you seen the pic in the eye?

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: I will come to that.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Did your friend produce the film for the police when they were investigating the incident?

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: They can look at it at any time. He is very proud of it, as a matter of fact.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I think it is a bit late now.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: Yes. The film showed that the sergeant and his horsemen did a tremendous job to clear the way for the Prime Minister. To my way of thinking most of the noise was started by a lot of young people. I would not think they were farmers, but I would not know what organisations they represented. They started to yell even before Daly spoke. The previous speakers had tried to incite the farmers, but when Daly got going he really turned the heat on and that is when everyone—the farmers and everyone else—started to yell.

Mrs Vaughan said that many farmers were there and that she knew some of them. I know she knew one of them because one of them knew her. While she was rubbishing the farmers and trying, to use her own language, to upset their hip pocket nerve, she spotted this chappie and said, "All the farmers are not rubbish!" He said, "Thanks Grace", because he knew the remark was meant for him.

The honourable member went on to say that it was hard for her with an eye full of pie and with tomatoes and sheep dirt being thrown at her. I would like to tell everyone here that if she had sheep dirt thrown at her it would not have been thrown by farmers because they prize it as the best fertiliser.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: They might have spared a bit that day, though.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: No farmer there would go to the trouble to do anything like that, so it is pretty terrible when people start talking like this.

The Hon. W. R. Withers: How many farmers drink Coke?

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: I said something about Forrest Place to the Leader of the Opposition and he said that he was not there.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I said I was not there?

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: Yes.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I was there from 11.40.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: The honourable member can check in *Hansard*. That was the interjection.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I must have known a thing or two that day because I was drinking coffee with high school teachers at Rockingham.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: In *The West Australian* of the 27th March, Mr Thompson, who was then the Minister for Police, is reported as follows—

Farmer "rabble like bikies"—minister The West Australian Minister for Police, Mr Thompson, yesterday described farmers who demonstrated against the Prime Minister in Perth on Monday as "scum and rabble".

That just about fits his mouth.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I said, "scum from the scrub".

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: That is very nice, is it not, when we know what farmers had to put up with and how they were incited?

The Hon. R. Thompson: Yes, but read all of what I said.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: I will read some more.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I said that the farmers at Leederville Oval were a different kettle of fish, but that those at Forrest Place were scum.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: After having called them scum and rabble, Mr Thompson said—

"I have a lot of respect for farmers generally,—"

I hope that Mr Abbey, other farmers in the Chamber, and I are included in that category. To continue—

"—but this was the scum from the scrub," he said. "Their pigs are better behaved than they were.

"These people were equivalent to the bikies, but they left their bikes at home. These were the same people who complain when the bikies go into their areas and cause trouble."

During the demonstration, at a State election rally in Forrest Place, Perth, Mr Whitlam was jostled, pelted with tomatoes and hit by a half full soft drink can.

I thought it was a full one because afterwards one of those present said he drank it and it was very refreshing. To continue—

Mr Thompson yesterday had talks with WA's acting Chief Superintendent of Police, Mr A. J. Parker, and

the acting Police Commissioner, Mr R. H. Sims, about police action and security arrangements during the rally.

Later, at a press conference, Mr Thompson said he was satisfied with the way police acted in the crowd of 12,000.

The papers reported the number as being 10 000, but the Minister for Police at that time said it was 12 000.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I never at any time referred to 12 000. I said there were 10 000 present.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: This is the report of what the then Minister said.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Do you believe everything that you read in the paper?

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: I am giving Mr Thompson an opportunity to refute it.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Only when we want to.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: The article continues—

All available police—a total of 129, including 59 uniformed police—were there.

SECURITY REVIEW

He said: "The Premier, Mr Tonkin, said he was completely satisfied with the police action, and the Prime Minister has not lodged a complaint."

I did not think he would because he enjoyed it. From the expression on his face when he left the meeting it looked to me as though he had stirred up all the trouble he could and, having done so, was making for Canberra as fast as he could. He did not have the stomach to face the 6 000 at Subiaco, but if he had gone there he would have learnt of the problems confronting the farmers, and he would have gone home a much more enlightened man.

The Hon. R. Thompson: If he had been given a reasonable invitation, he would have attended, too.

The Hon. N. McNeill: Even if the Premier did not want him there.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: He did not want to go there and that is all there was to it. He had plenty of time. Further on the article states—

Meanwhile, Commonwealth Police are reviewing the security arrangements for Mr Whitlam.

The acting Commonwealth Police Commissioner, Mr L. S. Harper, is conducting the review, and will consult senior Federal officials.

It is likely that more officers will be assigned to future public meetings attended by Mr Whitlam, and there could also be a change in procedures.

I think this is quite right. There would have to be a change; particularly when a man comes over here especially to incite people into doing things they have never done before in their lives; and have done them only because they were abused so much.

