

Legislative Council

Tuesday, the 27th October, 1959

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

NORTH-WEST ROADS

Improvement of Stock Routes to Wyndham, Derby, and Broome

1. The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE asked the Minister for Mines:
 - (1) Would he indicate the Government's policy in regard to road construction over road stock routes to Wyndham, Derby, and Broome?
 - (2) In connection with each town mentioned, what length of road will be constructed this financial year?
 - (3) What amount of money has been allocated for this purpose?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) The Government will allocate as much money as possible to the improvements of the roads referred to, having regard to funds available and other road needs in the Kimberleys.
- (2) Between Broome and Yeeda stabilising work between the 40M. and 80M. has been provided for. Funds have also been allocated for a concrete crossing over Yeeda Creek and for construction work

between Langi Crossing and Yeeda, amounting to £27,400. Between Derby, Yeeda, and Fitzroy Crossing an amount of £60,000 has been provided for the construction and bituminous surfacing of 12 miles between the 25M. and 37M. Between the 50M. and 62M., £6,000 has been provided for stabilising work, and between the 140M. and 160M. a further £10,000 for stabilising work, making a total on this section of £76,000.

Between Wyndham and Halls Creek via Turkey Creek £25,000 has been allocated for construction of approaches and a concrete crossing over the Bow River, and a further £20,000 for approaches and a concrete crossing over Turkey Creek, making a total of £45,000. On the more easterly road out of Wyndham—the Wyndham-Nicholson road—a total amount of £55,000 has been provided for construction of concrete crossings over various creeks and general improvement work. All this work amounts to a total of £203,400, to which must be added substantial financial provision for general maintenance purposes amounting to £44,250 in the Broome, West Kimberley, Halls Creek and Wyndham Road Board areas.

- (3) Answered by No. (2).

TUBERCULOSIS

Detection and Treatment

2. The Hon. R. THOMPSON asked the Minister for Local Government:
 - (1) How many tuberculosis cases have been detected in Western Australia since mass X-ray came into operation?
 - (2) How many of these people have had to undergo—
 - (a) hospital treatment;
 - (b) clinical treatment?
 - (3) Are patients discharged from hospital with communicable or infectious T.B.?
 - (4) When patients are discharged from hospital and are required to continue P.A.S. and I.N.A.H. dosage at home, are they considered to be infectious?
 - (5) What is the estimated number of persons who could escape detection under X-ray and be proved positive with clinical tests?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN replied:

- (1) Since mass X-rays began in 1948, 4,635 cases of pulmonary tuberculosis have been detected.

- (2) Virtually all these have undergone hospital treatment.
- (3) Patients are not discharged from hospital until their disease is controlled and non-infectious. Occasionally, on humanitarian grounds, it is advisable to discharge an infectious patient for a short period after long-continued hospitalisation, but this is done only under strictly controlled home supervision, designed to prevent communication of infection to other people.
- (4) No.
- (5) Practically none.

STATE HOUSING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban—Minister for Housing) [4.40] in moving the second reading said: Members will be aware that the parent Act gave the State Housing Commission the power to utilise land acquired under the Act for the purposes of the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement Act of 1945. The commission was authorised, also, to manage and control the business arising out of this agreement with the Commonwealth.

The agreement expired on the 30th June, 1956, and a separate agreement took effect as from the 1st July, 1956. It was then assumed that the commission's authority to administer the initial agreement would continue automatically so far as the new agreement was concerned. However, the Crown Law Department has now advised that this was not so. The commission's authority lapsed with the old agreement, and it has become necessary to amend the parent Act to reinvest the commission with this authority and to validate the action it has taken since the 1st July, 1956.

The Bill is purely of a machinery nature to validate something which the Crown Law Department discovered had been going on for a long time; and, the discovery having been made, action must be taken to put the position right; and the Bill seeks to do that very thing. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

THE HON. H. C. STRICKLAND (North) [4.42]: I have checked this amendment to the Act, and it does exactly as the Minister has explained. The measure is a formal one, designed to leave no doubt whatever, legally, that all actions that have taken place under the new Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement will be validated. I see no reason for delaying the Bill, and I support the second reading.

On motion by the **Hon. R. C. Mattiske**, debate adjourned.

OIL REFINERY INDUSTRY (ANGLO-IRANIAN OIL COMPANY LIMITED) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban—Minister for Housing) [4.44] in moving the second reading said: This Bill has a similarity to that of the measure I have just introduced, because its purposes are to validate action taken by the State Housing Commission since the 1st July, 1956, and to provide statutory authority for the continuance of that action.

Under subclause (n) of clause 4 of the agreement between the Government and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company Ltd., the State accepted the responsibility of developing a new townsite at Medina, and erecting rental homes for employees of the company. The houses are, of course, the property of the commission; but as there was no statutory power enabling the commission to retain the rentals, they were paid into the Treasury by the commission.

As from the 1st July, 1956, the then Government, on Treasury advice that this would simplify control and administration, invested the commission with the whole responsibility of the management and financial control of the housing-scheme. The Auditor-General, however, has recommended that statutory approval for this authority be obtained, and this is supported by the Crown Law Department.

The Bill, therefore, seeks to validate the action taken since the 1st July, 1956; and it empowers the commission to continue the management, control and administration of the housing scheme. It also authorises the commission to collect the rentals; to apply them; and to maintain, deal with, and dispose of the houses in the manner specified by the State Housing Act.

There is no necessity for me to explain further why the Bill is necessary. In this case, another action has been going on for some time, and it was thought by the State Housing Commission to be quite valid, but found to be not so by officers of the Treasury and of the Crown Law Department. The Government, therefore, seeks to put right this small anomaly. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the **Hon. E. M. Davies**, debate adjourned.

SUPPLY BILL (No. 2), £19,000,000

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 21st October.

THE HON. C. H. SIMPSON (Midland) [4.47]: I listened with great interest to the contributions by the various members,

and I appreciate the views they expressed concerning the matters that were discussed, and the angles from which they put forward their views. Their contributions were, I think, of value to the House. I was particularly interested in the impressions gained by members after making contact with the visitors from the overseas Commonwealth countries on the occasion of the recent Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conference.

It has been said that the best means of education is travel; and that if we cannot travel ourselves the next best means of securing education is to make contact with people who have travelled to other countries and can speak with knowledge of and authority on the conditions ruling in those places. It was a real pleasure to us all to be hosts for a brief period, and to listen to the views expressed by our visitors. It was, on this occasion, our pleasure to dispense hospitality; and, in a sense, we were givers; but in another sense we were beneficiaries, because I think we will all acknowledge that we received a great deal of benefit and knowledge from the pleasant contacts that we made.