The Hon. R. Thompson: How did they know they would be incited? He did not know they would be there so he did not predetermine he would incite some mob.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: After everything Mr Whitlam had done to farmers in Australia, and in Western Australia in particular, would the Leader of the Opposition not expect some farmers to go there and try to tell him?

The Hon. R. Thompson: All the other speakers have said it was not the farmers in Forrest Place. You are saying it was.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: I was not there.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I was.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: The Hon. Grace Vaughan said she recognised some of the farmers who were there.

The Hon. R. Thompson: I was talking to 20 or 30 whom I knew.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I think the offer still stands that any farmer or group of farmers can apply to the rural industries assistance commission.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: A farmer applying to the commission would not have a dog's chance because it would be six months before his application was heard and another six months before he got a decision. Farmers are not people who crawl to everybody to try to get help, but when they are honestly trying to do a decent day's work they do not like to be abused by the Prime Minister of Australia.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: One group has already applied, and I hope they are not the kind of people you mentioned.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: Let us see what the police had to say—

The secretary of the Police Union, Mr I. T. Fraser, who attended the Forrest Place meeting, said he thought the police had always been in control.

"The lack of panic in the congested crowd was probably a tribute to the cool way the police handled the matter," he said.

"I think the fact that no-one was hurt was also a tribute to the work of the police."

The leader of the National Alliance in WA, Mr W. R. McPharlin, denied yesterday that the alliance had been involved in Monday's disturbances.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: That was the Country Party, was it?

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: The Country Party was accused of many things.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Who accused them?

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: I think the Labor Party accused the Country Party of a fair amount of complicity in the arrangements, but the honourable member knows as well as I do that his party had full control of the meeting and organised the whole thing to bank up this feeling of hate. I am getting members of the Opposition stirred up. They do not like the truth.

The Hon. R. Thompson: This is highly amusing because that statement by Mr McPharlin was made from Albany.

The PRESIDENT: Order, please! The Hon. J. Heitman has the floor.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: The Leader of the Opposition is leaving. He has had enough.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: He is conserving cigarettes.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: I would like to repeat what Mr McPharlin had to say—

Mr W. R. McPharlin denied yesterday that the alliance had been involved in Monday's disturbances.

"While a certain irresponsible rural element was apparently involved, it is obvious that farmers were not the only ones to blame," he said.

Here is someone else who does not deny the farmers were there; neither do I. To continue—

He said that anti-rural forces had had ample time to mount their own demonstration, knowing it would reflect against the farming community.

He did not condone the actions of primary producers involved in the violence.

When one looks at the true picture, there was no violence from the farmers.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: That is a very soothing story to tell to people.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: The honourable member has missed half the story. Had he heard the story right from the beginning, he would have more to talk about; but as he is being irresponsible, as he normally is, there is nothing I can do about it.

One could go on for quite a long time talking about the hostility and the record crowd in Forrest Place on that occasion. We all know it was a cooked-up affair, and even the Farmers' Union says, "Don't blame the farmers." The executive of the union said it was totally unjust and misleading to blame the farming community for everything that happened, and I heartily agree.

The Hon. T. O. Perry: Tell us what Mr Whitlam said about Monday being the middle of the week.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: He does not know anything about farming people or he would not make such statements. He

asked, "What are they doing here on Monday?" When one is running one's own business and does not want to bear all these impositions, of course one would come to the city. It is part of one's business to come to the city and try to see the Prime Minister.

I would now like to speak about the State Housing Commission. Other speakers have mentioned the indiscriminate use of land by the State Housing Commission and I would like to enlarge upon that matter. It appears to me the commission does not have any thought of working in with local authorities. The first that local authorities know about houses being built in the area is when timber and other materials land on the site, and the building surveyor or health inspector has to pass the plans because the houses come under the local authority's building by-laws.

It would not hurt at all if the commission asked local authorities what use they intended to make of certain areas in their districts. This does not happen. The commission will build a house for Aborigines here and a rental home there, and a local authority has no chance to plan when the State Housing Commission makes indiscriminate use of the land available in the district. Never at any time does the commission advise the local authority what it intends should happen with the buildings it erects. On quite a few occasions houses for Aborigines are erected in places where one would not expect them to be.

This has happened at Watheroo. I had to get in touch with the State Housing Commission because it was planning to build a house for an Aboriginal family right in the main street. It is not a big town and the main street was intended to be reserved for commercial buildings. The first that the local authority knew about it was when the timber arrived on the site. The local authority said it would be prepared to move the timber if the State Housing Commission would agree to build the houses four or five blocks further back and leave the main street for commercial use.

The arrangement was agreed to, and then the commission built the house immediately opposite the kindergarten. I have had a fair bit of experience with Aborigines and I have helped quite a few families to get houses of their own. It is always possible to find a site which is acceptable to the Aboriginal family and to the other people in the town. But fancy putting a house for Aborigines opposite a kindergarten! Everyone knows that Aborigines cannot take liquor, and even though a good family might be occupying the house, other Aborigines bring their liquor and consume it on the premises.

A great deal of trouble has been experienced as a result of houses for Aborigines being built next to other houses without consulting the owners of the other houses or the Aboriginal family for which the house is intended. Immediately a house is built for Aborigines, the value of the house next door is greatly decreased. Many people have written to me stating that although they had nearly finished paying for their house, the value of it went almost to zero when a house for Aborigines was built next to it. Eventually the house occupied by Aborigines becomes unfit to live in and the Aboriginal family moves out.

If the State Housing Commission intends to erect this type of home, it should have full knowledge of what the local authority intends to do. The Aborigines could be given a course in home management before they are given houses so that they will know what is expected of them. I think it is mainly on grounds of hygiene that people do not want to have Aborigines living next to them, and I have seen what happens when they have a drinking orgy. In two or three cases in Morawa, an Aboriginal family was given a home, and other Aborigines arrived bringing their drink with them; they also bullied the occupiers of the house to go down to the town and bring drink back with them. After one such party, it cost \$1 200 to repair the damage done to the house. When I asked what had happened to it, I was told they get drunk and push heads through partitions. I do not object to Aborigines being given houses or to their being integrated, but it should be done in the right places and in the right manner.

I would like to compliment the home-makers—the women who go around the various districts helping the Aborigines to set up house and to make the best use of their social service money. The home-maker must first of all win the goodwill of the Aboriginal family and gain their confidence so that she can talk to the Aborigines, tell them how to buy, how to make the social service money cover their needs, and how to look after the children. These women do a tremendous job. I do not think they have reached the stage where they can improve the living conditions of the Aborigines but they are doing their best to educate them.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton interjected.

The Hon. J. KEITMAN: If the honourable member wishes me to hear him, he should speak up.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Be careful not to praise them too much. They do not produce anything, and that is bad from your point of view.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Did you understand that?

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: No-one can understand him. He mumbles away to himself.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I can hear him but I cannot understand him.

The Hon. J. HEITMAN: The home-makers are not paid a great amount for the work they do in going amongst the Aborigines and trying to get them to do the right thing. We should have more of these women in the districts where Aborigines congregate.

The other night Mr Gayfer told us a very interesting story about the comprehensive water scheme. There are many other areas of the State which are deficient in water. The only part of my province to which the comprehensive water scheme has been extended is the Dalwallinu region, and even there it does not go far enough.

There are many other areas which are worse affected by salt encroachment than some of the areas covered by the comprehensive water scheme. Around Bindi Bindi, for instance, there are areas of 25 000 to 60 000 acres where there is no hope of putting in a dam. Even on the hills one can strike salt water about six or eight feet down, and every bore there has gone salty. A survey has been made of the area and it has been declared water deficient, but that is as far as it has gone, because the available money is needed to finish the comprehensive water scheme.

I appeal to the Government for something to be done about this area. It is a tremendous wheatgrowing and feed producing area, but sheep can be fed only in the wintertime, after which they must be sold because there is no water to keep them going in the summertime.

I would also like to speak about the area west of Perenjori or Bowgada. I tried to have a survey made. The soil conservation officers have had a look at it but they have not yet made a survey. Some farmers have put down 70 or 80 bores, but since the Federal Government has decreed that the money so spent can no longer be claimed as a taxation deduction, it has become a dead loss to put down a bore which might not produce water.

When a farmer puts down 77 bores within an area of 2 500 acres he is naturally faced with a great cost. With the inflated prices today bores cost something like \$7 a foot to put down, and often when the bore is down to 100 feet granite is struck and no water is found. This is a sad state of affairs.

In this area I think there are 14 farmers whose properties would cover about 40 000 acres. It badly needs reticulating. Once again, there is any amount of sheep feed; and though it is a wheat growing area it is short of water. Unfortunately it would not get water if the present comprehensive scheme were completed. However, water could be brought over from

Arrino where Miss McAleer lives. I think she might feel the water belongs to the people of that district, but there is plenty of it there and I do not see any reason why it should not be taken across to the areas that so badly need it. This bore water serves the townships of Morawa and Perenjori.

I would like to say a little about the Northern Mining Company and the deep port north of Geraldton, which were mentioned by Miss McAleer. There is a chance now of getting this project off the ground because the Federal Government has decided that it only requires 5 per cent of investment capital to be deposited with the Reserve Bank instead of the 33½ per cent it previously required.

I feel if we can get this iron ore project off the ground it will lead to tremendous development in that area. Whilst Miss McAleer and I represent the district we will do everything we possibly can to assist the company to get off the ground. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply.

Sitting suspended from 6.03 to 7.30 p.m.