However, whilst all the impressions that we gained were very interesting and educational, and whilst they lie within the scope of this debate—we rightly take note of an interesting and significant experience so far as this State is concerned—they are not directly related to the character of the Supply Bill itself. It is my intention now to refer to a matter which has far-reaching implications, financially, to the State; and I shall deal with it by making a further reference to a subject that I was privileged to bring under the notice of the House in December last: The proposed standard-gauge link between Kalgoorlie and Fremantle.

Since that date there have been certain developments; and as it is a matter of grave financial concern and could involve the State in the expenditure of a huge sum of money, it is only right that the developments since that time should be brought under the notice of members.

When I introduced the matter in December last, I pointed out that it was a project which could have a tremendous effect on the railway system of Western Australia and its finances, both in regard to the initial cost and the result likely to flow from the proposed implementation. At the time when I made my speech, I spoke for no political Party, but rather as an individual and an ex-Minister for Railways who had had inside knowledge and access to information in regard to the real implications; and I felt that it was my duty to bring that knowledge and experience before members.

Believing that the public generally were shockingly ignorant regarding the possible effects of placing a new line

alongside an existing old one, I had several hundred copies of the speeches made on the debate printed and circulated. I submitted to the Party that I represent a report of what I had done, and I felt gratified when my action was endorsed and later formed the subject of debate at the annual conference of the Country Party, which adopted the following resolution:—

This conference is not in favour of the standard gauge line from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle at this juncture on the ground that the proposal is not economically sound, would be likely to increase the railway deficit, and lead to an increase of railway freights; and that the huge capital expenditure involved should be used in other directions to develop Western Australia's resources.

Now, therefore, I speak with the backing of the Party which I represent, and not merely as an individual. However, I feel it is desirable that I should report on developments for the information of members generally.

Although I sent out hundreds of reprints to all road boards and municipalities, as well as other public bodies such as banks, stock firms, country newspapers, chambers of commerce, chambers of manufactures, and the like, in no case was there any adverse reaction to the circular. Some wrote for further information, and in several instances my presentation of the case was warmly commended. I was asked by the Kalgoorlie Chamber of Commerce to supply 12 copies for the information of and study by its members. As a matter of fact, the chamber offered to stand the cost of printing; but, as it so happened, I had a number of copies to spare. This is the reply I sent to the secretary of the Kalgoorlie Chamber of Commerce—

Kalgoorlie-Fremantle Proposed Standard Rail Link

Thanks for your letter of 12th February. Earlier acknowledgment would have been made but for the fact that I only returned from Melbourne yesterday.

I have pleasure in furnishing the booklets you desire. These are spares, so there is no difficulty in providing the number asked for.

Speaking objectively, I may venture the opinion that, taking the long range view, the proposed link would not benefit Kalgoorlie. At first sight the proposal might appear attractive. It would mean an early build-up of personnel employed on constructional works, and some benefit from the disbursement of a large amount of money.

Looking further ahead, the time would come when, with the completion of the link, Kalgoorlie would become just a stopping-place on the way.

The extra staff required to handle change of gauge goods would no longer

be needed. In all probability the Parkeston depot, with its workshops and sheds, would be transferred to the new terminal, Fremantle. That is the usual practice when such changes occur. At present, Kalgoorlie is, in effect, an important railhead joining two systems. Although the stops at Kalgoorlie are shorter than they once were they are still longer than, say stops at Ballarat in Victoria or Rockhampton or Townsville on the Brisbane-Cairns railway in Queensland.

No doubt these thoughts have occurred to you people also, so you will forgive my mentioning an outsider's viewpoint.

A precis of the pamphlet was also circulated among the country newspapers, and later on a condensed account of the discussions at the Country Party conference was also sent to these organisations; and extracts from the pamphlets have appeared, and are appearing, in various sections of the country Press. So, on balance, the people are becoming reasonably well-informed regarding the possible implications of this project.

Concerning the subject matter of the address which I delivered last year, I am now in a position to state more clearly the financial arrangements which would probably be entered into between Western Australia and the Commonwealth. They would follow the pattern established by the arrangements already made between the Commonwealth on the one hand and Victoria and New South Wales on the other in regard to the Albury-Melbourne standard gauge railway. In that case the Federal Government pays 70 per cent.; and, over a period, the State will pay 30 per cent. In that instance New South Wales joined forces with Victoria because the line was the joint concern of both States.

South Australia was accorded the same terms on its conversion from the 3 ft. 6 ins. gauge to 5 ft. 3 ins. gauge between Mt. Gambier and Wolseley, and on the new line constructed between Leigh Creek and Port Augusta. Newspaper reports indicate that the agreement between the Commonwealth Government and South Australia, as regards the proposed standard gauge link between Broken Hill and Port Pirie, and thence to Adelaide, are not yet finalised; but no doubt the arrangements will follow the same pattern.

In regard to the probable costs, the Wentworth committee estimated the total cost as £18,000,000. That was in 1956, and in 1957 a departmental committee of the Western Australian Government Railways estimated the cost to be £29,876,750. I said last year that Commissioner Clarke estimated the figure to be nearer £40,000,000. That figure deserves some consideration. We all know that final

costs have a tendency to exceed the estimated figures, particularly on a big job requiring a lengthy construction period.

The original estimated cost for a Sydney dock was £3,000,000, but the final cost was over £9,000,000. Other factors which would certainly apply would be the 15s. increase in the Commonwealth basic wage. That must influence the cost of both labour and materials in a project such as this. Therefore, of necessity, all factors have to be adjusted to current costs; and the estimate of £40,000,000, mentioned by Mr. Strickland last year, is surely a reasonably reliable one to work on.

In the issue of the 13th October last, *The West Australian* had a leading article under the caption "Interstate Unified Gauge Principle is Sound." To say that a principle is sound is generally a way of admitting later that it is not a practical reality at present. But in this particular case I think it could be said that if the State stood on its own feet financially and had to find the money necessary to cover the expenditure on this project, what I have just said would definitely be the case, because the State would have to get the money from the people the line was supposed to benefit, and it would have to account to them for the priority given to the project as compared with other projects which many people believe should have a higher priority.

However, *The West Australian* went on to say that the proposed Kalgoorlie-Fremantle link was on the bottom of the list and should not remain there. If one reads the Wentworth report one will see that is just about the opposite of what it had to say. It said—

The standard gauge from Kalgoorlie westwards could not bring its full benefits until the Broken Hill-Port Pirie link was completed, and therefore it stands behind it in priority. Both the Broken Hill line and the Melbourne line are of such high priority that it is difficult to decide which should be constructed first.

Further, the committee added—

If available resources are limited then it is best to concentrate work so that one project can be completed and paying its way before too much is expended on another.