THE HON. R. T. LEESON (South-East) [7.30 p.m.]: I want to draw the attention of the House to a situation which exists in my province, because I think the people concerned are being discriminated against. I refer to the granting of travel concessions to those people who need medical or surgical treatment by specialists in the city and who are required to travel to the metropolitan area to receive such treatment. As this situation has prevailed for some time, recently a committee was set up in Kalgoorlie to create interest in the matter in the hope that something could be done to have these concessions granted to the people concerned. As a result a fairly large committee of men and women is most concerned about this matter and I understand that, at the moment, there is a petition circulating in the Kalgoorlie area.

The position in regard to travelling concessions in this State is that if a man, woman, or child needs medical treatment from a specialist in Perth and their place of residence is above the 26th parallel they are entitled to free air travel from their place of residence to the metropolitan area, the tab being picked up by the Public Health Department. I am speaking of the eastern goldfields, but the same applies to the South-West Land Division, including centres such as Albany and Esperance. People residing in these centres have to find their way to Perth at their own cost if they wish to obtain urgent medical treatment.

I contend that something should be done to resolve this problem. For instance, a person living at Reid on the trans-line, which is approximately 400 miles from Kalgoorlie and 800 miles from Perth, is required to pay his own travelling expenses.

If a parent travels with a child by rail from this area—and rail is the only method of transport—the cost is something like \$120 for both of them to travel to the metropolitan area.

For some reason, the Public Health Department controls the granting of travel concessions to people who travel from places north of the 26th parallel to Perth. However, apparently the Public Health Department does not enter into a similar arrangement for people who wish to travel from the eastern goldfields areas to Perth. Some concessions are granted by the Department for Community Welfare if the people concerned can prove that they are unable to pay; that they are in dire straits; or that they have no money to purchase a train ticket. In such circumstances the Department for Community Welfare will assist them. There is a stringent means test, however, and most people in the goldfields areas do not like to divulge any details of their personal assets and incomes and, in fact, most of them do not have much income and do not possess any assets. In such circumstances their dignity prevails and they prefer to pay their own travelling expenses to Perth.

The Hon. Clive Griffiths: How did you get on when you brought this matter to the attention of the Tonkin Government? Did it receive sympathetic treatment?

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: I will tell the member that story later.

The Hon. S. J. Dellar: In private.

The Hon. R. T. LEESON: As I said before, this situation applies not only to people residing along the trans-line, but also to those who live in remote areas such as Wiluna, Meekatharra, and other places in the State that are many miles distant from Perth.

It would take a person who resides in Reid two days and one night to travel to Perth by rail, but a person wishing to travel from Port Hedland to Perth by plane would complete the journey in 2 hours 5 minutes, if my memory serves me correctly. Not only does the person living at Reid have to pay his own travelling expenses in order to travel to the metropolitan area, but also, he is subjected to a rail journey which lasts two days and one night and possibly longer if he cannot board the trans-passenger-train. If people are placed in this position they are obliged to travel on the tea and sugar train to Kalgoorlie and then transfer to the passenger train travelling to Perth.

It is time the Government endeavoured to alleviate the problems of these people. I have drawn attention to those who live in my own province, but there are other people, as I have said, living in centres such as Esperance, which is quite isolated because of the distance it is situated from Perth. Salmon Gums and Norseman are centres that do not have a regular daily rail service. On some occasions the people

living there have to travel by bus to Kalgoorlie and then travel by train to Perth. Sometimes they are absent from their homes for almost a week, and whilst in Perth they have to meet the cost of their accommodation in the city, in addition to their living expenses. I believe they should be granted some sort of concession on rail and bus transport, which is the only form of transport serving these areas, except for a few small commuter aircraft that fly to some outback towns.

I therefore ask the Government to give consideration to this matter in the hope that it will, perhaps, be able to alleviate the problem being faced by these people in remote areas in regard to their having to meet travelling expenses and other costs when requiring medical attention in the city. I support the motion.

THE HON. G. W. BERRY (Lower North) [7.38 p.m.]: In supporting the Address-in-Reply I take this opportunity to offer my congratulations to you, Mr President, on being elected to your high office. I also offer my congratulations to the Ministers who occupy the front benches, to the Leader of the Opposition, and to the newly-elected and re-elected members who have taken their places in this House.

I am beginning to serve my second term in this House, and I commence my speech on this occasion with a passage taken from *Julius Caesar*.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Are you going to act it or just speak it?

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Who wrote that?

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Richard Burton!

The Hon. G. W. BERRY: The passage from *Julius Caesar* reads—

Ant. If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.

You all do know this mantle: I remember

The first time ever Caesar put it on; 'Twas on a summer's evening, in his tent.

That day he overcame the Nervii:—
Look! in this place ran Cassius' dagger through:

See what a rent the envious Casca made:

Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabb'd;

And, as he pluck'd his cursed steel away,

Mark how the blood of Caesar follow'd it,

As rushing out of doors, to be resolv'd If Brutus so unkindly knock'd or no; For Brutus, as you know, was Caesar's angel:

Judge, O you gods, how dearly Caesar loved him!

The Hon. D. K. Dans: What did Mark Antony say as he lifted the flap of Cleopatra's tent?

The Hon. G. W. BERRY: That passage was taken from *Julius Caesar* and the character, Mark Antony, was inflaming the citizens of Rome to rise against the assassins of Caesar, and it did not take him long to get some action.

This is the seventh year I have been in this House asking for assistance to be granted to stabilise the water supply of those people residing in the irrigated areas surrounding the Gascoyne River, but to date there does not appear to be any assistance forthcoming—with one exception, which was on the occasion of the opening of the Federal Parliament prior to the election on the 18th May. In her speech, Her Majesty the Queen mentioned that provision was to be made for the allocation of money to be spent on the irrigated areas of the Gascoyne district and the conservation of water from the Gascoyne River.

The Hon. R. Thompson: You will be the first member on the Government side who will praise the Federal Government.

The Hon. G. W. BERRY: I am not praising it. We have not received the money yet. I will praise it when the money is received. What I wish to do now is to ensure that we prosecute the case to ensure that this money is granted to provide a suitable water supply in the Gascoyne area and also, to ensure that it is stabilised.

This will make the fifteenth year in succession on which there has been a flow of the Gascoyne River. On this occasion, the flow has been of some proportions. The river has been very full indeed. I bring to the notice of the people who are now in Carnarvon that not by any standard could the flow this year be termed a flood.

I will quote figures regarding the events that took place in 1960-61 and 1974. In the flow of the Gascoyne River only a few weeks ago the river level reached a height of 21 ft. 6 in.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: Apparently you are going to make sure that the people in Carnarvon know that.

The Hon. G. W. BERRY: In 1960 the river reached a height of 25 ft.; that is, 3 ft. 6 in. higher than the level reached only a short time ago. In 1960 it stayed at a height of 25 ft. for a few hours. Then for two days it dropped to 14 ft., but then returned to a height of 23 ft. During that flow the river reached a height of over 20 ft. for a period of eight days.

In 1961 the river reached a maximum height of 25 ft. again and it stayed at that level for 24 hours. It then dropped to 20 ft. for four days. So, if they can, members will appreciate the volume of

water that was present in the area on that occasion. In the recent flow of the river a height of 21 ft. 6 in. was reached but it then started to recede. It would not have been at that height for more than an hour.

I want to let the people of the area know that while the overflow of the Gascoyne River was serious it is not nearly as serious as it will be if it again reaches a height of 25 ft.

I want to ask some questions that apply equally as well to other housing areas in the State that become flooded. When such blocks are subdivided in these housing areas, is provision made for people to be informed that if they purchase a house in such areas they will be flood-prone? Does the local authority in question insist that such houses be built above the flood level so that people will not suffer as a result of flood damage to their homes? Does any Government department take an interest in the possibility of any housing area becoming flooded, particularly if it is situated on the banks of a river? I think such questions could be asked about any area in the State which is so situated and which could be flood-prone.

I also draw the attention of the Government to blocks that have been surveyed and allocated on the banks of the Gascoyne River despite the fact that they are subject to flood damage. These blocks were cleared of vegetation and, as a result, they have suffered serious damage from floods. So once again I counsel the Government that if it intends to open up and land that could be subject to similar conditions, it should take notice of where the river outlets lie and ensure that the natural vegetation is not removed, but is retained, in an endeavour to prevent flood damage. It is quite apparent that where the river flows through areas that have not been cultivated very little damage occurs.

It is when all the vegetation has been removed that the scouring takes place. I suggest that such blocks will always experience trouble when the river reaches such high flood levels. The people should be taken somewhere else to be relocated, and the blocks should be regenerated to their natural state so that they may be able to offset the overflow of the river again.

I am also very concerned about the roads in the Lower North Province, and of the effect of the Commonwealth aid roads programme. As members are aware the roads form a vital part of the lifeline of the Lower North Province where great distances have to be covered, but unfortunately very few people are served by the roads. The essential aspect is that we wish to retain the people in the outback. I view with alarm that money is to be allocated in the manner announced in

the newspapers recently. If the money is to be allocated in that manner I feel depredation will take place in an area where few people live but where long stretches of roads exist.

Another matter I wish to bring to the attention of the House is the high cost of living in remote areas. The great Professor Einstein is well known for his equation on relativity; that is, $E = MC^2$. This famous equation has resulted in the enormous power that can be released from an atomic explosion, and we are all aware of the advantages or disadvantages of such an explosion to mankind.