That is very sound reasoning. Resources always are limited; and that can be demonstrated by the fact that the Prime Minister tried to arrange a special loan from the World Bank to meet the cost of construction of the proposed Mount Isa railway. In that attempt he was not successful; and that in itself shows, firstly, that the Commonwealth was quite prepared to do what it could to assist in the matter; and, secondly, that as it had not sufficient resources available it had to approach the World Bank in order to secure

the necessary money. So the comment in *The West Australian* is not in line with the Wentworth report.

The leader writer in *The West Australian* made no attempt to prove his own contention that the proposed standard gauge link between Kalgoorlie and Fremantle should not, and need not, remain at the bottom of the priority list. That is not surprising as the facts do not support him. The rail users—that is the people who pay the freights—would like to know more about the proposal, if the writer of that leader has evidence to support his submissions. The following day's issue of *The West Australian* rather gave the show away when, in reply to questions asked by Mr. Cornell, the Premier said that the Government would examine Mr. Cornell's claim that the standard gauge link would—

(1) Help no other line in W.A.

(2) Concentrate a huge expenditure on extending a rail service which represented only 1.4 per cent. of the State's total traffic volume.

(3) Tend to increase the present unbalance of the traffic exchange which was now in favour, 6 to 1, of the Eastern States.

In his final paragraph the leader writer said—

It will be essential to safeguard railway revenue as between Fremantle and Kalgoorlie.

I take it he means railway revenue earned by the present system. But how, one may ask? Surely the last means of preserving patronage to a trading concern is to establish competition alongside it. Surely it is not envisaged that the customers will be restricted in their rights to use the line, or that the Commonwealth railway authorities will not hold out special inducements in order to attract patronage and so rob the existing line of its revenue!

The Wentworth committee is apparently identical with the Commonwealth rail gauge committee mentioned in the daily Press, and is pressing the Federal Government to treat the Kalgoorlie-Fremantle link as a matter of urgency. It took the Governments of Victoria and New South Wales two years to make up their minds in respect of the Albury-Melbourne link; so why this haste in deciding the fate of Western Australia? Let us have a look at the Wentworth committee, its history, and its functions.

I have been told by members of the Commonwealth Parliament that Mr. Wentworth after being repeatedly refused permission to bring forward his motion in regard to this uniform gauge, was finally given approval with the change of leaders in the House, and on an error of judgment by a senior Minister. That can be understood. After all it is the province of the Government to decide how and

where it shall spend its money. It could be embarrassing to the Government if its policy were framed and dictated by motions carried in the House which were not initiated and sponsored by the Government itself. The committee consisted of 10 members. Of these, seven were M.Ps. and three were senators. The State complexion of the committee consisted of four from New South Wales, two members from Victoria, two from Queensland, one from South Australia, and one from Western Australia.

In a technical sense all were laymen and had, of necessity, to base their reports on investigations and inquiries into matters culled from official sources. The plan itself is not a new idea; it was the Clapp plan. Sir Harold Clapp was not an advocate of the standard gauge. For 19 years he was Commissioner of Railways in Victoria; and, during that time, not one yard of standard gauge was laid in the Victorian railway system. After his retirement he was engaged by the Hon. E. J. Ward, then Minister for Transport, to sell the idea of a uniform railway gauge, as has been laid out in the Wentworth report, which would be a link with all the capital cities. That became known as the Clapp plan. Incidentally Sir Harold Clapp did not advocate this as a matter of economy but more on the grounds of necessity for defence. On the other hand, the military authorities said they never gave it top priority.

Most of the data so collated was supplied from Commonwealth railway sources. This is quite obvious from the official Western Australian Government Railway Department files, because after the W.A.G.R. had compiled its cost estimate of approximately £30,000,000, as compared with the Wentworth committee's estimate of £18,000,000, the Commissioner of Railways in Western Australia immediately wrote to the Commonwealth Commissioner (Mr. Hannaberry). He did not write to Mr. Wentworth at all. In his letter, dated the 16th August, 1957, Mr. Hannaberry replied—

On present indications it does not look as if this project is one which will ever be implemented . . . and if the time ever comes for the project to be given serious consideration it would be necessary for a joint detailed investigation.

The Premier referred to discussions having taken place, but he said they took place in 1956 at the time of the Wentworth committee. The letter from which I have just quoted was dated August, 1957. In a speech in the House of Representatives some time in 1957, Mr. Fred Chaney said that the impression he had gained as a member of the committee which waited on the Western Australian Commissioners at the time was that they had a hostile attitude towards the project, and that the Wentworth committee did not go away

with a favourable impression in regard to the willingness of Western Australia to come into the scheme.

One railway expert—until recently chief research officer for the New South Wales railways—who has had world-wide experience, makes caustic comment on the committee and its methods. He has this to say—

New South Wales and Victoria were extremely cautious about an agreement even on the lavish terms offered, but the States were coaxed into it by the most fascinating prospects ever presented to a State railway and the railways were hungry for help.

To get the States of New South Wales and Victoria to bite, the Federal Government dangled some most attractive baits before their eyes. The Gauge Committee declared triumphantly that it had discovered a railway "bonanza" (to use its own word) but in reality they had invented it. It was this: The railways would be provided, at little cost, with a new line and new rolling stock and were at the same time provided with a cut-and-dried formula that flatly ignored the proper principles of cost accounting for making a handsome profit out of rates cut down as low as 2d. per ton per mile, thus enabling them to rob all the traffic now carried by road between Sydney and Melbourne. Even a rate of 1d. per ton mile would be profitable. This looked good to the railways, especially under the urge of the Commonwealth Government, and they swallowed the bait and signed up their agreements.

The Committee was badly constituted and early in the piece literally tore up its limited terms of reference, adopting its own terms of reference which were high, wide and handsome. It held no formal proceedings; it called no evidence, but roamed all over Australia gathering scraps of the most dangerous information from carefully selected officials, by far the most of whom were railway chiefs. This is typical: In the very early stages Mr. Wentworth wrote to the New South Wales Commissioner for an interview, but the Commissioner deputed a well-informed and trained railway executive to wait on Mr. Wentworth, without result. How dangerous this information gathering proved to be is now gradually coming to light as the Commonwealth Government goes ahead with the Committee's scheme. As to terms of reference the Committee boldly set itself the task of solving the whole of Australia's transport problems and came up with the unbelievable solution of a complete rehabilitation of the railways by heavy injections of financial medicine and false cost accounting by means of which the railways could quote rates low enough

to rob millions of tons of traffic from the road and the sea, and not altogether overlooking the air. The urge for this nefarious plan did not come from one man or even a committee; it must have come from a pressure group and the most powerful pressure group today is the unions which are all devotedly in favour of unifying the gauges and reviving the railways at any cost. The Committee took all its statements in camera and thus violated all the well-proven procedures of British democracy in carrying out a fact-finding investigation of such vast importance.