With the costs rising so rapidly in the remote areas of the State I could apply that equation but under a different formula—one arrived at with the help of Mr Withers. The equation which I use is the same, but the formula is "Existence in remote areas equals Metropolitan Costs squared". I only wish the great Professor Einstein were able to be here to help us solve the problem of the high costs in remote areas, because a solution has not been found by any Government. I wonder how the people in the outback areas manage to exist.

It seems that another nail has been hammered into the coffin in respect of the high cost of living in remote areas. I read in this morning's newspaper that the local authorities have been called upon to bear 50 per cent of the maintenance cost of airfields in their localities. How they are expected to do that is absolutely beyond my comprehension.

There is always good news, and bad news. A bit of good news I have heard from Mr Heitman; it is that the Commonwealth Government has agreed to reduce the amount of interest-free deposit to be lodged with the Reserve Bank, and it has now agreed to 5 per cent of overseas capital being so lodged. I sincerely hope that this move will enable the mining ventures in the Murchison area to get off the ground, because this is one area of the State which Dame Fortune did not smile on kindly when the mineral developments took place in recent years. I am hoping that by this move the companies will be able to bring their plans to fruition and get their projects under way.

I feel I should mention one other matter; it relates to the imbalance that exists between the metropolitan area and the country areas in respect of voting. I think it would be as well for me to start my discourse by quoting a passage from *Hansard*. It is as follows—

It is an important point and it must be cleared up in order that we shall know where we are going. The basis upon which representation is decided in Western Australia is not on a basis of pure democracy; that is, one vote one

value—which ought to be the ultimate objective, and maybe one day it will be—but it is upon the basis that two voters in the metropolitan area shall have the voting strength equal to one voter in the country districts.

I do not quarrel with that basis of representation in Western Australia, because this is a very vast State; the people in the outback have communication difficulties; their community of interest is different; and therefore I have no objection to their having a louder voice in the government of the country than the person in the metropolitan area.

That was said by Mr J. T. Tonkin, the then Deputy Leader of the Opposition, on the 19th October, 1965, as recorded on page 1570 of *Hansard* of that year. Mr Tonkin was participating in the second reading debate on the Electoral Districts Act Amendment Bill when he made that statement.

When the Bill was transmitted to this House, some remarks were made by Mr Wise, who was then the Leader of this august Chamber. On that occasion he said—

On the quota system, for the proportion of representation in the Assembly, the vote of the country will be two to one, one vote having the value of two in all of the 24 Assembly seats. The eight country provinces in regard to the Council seats will have the ratio of nearly four to one. A vote in the country for the Legislative Council under this division will give a value of nearly four to one in the case of the country provinces as compared with the suburban provinces. It is a matter of arithmetic. That, I suggest, will create discord somewhere at sometime.

I am not suggesting we will endeavour to do something about it at this stage because it would need considerable adjustment and variation to Acts more recently passed than the last redistribution Act.

I quite agree it would not have created any discord at that particular time, because in the two northern provinces six seats were held by the then Opposition and two were held by the then Government. Of course, today the situation has changed somewhat, because the present Government has seven seats in the two northern provinces, while the Opposition has one seat. So, I can see there is now no cause for discontent. This must have been the time Mr Wise was referring to.

At the conclusion of his speech on that measure Mr Wise said—

However, with all its faults and with all its minor prickles I can see no reason to oppose it. I do not propose to move an amendment to it and I support the second reading.

The Hon. R. F. Claughton: He was well aware that no amendment would have succeeded.

The Hon. G. W. BERRY: Only two members of the Labor Party in this Chamber spoke against the Bill on that occasion, and they actually voted against it. They were Mrs Hutchison and Mr Heenan. Mrs Hutchison spoke on that occasion because she was anti-Legislative Council on every occasion available to her; and she said a few words about the undemocratic House which, she alleged, this Chamber was. Mr Heenan opposed the Bill because it proposed to excise part of the town of Kalgoorlie from his constituency, and it was this part upon which his seat depended. Under the proposal, a part of the Gascoyne area was included in his seat, and that placed it in jeopardy. His fears were well founded when he made his speech.

It appears to me that when the vast majority of the seats in that area were held by the Labor Party the imbalance did not worry it very much; but today this is causing the Labor Party much concern because the representation of the seats has changed.

While I am still on the question of the imbalance of electoral representation I wish to refer to a speech made by Mr Anthony, the Leader of the Country Party in the Federal Parliament, on the 6th August, 1974, at the joint sitting of the two Houses of that Parliament. This is recorded on page 14 of the proceedings of the joint sitting of the Senate and House of Representatives, and is as follows—

Let us have a quick look at what happens in some of the other countries with no less an attachment to democracy than we have. In New Zealand enrolments range from 16,000 to 21,000, a difference of about 35 per cent. In Britain, the mother of modern democracies, at the recent election, which was immediately after a redistribution, numbers ranged from 22,000 to 96,000, a difference of 400 per cent to 500 per cent. Britain could fit into any one of a number of our large country electorates. In Canada, where there has only recently been an election, the number of electors in electorates varies from 7,500 to 80,000. The Minister for Services and Property returned from Canada only recently, but we did not hear a word about this variation.