The Committee broke through the sound barrier of its terms of reference and launched itself in the limited time at its disposal on the uncharted sea of Australia's whole transport policy. On the scrappiest of information it wrote off interstate shipping except for specialised bulk cargoes, thus confirming the Government's attitude to ships and shipping. Out of hand and without taking operational or technical evidence, it condemned the pioneering hauliers as lawless destroyers of the road. Finally it recommended that the only way to solve Australia's transport problem was to adopt an unreserved policy of railway revival. The Federal Government, following the lead of the Committee, took the Committee's report and recommendations in camera and started to give effect to the Committee's recommendations without any formal approval of the Committee's report and seemingly without even recognising that it was laying down a new transport policy for Australia; nay, more, it was laying down a transport policy diametrically opposed to world trends in transport and drastically opposed to its own accepted policy in relation to defence.

I mention that as an instance to show that there are reactions in well-informed quarters, and that other interests are being affected by these recommendations which appear to have been made without a full study of the repercussions attendant upon these projects being put into effect. Other sections of the community which are well deserving of some consideration are suffering considerably because of that action.

This is, admittedly, a plea for some consideration for road hauliers. Surely cognisance of the road in our transport system is a necessary component of our thinking when dealing with railway problems. In my speech in December last year, I referred to the impossibility of making a true comparison between the Trans.-line and State systems generally. Essentials can be summed up on a question-and-answer basis. A question could be—

Do the comparative cost figures showing comparisons favourable to the Commonwealth and unfavourable to the States, present a fair picture?

The answer—

No. The picture is valueless as a true guide to relative merits of the systems. No comparisons are possible because—

- (1) A selected portion of one system, i.e.—the Trans.-line—is compared to whole systems.
- (2) The Trans.-line is advantaged by—
 - (a) Being free of terminal costs. These amount to 30 per cent., and up to 50 per cent. of total. (Despatch costs involve receiving, loading and stowing, consigning and classifying, sheeting and accounting. Delivery costs include checking, unloading, warehousing, delivering, freight collection, accounting and claims checking.)
 - (b) Not being charged with—
 - (i) Metropolitan losses.
 - (ii) Unpayable branch and developmental lines.
 - (c) Being more fully loaded. Having fewer stopping places. Having easier grades and curves. Having no junctions. Having less weathering (assisting track preservation). Possessing favourable terrain reflecting low capital, constructional and running costs.

In other words, the Trans.-line is a railwayman's dream, but it is ludicrous to attempt a comparison between this and other rail systems.

Bearing on the point of cost, there was a very interesting sub-leader in *The West Australian* on the 7th of this month. It was quoted from *The Advertiser*, a South Australian publication, and is as follows:—

Last year the Commonwealth Railways made a profit of £1,249,000. They have never done as well as that before. The previous best was £1,180,000 in 1955-56. The new figures look even more striking when seen against the losses that all the State railways continue to make. How do the Commonwealth Railways do it?

Part of the answer is that they have been able to save money on the trans-Continental and Central Australian lines by using diesel-electric locomotives.

On the comfortable and well-patronised trans-Continental, where stops are few and running expenses

a ton-mile are well below those of most State railways, diesels and more efficient working methods allowed the railways last year to clear £640,570 after meeting all service costs. That was £36,500 more than in the previous year.

The rest of the answer has nothing to do with the way the Commonwealth Railways are run, and this is where the States can envy them. When the former make up their accounts they do not have to include such items as the Commissioner's salary, superannuation payments or contributions to the accident and insurance fund. Nor do they have to bother about the payroll tax, which in 1957-58 alone cost State railways a total of £3,036,000.

But even these are comparatively minor aids to profit-making by comparison with the help that the Commonwealth Railways get from Federal revenue. While the State Railways, relying for their capital needs on loan money, are charged with the major part of the interest bill, the Commonwealth Railways (in addition to loan money) have had £30,000,000 of interest-free capital out of Federal revenue.

This year's budget provides them with another £1,267,000. The Commonwealth Railways are undoubtedly a competently managed business undertaking. But there can be very few business undertakings that enjoy their advantages.

I think it is as well to know those facts, which can be added to the list I gave, to show once again that it is not possible to make a true comparison, which we are inclined to do, between, say, a State system and the Trans.-line which, after all, is only a portion of the total Commonwealth system.

In regard to local reactions, the other day a letter was published in *The West Australian* which said that Mr. Wentworth, a good friend of Western Australia, had made a statement that—

A fast unbroken Commonwealth line to the Eastern States would allow overseas ships to turn around at Fremantle, giving them five trips a year to the Australian coast from Europe instead of the normal four. Shipping companies generally are spending millions on faster ships to achieve this.

I sent in a reply, and rather to my surprise it was not published. However, after talking the matter over with the editor, he agreed to publish a letter from me which I suppose will appear in due course. In this letter I said that the statement which was attributed to Mr. Wentworth

did not appear in the Wentworth report. I pointed out that all that appeared in the report was—

This matter was discussed with the overseas shipping representatives in Sydney and discounted on the score of shipping time tables and extra distance.

If a single Australian port were adopted for turnaround time-saving, it would almost certainly be Melbourne or Sydney as being closer to over 90 per cent. of Australia's population.

I also think that the matter should be considered from the point of view of the passengers. Incoming visitors from overseas to the Eastern States would not welcome a forced change at Fremantle, and the necessity to travel on by rail or air. In any case, more than half of Fremantle's shipping tonnage comprises bulk cargoes, such as oil, wheat and other grains, phosphate rock, sulphur, etc., and there would be no question of their being taken off at Fremantle and sent across by rail.

I mentioned earlier that some criticism was made by Mr. Allen, who is the expert I have been quoting. He said that the Railway unions had a good deal to do with fostering the idea of a uniform system under one control. I am inclined to agree with the critic in applying that to the Eastern States. I do not think the same reaction exists at present amongst the railwaymen of Western Australia. I believe that they realise that if a standard line were constructed from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie, additional losses would be made by the State, and the State might, in desperation, turn to the Commonwealth and ask it to take over the whole system.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: It would be the best thing!

The Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: If that happened, half of our lines would go, and with them would go half of the employees. I am asking railway employees to give that thought serious consideration.

Rather than spend £40,000,000 on standardisation, I think it would be better to attain economies in our own system by rehabilitating it; and to spend the money maintaining a reasonable work-force to service the necessary lines.

In the Railway Department's files there is a letter from the Federal secretary of the Liberal Party, and one from the Australian Federated Chamber of Commerce. Both these letters are couched in somewhat similar terms, and they decry the question of standardisation because it is felt that it would conflict with the opportunities enjoyed by many of the small operators, such as the road hauliers, etc. The letters express the contention that, as a matter of policy, private enterprise should be fostered, rather than destroyed

by uneconomic Government competition. The Chamber of Commerce letter goes on to say—

The Federal Chamber of Commerce passed the following resolution:—

1. Motion carried—Standardisation scheme not warranted.
2. Conference noted—
 - (a) Clapp Report claimed proposal put forward not on economic grounds, but for grounds for defence.
 - (b) Defence authorities said standardisation not necessary for defence.

Behind the scenes there has been quite a bit of activity in regard to this very important matter; and I think various bodies in the Eastern States are realising that there is some resistance at least from a section of the Western Australian community in regard to this proposal. It is realised that this section does not believe it would be in the best interests of our State's economy.

I would like again to stress that those who are voicing these objections are doing so on behalf of the rail users because they think that, as they are the ones who pay the freights and, to a large extent, produce the wealth, they are entitled to the highest priority of consideration when this particular matter is studied.

THE HON. R. THOMPSON (West) [5.27]: I rise to support the Bill. I wish to refer to a place in Fremantle which I am told is unique in Australia. It is known as the "Homeless Haven for Alcoholics." Firstly, I had better explain that this home came into existence approximately three years ago when, through economic circumstances, there was a large number of unemployed. Most of these people drifted into Fremantle, and at one time there were, congregating around the port looking for work, anything from 350 to 400 people, many of whom became destitute.

The Fremantle City Council, through the good graces of the Mayor (Mr. Samson) or the Acting Mayor (Mr. Davies), held a meeting from which there emerged the Fremantle Unemployed Relief Committee. That committee functioned effectively through the good graces of the business people in Fremantle, who donated very generously to help those people who needed sustenance at that time.

In about 12 months, between 6,000 and 7,000 grocery orders and bags of vegetables—as well as meals—were given to persons who needed them. However, the number of unemployed declined; but at that time there seemed to be a blitz around the port on persons who were considered to be undesirable. The majority of the persons to whom I refer had had gaol sentences for some reason or other—mainly as the

result of alcoholism—and were consequently debarred from receiving social service benefits.

At that time a good lady—I cannot speak too highly of her—named Mrs. Grace Oliver, prevailed on the Government of the day to do something to assist these people who were frequently in and out of the police courts. Many of them were the type often referred to as metho drinkers, “plonko’s,” and so on. Mrs. Oliver was able to get a building, previously occupied by the Public Works Department at the corner of Marine Terrace and Mouatt Street in Fremantle, in which to assist people who needed meals and who had nowhere to sleep.

I might mention that at that time many of these people were sleeping in caves, and so on; and I think it was the *Weekend Mail* which at one stage published an article of several pages in regard to these people, together with flashlight photographs showing them sleeping in caves, with metho and wine bottles close to them. However, Mrs. Oliver saw a higher side of the lives of these people, and was responsible for setting up this Haven, as it is now known. At present there are 14 persons for whom she provides beds and three meals a day there. She is not without assistance now, as there is a committee working with her. It consists of Mr. Hansen, Mr. Gaynor, Mr. Dans, Mrs. Goode, the Rev. Cuthbertson, and Mrs. Chandler; and they are doing a job that is unequalled throughout Australia.

This building is open seven days a week, and a person in need can get three wholesome meals a day there, while 14 are provided with sleeping accommodation. If that place were not there, I have no doubt that those people would be frequently charged with vagrancy and would be before the Police Court on many occasions.

The Hon. A. L. Loton: How long do they stay there?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I will come to that in a moment. Since the Haven commenced operations about a year and ten months ago, approximately 200 people have passed through it; so it will be seen that there is quite a big turnover of personnel. Most of those passing through the Haven are persons who are let out of gaol and have no money, and no home to go to. Such people can go there, and they are given protection and the food they need. It is surprising to see the number of people—declared alcoholics—who have passed through that place, and who have since been able again to take their places in the community.

I am sure that the Minister for Local Government will agree, if he goes back through the records of the Child Welfare Department, that a lot of men who were parted from their wives, and for whose wives and families the Child Welfare

Department had to provide, are, through the good work of Mrs. Oliver and the human understanding which she brings to bear on each case, again united with their wives and families and able to take their places in society as respectable citizens.

Last week I had the privilege of attending a meeting of leading citizens of Fremantle, called by the Mayor of Fremantle, to discuss the Haven. Professor Saint of the Medical School was the principal speaker. I would not try to portray to members everything that he said, but his knowledge and understanding of the disease of alcoholism were such as to be most impressive. He made it clear that in two States of the Commonwealth there are foundations where the problem of alcoholism is really being tackled.

Many people frown on alcohol and believe that alcoholics and drunks are no good to the community; but the sooner we realise that there have been alcoholics since alcoholic drinks were first manufactured, the sooner we will acknowledge the fact that alcoholism is a disaster and a disease which all of us, in these enlightened days, must do our best to conquer. This is the responsibility not only of the medical profession, the community generally, and the Government, but also of the manufacturers of alcoholic drinks who, I think, should contribute generously towards the discovery of some cure for this disease.

The Fremantle Rotary Club has also taken an interest in the Haven; and it is sponsoring a small works programme at the present time. The Haven has been scrubbed from top to bottom by those who have passed through, and it is kept very clean, but it is in a sad state of repair. The building is dilapidated, the toilet facilities are very poor, and the kitchen facilities are not up to the standard which would be required by the Public Health Department. Most of the provisions used in this place are donated. Those that are not are purchased by Mrs. Oliver, who is the wife of a working man, and has nothing left out of her pay packet at the end of the week; because if these people are short of anything, she pays for it out of her own pocket.

Mrs. Oliver is also purchasing a utility, which she runs at her own expense, in order to go out to the market gardens at Spearwood to get donations, vegetables, and so on to help to sustain the inmates of the Haven and keep them off the streets. Over the last three years many people have not been able to get social service benefits, and they rely on the Haven for their meals. We might term a number of these people unemployable; because many of them suffer from afflictions other than alcoholism.

Money is urgently needed to remodel the Haven and put it into better repair, so as to improve the environment of the persons who frequent it; and it was for that reason that I rose to speak this

afternoon. I have made arrangements with the Speaker of another place for Professor Saint to come to Parliament House and address members during the tea suspension on a night to be arranged; and I think all members should avail themselves of the opportunity to hear him speak on this subject.

Several months ago a trained social worker, a Miss Pitman, spent three months at the Haven, living among these people and observing them, in order to see how the place was run and what was required there. She also addressed the meeting last week, to which I have referred, and gave a comprehensive report of what takes place at the Haven. She stated that although the people there were provided with decent meals—all, incidentally, cooked by the men who live there—the arrangements fell down sadly at night when Mrs. Oliver had to go home to her own family. Between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m., the place is without supervision; and, although visits are made by members of Alcoholics Anonymous, who do their best to assist, there is always the good fellow from down the street, who comes along with several bottles of wine under his arm, and wanders into the place and undoes much of the good work that has been done.