It appears to me from my way of thinking that the imbalance as between country districts and the metropolitan area in the Parliament of Western Australia is brought about only by the fact that the Labor Party does not hold the seats in the outer areas.

Let us not forget that every person in the outer areas has an equal vote; each and every person of 18 years of age and over is able to vote for both Houses. Instead of grizzling about the imbalance,

I suggest the Labor Party should get its nose to the grindstone, and try to win the seats.

I wish to bring another matter to the notice of this House, and this also relates to electoral matters. On the 31st July I asked a question of the Minister for Justice. This is to be found on page 100 of the current *Hansard*. The question and the reply are as follows—

FEDERAL ELECTIONS

Kalgoorlie: Postal Voting

The Hon. G. W. BERRY, to the Minister for Justice:

With reference to the postal vote ballot papers for the Division of Kalgoorlie for the Federal Election on the 18th May, 1974, can the Minister ascertain—

- (a) the date the ballot papers were received by the Returning Officer for distribution;
- (b) when distribution of the ballot papers commenced?

The Hon. N. McNEILL replied:

- (a) and (b) Endeavours are being made to obtain this information from the Commonwealth Electoral Office and if available will be passed on to the Hon. Member direct.

Up to date I have not received any further information. I can only assume that the question has been put into the too-hard basket, or has been sent to the Prime Minister to see whether an answer can be obtained.

The Hon. N. McNeill: I have not received the information as yet.

The Hon. G. W. BERRY: I would like members to know why I asked the question. I did so, because through the grapevine which is, as members know, an authoritative source I heard that the ballot papers were not received until 10 days after the nominations had closed. What chance would any person have of getting a ballot paper in time in order to cast a vote in the remote areas of the Lower North Province?

At Carnarvon I was in attendance on polling day of the last election. On the day prior to the election an officer from the Flying Doctor Service said to me, "I am getting inundated with calls as to what the people should do about voting. They have no ballot papers." I replied, "All I can suggest is that those people go to the nearest polling booth and record a vote."

That was their only chance of getting a vote, because if the ballot papers were not post-marked on the day prior to the election they would be invalid when they were received. One person had to travel over 200 miles to a polling booth, or 400 miles for the return journey, in order to cast a

vote, because up to that time he had not been able to get a vote in any Federal election as the ballot papers invariably arrived after the election was over.

As I have said, that man travelled 400 miles to make sure that he and his family recorded a vote. If anyone suffers an injustice under the Federal electoral system it is the people in the remote areas of this State. They certainly suffered at the time of the last Federal election.

The Hon. J. Heltman: It will be worse next time.

The Hon. G. W. BERRY: The people to whom I have referred had no hope in the world of recording a vote. Any member who cares to study the figures must agree with my opinion. If people living in out-back areas had been able to get their votes in on time then those remarks of Mr Collard which have been referred to would not need to have been made.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Supposition.

The Hon. G. W. BERRY: It is not supposition. I hope this matter regarding the inability of people from remote areas to vote in Federal elections is brought to the notice of the Federal Government. This is one of the greatest disadvantages which exists between country and metropolitan people; the lack of communication. Most of the areas where postal votes are recorded have a mail run only once a week, and sometimes only once a fortnight, so what hope is there of even getting a ballot paper out to an elector? The applications are sent in soon enough but according to the grapevine the ballot papers were not received until 10 days after the closing of nominations. Having said those few words, I support the motion.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. D. K. Dans.

EVIDENCE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West—Minister for Justice) [8.02 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

In moving the second reading of this Bill I remind members that it was introduced as the Privilege Bill on the opening day of Parliament.

Present laws in Australia do not allow the general reception, in lower courts, of evidence from people who happen to be in another State, New Zealand or any other place, unless they attend that court or happen to have made a statement admissible under the ordinary rules of evidence.

This Bill is the result of consideration given to this situation by the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General when agreement was reached by all States, the Commonwealth, and New Zealand in 1972 to enact reciprocal legislation for the taking of evidence on commission in any court which corresponds with the court in which

the evidence is given. It is designed to give effect to that agreement and has been prepared in accordance with the draft Bill adopted at the meeting of the Standing Committee in 1972.

The method of taking evidence on commission will be by arrangement where a corresponding court, or court of equal status, is requested to take evidence from a witness in the same procedural manner as if conducted by the originating court. It will simplify the process of obtaining evidence where the expense of bringing a witness from another State may not be warranted. The existence of the power to take evidence on commission does not mean that it will be used in all cases.

The decision will be a matter of judgment for a defendant or prosecutor to determine whether the expense and difficulty of obtaining the presence of a witness in court, having regard to the importance of the evidence, is justified.