As every member of Parliament probably knows of people in his own electorate similar to the inmates of the Haven, I believe it will be only a matter of time before such establishments will be found throughout the major centres of this State and the Commonwealth generally. I repeat that supervision is urgently required at the Haven between the hours of 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. At present, through lack of supervision, much of the good work done in the day time is undone during the night.

The work done by Mrs. Oliver does not consist simply of walking into the building and carrying out instructional work; she is a St. John's nurse and a qualified nursing sister; and many of the cases with which she deals are in need of medical attention. On many occasions she has found it necessary to undress and bath men and put them into clean clothes, after which she has washed their clothing and turned them out, clean and decent again, so that they may hold their own and not be ostracised by the rest of the community. The results she has obtained to date do her a great deal of credit.

At this stage I ask that, when Professor Saint visits Parliament House to make his address, all members will give every attention to him because, sooner or later—as I have already said—the establishment of similar centres throughout the State will become an established fact. Fremantle has given the lead, and I trust that Government assistance can be granted to further this work.

THE HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [5.46]: I did not propose to speak on the Bill, but the remarks made by Mr. Thompson have, I am sure, created considerable interest among those members who have had the privilege of listening to him. The question of alcoholism is undoubtedly forcing its attention on thinking people; and it must, of necessity, receive more consideration from Governments in the future than it has in the past. The remarks of the last speaker serve only to bring to our notice the fact that many well-meaning and conscientious citizens are endeavouring to cope with this disease in a way which, although the work done is a credit to them from a practical point of view, is inadequate. I therefore support the hope expressed by Mr. Thompson; namely, that the Government will give more attention to this disease than it has in the past.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: There is a committee working in your area in Kalgoorlie, now.

The Hon. E. M. HEENAN: A great deal of research has taken place in recent years. Members of the medical profession, and various religious and lay institutions have been doing their best to combat alcoholism, but it seems to me that the time has now arrived when some co-ordination should be aimed at; and the Government should give a lead in this direction by giving more encouragement to the people who are already doing so much. Much interesting medical and scientific data has been accumulated, together with statistics of an appalling nature, which indicate how vital and pressing this problem is becoming.

It is pleasing and interesting to hear from Mr. Thompson that through his efforts we are to have the privilege of listening to an address by Professor Saint some time before the session closes. I earnestly hope that every member will take advantage of this great opportunity to learn something about alcoholism which is one of the most serious social problems of the day. It is asserting itself more and more in the highly-organised society in which we are called upon to live.

I have the utmost admiration for Alcoholics Anonymous. I have seen their work in the courts and in other spheres; and it seems to me that if more practical encouragement were given to this organisation, and the public learned to be more appreciative of its efforts, it could do a great deal more useful work. Mr. Thompson mentioned that in Fremantle a lady had established a centre to care for these unfortunate people. I applaud the honourable member for the interest he is taking in the Haven, and I congratulate the people who are associated with it.

For the record, I would like to mention that in Perth there are several worthy people who, a few years ago, with their

own hands built a splendid house in East Perth called Camillus House, which has for its aims and objects the self-same ones as the institution in Fremantle. It is immaterial which institution was established first, but the one in East Perth, which was named after St. Camillus—who, for the major part of his life, was a derelict and a loss to himself—is doing a great deal of good; and there are many men who are devoting the whole of their lives, in an honorary capacity, to working for that institution.

Sometimes I think the community at large does not fully realise that humanitarians such as those men are in our midst. I often feel that their efforts are not appreciated to the extent that they deserve. So I hope the remarks expressed by Mr. Thompson have lit a flame which will kindle greater interest among members of the Government and cause the people of Western Australia to shoulder their responsibilities in regard to a problem which is causing concern not only in Australia, but in all parts of the world.

I must not trespass on the Licensing Act Amendment Bill which is to be introduced in another place today. There is a great obligation on every one of us here to bring that Act up to date for the benefit of the community. The other evening we debated very carefully the advisability of preventing people who suffer from tuberculosis from adopting little children, because this is such a dreadful disease that it can impair and ruin the human body.

In comparison, I think that alcoholism is equally villainous in its effect on those who suffer from it. Yet we hear of these unfortunate people entering wine saloons and hotels; and, so long as they have sufficient money to purchase alcohol, they are permitted to bring about their own ruin and degradation. No-one seems to care very much about the problem. In the Press, from time to time, we read of people who are convicted of selling liquor to natives; because alcohol causes natives to go mad and lose their sense of responsibility, thus leading to their degradation.

Although action is taken in this way in regard to natives, we have a number of people in our community who are in no better position to handle liquor than they are; and although, as I have said, people are convicted of selling liquor to natives, those who sell liquor in hotels and wine saloons to alcoholics are allowed to go scot-free; nothing much is done about them.

I now wish to refer to the inadequate accommodation in some of our gaols. The subject of alcoholism has brought this matter to my notice. I am not referring to the Fremantle prison, but to the out-of-date and inadequate facilities that exist in the gaol at Perth Central Police Station, and in the gaols of our larger country centres.

There is a degrading atmosphere in most of these places. The Government would be well-advised to investigate the accommodation provided in our gaols throughout the State; particularly the one in Perth. Unfortunately I have not seen inside this prison, but I have spoken to a number of people who have, and some of them say they would rather bring their lives to an end than experience once again the degradation of being confined in those cells; particularly over the week-end.

Our population is growing rapidly, and apparently our gaols, in much the same way as our hospitals and schools, are not keeping pace. According to some of the stories I have heard, this is a matter which the Minister in charge of prisons should investigate. I support the Bill.

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban—Minister for Mines—in reply) [6.0]: In replying to the discussion on this Bill, I would first like to thank members for their contributions to the debate, and to assure them that every suggestion, every enquiry and every criticism has been referred by me to the appropriate Ministers and departments.

Members will appreciate that the time has been somewhat limited to obtain an answer to each matter that has been ventilated, but I have done my best to obtain as much information as possible.

I am not able to reply in detail to the point raised by Mr. Simpson relating to the standard gauge railway. He has addressed this House on that subject on a number of occasions previously, and we know it is a matter dear to his heart.

Regarding the comments of Mr. Thompson, supported by the remarks of Mr. Heenan, I am quite sure every one of us is interested in the points that were raised, and in the fact that he has arranged for the doctor in question to visit Parliament House and talk to members here.

It was thought by Mr. Heenan that the Government had an obligation to bring the Licensing Act up to date. All I can say in reply is that this particular state of affairs has prevailed for many years, but the present Government will give an opportunity to Parliament to improve the legislation on the statute book. He further stated that the provisions in our gaols at present were inadequate, and he thought the Government should take steps to improve them. There are so many establishments where improvements are needed that the Government can only attend to them as time goes on. I understand that in connection with the gaols something will be done.

The Hon. A. R. Jones: The Government should not make the prisoners too comfortable.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That depends entirely on the honourable member's point of view. I listened with interest to Mr. Wise's lucid and sapient discourse on the problems associated with

the welding as a unit of the diverse nations of the British Commonwealth. The complexities referred to by the honourable member cannot, and must not, be incapable of solution; and it behoves all of us to give of our best to achieve a feeling of teamship and brotherhood among the white and coloured peoples of our great Commonwealth of Nations. Dr. Hislop's comments on this subject were of great interest and provided food for careful thought.

I proceeded to Kalgoorlie with the Parliamentary delegation, where the Premier of South Australia welcomed them and took over the arrangements for their visit. I had the opportunity to associate with the members of that delegation and to talk to them. There was a keen desire among the delegates to discuss matters which affect their countries.

Turning now to matters of more parochial interest, members will recall that Mr. Strickland took the Government to task for allegedly expending State funds at a high rate. He based his comments on the fact that this Bill sought £1,000,000 more than the amount requested by the previous Government to cover a similar period at this time last year.

Members will not find it difficult to realise that, due to inescapable increases in costs associated with wage increases—

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: There will be more rises in the future.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am sorry to hear the honourable member make that remark. That shows how one must be consistent on a matter such as an increase in the basic wage. As the wage rises, so inflation follows suit, and the stability of our economy is accordingly affected.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: That is only election patter.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It is not election patter. It is plain common sense.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: The wages are fixed on the cost of living.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I realise that, but it is a pity to see the costs rising. Added to that, there are debt charges and normal expansion of services, so that the increase sought is reasonable; and certainly it does not reflect extravagance on the part of the present Government. In other words, the increase of £1,000,000 is reasonable. The State's financial position is much more stable at the present time than it was for the corresponding period of the last financial year.

The deficit on the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the three months ended the 30th September, 1959, was £1,733,000. This compares with £2,233,000 for the corresponding quarter of last year, and represents an improvement of over £500,000.

Should the honourable member feel the Government has been extravagant in other directions, let me remind him his

Government found it necessary to obtain temporary finance by way of Treasury bills to the extent of no less than £3,000,000 in the first quarter of the last financial year, in order to keep itself solvent. On the other hand, the present Government has not drawn one penny of Treasury bills right up to this current date.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: This Government is only a new Government.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is perfectly true. In all our newness we have shown a saving of £500,000 in the first six months of office, and we anticipate improving in the same manner.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: By squeezing the taxpayers.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Surely these facts should allay the honourable member's fears of bankruptcy, which, to say the least, are quite ridiculous and at complete variance with the facts, as I have indicated.

As Mr. Strickland well knows, Supply is necessary in order to cover the first period of a financial year pending final appropriation after Parliament has passed the Estimates. It is customary to assume that the Estimates will not be passed until late in the session, and it was on these premises that this Supply Bill was prepared. Hence the request for £19,000,000, which it is expected will carry on the services of the State until December next.

If the Estimates are passed at a date earlier than normal, that is all to the good; and certainly no harm will result in Supply being granted for a larger sum than may prove necessary as the year proceeds.

The honourable member also made a reference to the increased collections which it is estimated will be received from certain taxes. These increases result from the normal expansion of activity in various fields and are not the result of any increase in rates. He may rest assured that the Government will carry out its election promises in relation to reductions of certain taxes. Action has already been taken in respect to entertainments tax; and the other matters are receiving attention.

In discussing assistance to the Applecross Parents and Citizens' Association, Mr. Lavery, supported by Mr. Davies, endeavoured to show that the present Government had failed to ratify assistance promised by the previous Government.

The inference drawn by the honourable member is not the interpretation I would arrive at from the circumstances. It is interesting for Mr. Lavery to learn that—

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: I object to the remark that I have to learn. I am the member for the province concerned. I conveyed the wishes of that association to this House.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am sorry if I have offended the honourable member. The use of the word "learn" was not meant to convey that the honourable member was ignorant of the facts. The honourable member appears to be touchy.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: I am touchy on that subject.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I shall use another method to describe what I have to say. May I convey to Mr. Lavery, in the most polite terms, the situation as I discovered it in the last two or three days?

The details of the case are these: There is no doubt that the Applecross-Canning Bridge Parents and Citizens' Association has done a great deal for its school. Its efforts have been mainly concentrated on the provision of playing fields and amenities. In 1957 the association decided that the next large-scale project to be undertaken would be the construction of a school hall. It was contemplated that to provide a hall capable of seating 700 pupils, about £11,000 would be needed. The association could find £1,000 and it approached the then Premier for some financial assistance from the Government.

However, the accumulation of urgent school works, particularly classrooms, that were required, rendered it impossible for assistance to be given. The position was such that building at the rate of £1,500,000 to £5,000,000 per year for at least four years would be necessary to accommodate expanded school population. In the face of such circumstances, it was imperative to ensure that the maximum funds were expended on classrooms to the complete exclusion of less essential projects. I am very conscious of the desirability of halls at schools, but they cannot be compared in importance with classrooms and teaching facilities.

In the light of this position, Mr. Hawke advised the Applecross association that it was not possible for any money to be provided, even on a subsidy basis, for this purpose. He further said that he did not expect the Government to be in a position to assist until, say, the beginning of July, 1959.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Before tea I was talking about the Applecross school, and I had said that the previous Premier (Mr. Hawke) had found it necessary to advise the Applecross Parents and Citizens' Association that it was not possible for the money it had asked for to be provided, even on a subsidy basis. Further, he said that he did not expect his Government would be in a position until the beginning of July, 1959, to consider giving any assistance. I was going to say that Mr. Lavery had misrepresented the facts, but I do not want to offend him any more; therefore I will not say that.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: He has calmed down now.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Since the present Government took office, further approaches have been made by the Applecross Parents and Citizens' Association, but it has not been possible to grant financial assistance because of the still urgent need for more classrooms. In the past two years the school population has increased by 11,300 pupils; and, in that period, 407 new classrooms have been completed. Although provision has been made in 1959-60 for the construction of 250 more, the position is still acute.