It is anticipated summary procedure will only be availed of in criminal trials and civil cases where the evidence is of a formal nature.

In respect to the definition of "corresponding" court it is intended to proclaim in this State the Supreme Court, District Courts, Local Courts, Courts of Petty Sessions and the Summary Relief Court. It will be a purely reciprocal arrangement between States or other places which have equivalent legislation providing for this method of obtaining evidence.

The proposals contained in this Bill have been referred to the Law Society of Western Australia which can see no objection to the changes.

I commend the Bill to the House.

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

REGISTRATION OF DEEDS ORDINANCE AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. N. McNEILL (Lower West—Minister for Justice) [8.06 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The table of fees contained in the Registration of Deeds Ordinance, 1856, has not been amended since the Ordinance came into force on the 14th June, 1856.

In comparison, the fee for registering a similar type document such as a transfer, mortgage, or discharge under the Transfer of Land Act has increased since 1893 from \$1 to \$10. An evaluation of the time taken in respect of registration procedures involved has been undertaken and suggests that the fees being charged under the Ordinance are quite inadequate to match the service given.

The number of documents registered annually in this category has been assessed at approximately 100 and is expected to diminish, therefore being of little significance from a revenue aspect.

However, the value of work involved warrants an increase in the fee equal to that charged for similar documents registered.

This Bill provides for the fees to be fixed by regulation in line with the scheme adopted in the Transfer of Land Act, 1893.

In reviewing the Ordinance, Parliamentary Counsel took the opportunity to also include in this Bill desirable amendments, some of which are virtually complementary to the expressed purpose of the proposed legislation.

These further amendments include the changing of the citation of the Ordinance to that of an Act and to appoint the Registrar of Titles as the Registrar of Deeds and Transfers under this Act.

Act No. 36 of 1909 is currently a "homeless" section of the Ordinance and this Bill also provides for the incorporation of that section in the principal Act for ease of reference and to enable the principal Act to be reprinted.

Sections 21 and 23 can now be repealed as section 21 is covered under the provisions of the Interpretation Act, 1918, section 34 (d).

Section 23 can be repealed, as fines and penalties are paid into revenue under the Fines and Penalties Appropriation Act, 1909, section 2, and fees are paid into revenue under the Constitution Act, 1889, section 64, and the Treasury regulations number 9 made under the Audit Act, 1904, section 71.

Section 22 is to be repealed and re-enacted to give power to the Commissioner of Titles, with the approval of the Governor, to make regulations. This is desirable to allow a standard of documents to be presented, prescribed fees to be set, and any other requirement for the purpose of the Act to be properly administered.

While that concludes a general explanation of the Bill, Mr President, it occurs to me it is of sufficient interest to mention that the decision to lift the statutory fees payable under the 1856 Ordinance was made by the previous Government early in 1973, the intention being to proceed with an amending Bill in the spring session of that year.

Members who participated in the debates on the Government's very extensive legislative programme will appreciate there were good reasons for the deletion of that comparatively unimportant measure.

In the intervening period we have taken the opportunity to have a close look at the rather venerable Ordinance which was

required to be read in conjunction with the 1909 Act, with a view to tidying up the legislation and retitling it in accordance with present day form for reprinting under the Amendments Incorporation Act, 1938.

While from time to time we hear some criticism of the administration of legislation by regulation, members who are fortunate enough to be able to readily obtain a copy of the laws relating to the registration of deeds, wills, judgments, and conveyances affecting real property, as proposed by this Bill to be amended, will note the impracticability of inserting statutory fees as is done in section 22 of the Ordinance for such services as are therein listed.

Therefore, I believe it quite appropriate that the regulation-making power should be extended to such fees in a similar manner as applying in the Transfer of Land Act of 1893.

Again, the proposed provision that every person appointed to the office of Registrar of Titles under the Transfer of Land Act 1893, shall by virtue of his office be the Registrar of Deeds and Transfers, is most desirable. From information supplied to me it appears that at least one Registrar of Titles had not been appointed Registrar of Deeds and Transfers thus necessitating now the insertion of a validation clause. It is now intended that any future appointment as Registrar of Titles under the Transfer of Land Act, 1893, will be sufficient to encompass appointment as Registrar of Deeds and Transfers also. While the gain in revenue from the suggested increases to the scale of fees to bring them in line with the fees prescribed in the regulations to the Transfer of Land Act will not be significant, the great disparity now existing in respect of the fees chargeable for similar services should rightly be removed and I commend the Bill to members.

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

House adjourned at 8.12 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, the 13th August, 1974

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

QUESTIONS (49): ON NOTICE

1. MIDLAND JUNCTION ABATTOIR

Police Investigation

Mr H. D. EVANS, to the Minister for Police:

(1) Is the report contained in the 1st August, 1974 edition of the *Western Farmer* that the CIB has