Mr. MacKinnon suggested that adequate school accommodation could be provided on a more inexpensive scale than at present. In this regard, I am advised that the honourable member may rest assured that the responsible officers in the Education Department, in listing their school building requirements, have kept a very strict eye on State finances. I am told that the schools that the department has requested have certainly not been the ideal it would have desired if unlimited funds had been available. There is a happy medium always between the extravagance of ideal accommodation and the extreme economy of poor accommodation, which, in the long run, costs more because of heavy bills for maintenance. Over the past ten years, considerable thought, discussion, experimentation, and planning have gone into the question of school buildings.

It has been felt that although at the outset some costly buildings were erected, and later some very cheap buildings, which are already proving costly for maintenance, a satisfactory solution has now been found; and the primary schools and high schools that are being erected meet the needs of the State without providing all of those things that are desirable but not essential; and that they also are reasonably priced. My colleague, Mr. Logan, said that the Tuart Hill High School is an example. That high school was opened on Saturday afternoon by Mr. Logan.

I think the honourable member confused loan funds with expenditure from revenue. It is not permissible to erect school buildings out of revenue, as he suggested. These must come from loan funds. It was suggested to me that the honourable member had been misinformed as to the cost per classroom. A single classroom erected as an extension to an existing school costs in the vicinity of £3,000, but in a new school, where ancillaries such as playgrounds, toilet facilities, administration rooms etc. have to be provided, the cost of the whole school divided by the number of classrooms will naturally be a little higher—

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: How much is a little?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: —but not in the vicinity of £10,000 a classroom, as quoted by the honourable member.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: Mr. MacKinnon is learning something now.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: A four-roomed school costing £100,000 works out at £25,000.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I suggest that at some later date the honourable member might take a suitable opportunity to correct me again, and I will make further inquiries into the matter. The information I have given has been provided by the department in regard to the position at the present time.

The PRESIDENT: I do not think the Minister should encourage honourable members.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Honourable members do not need any encouragement. I advise him that corridors were provided in schools some years ago, but, as an economy measure, verandahs were substituted. Furthermore, it was found that corridors interfered with ventilation and retained noise. The department's experience is that rooms with verandahs are much more suitable for Western Australian conditions than those with corridors.

In regard to kindergartens, the present Government Parties, when in office previously, set up a Royal Commission, the chairman of which was Sir Ross McDonald, to investigate kindergarten education. The commission recommended that the Government should not undertake the responsibility of providing kindergartens but should content itself with providing to the Kindergarten Union a subsidy based on a formula.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: A very good idea.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The Government accepted this, and the practice was continued by the Labor Government. Under the Education Act, the Government is obliged to provide education from the age of six; but some years ago it was decided that children could be admitted to school at the beginning of the year in which they turned six. The obligations of the Government in regard to education, from this age upwards, are such that it is not possible at the present time for kindergartens to be added to the Government's responsibilities.

I can advise Mr. Thomson that consideration will be given to his suggestion that sick bays should be provided at hostel accommodation for high school students. The possibility of these being added when extensions or renovations are being provided at Government-owned hostels will be considered.

Mr. Strickland was critical of the Government's activity in the North-West. I think that little comment is needed on the parts of his speech dealing with road

restrictions and subsidies. These have been effectively dealt with through answers to questions asked by the honourable member in recent weeks, and by an answer to a question asked by Mr. Willesee this afternoon. I think honourable members will agree that a very adequate answer was provided today.

It was perhaps unfortunate that the Liberal Party made reference in the advertisement to the removal of road subsidies. All I can assume is that they took it for granted that the reference to road subsidies in the south also applied in the North. However, the answers given to questions have disposed of this matter.

If the question of subsidies is pressed further, it will be important to bear in mind that the old subsidies referred to a wartime set of conditions. In fact, Mr. Strickland made mention of this when he said: "There were road subsidies paid on all goods which went from Broome northwards during the war years after the Navy stopped the ships at Broome." Naturally these subsidies were withdrawn shortly after the war because they no longer had any significance.

In regard to a deep-sea port on the west coast in the North, surely the honourable member is not suggesting that a Labor Government would have proceeded bull-headed with the construction of a deep-water port at Black Rocks without having regard for the protests of the local people. It was because of the local feeling in the matter and their genuine belief that Black Rocks might not be the best answer that the present Government engaged the services of Maunsell and Partners to examine not only the question of Derby versus Black Rocks, but also where the best location for a deep-water port would be in the West Kimberleys.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: They had 12 months in which to build it had they wanted to.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Maunsell and Partners are a world-famous firm; they command a lot of respect; and they also have at their disposal a wealth of expert advice, including advice in the development of ports subjected to large tidal movements. Their recommendation on a port for the West Kimberleys will be very important in the overall development of that area. It is, therefore, both desirable and necessary that we should await their report, which is now expected to be received about the end of March. This delay will not retard any developmental projects in the Kimberleys; and it will certainly do much to put the minds of the people of the Kimberleys at rest.

As to the honourable member's claim that the Hawke Government assured the people of Broome that it would build a deep-water jetty at Broome, this has to be considered with great caution and should be written down as an election promise

given at a time when the Black Rocks argument raised its head during the election campaign. The honourable member shakes his head. Therefore, I refer to the remarks I made earlier in this speech when I said I would endeavour to give the explanations, although I expected that they would not all be accepted. What I have just said is how the Government feels about the matter. It is significant that the then Government could not be certain that it was practicable to build a deep-water jetty at Broome. It was only a guess.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: That is not true; you could build one for a mile and reach deep water.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes; but whether that is practicable or not is another matter. It is also significant that the survey in respect of the possibility of building a deep-water jetty at Broome has been undertaken during the life of the present Government. It does not appear to have been undertaken during the Hawke Government's regime.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: It was initiated then.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Mr. Strickland may be assured that the present Government will press on with its policy of eventually having at least one deep-water port for each of the electorates of Gascoyne, Pilbara, and Kimberley; and, in the case of Kimberley, this deep-water port will be on the west coast to serve the West Kimberley, and will be additional to the port at Wyndham. It is appropriate for me to remind Mr. Strickland that much has happened during the six months that the present Government has been in office—

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: I would like to hear of it.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am sorry the honourable member has not heard of it.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: You have done nothing.

The Hon. F. D. Willmott: The honourable member should not sleep so much.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is so much of an under-statement it is not worth replying to. I repeat: It is appropriate for me to remind Mr. Strickland that much has happened during the six months that the present Government has been in office, and it does not suffer by comparison with the Hawke Government's six years in office. Suggestions that we are likely to allow towns like Broome to deteriorate hardly call for comment.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Build the jetty.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: In the later part of the honourable member's speech, his reference to Broome was very contradictory. He explained the problems of employment at Broome, and referred to the fact that there were no back-country stations at Broome. Then he went on to

say that the Government was treading on dangerous ground so far as Broome was concerned if it did not build a deep-water jetty there.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: That is right; you will close it up!

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: He added that the jetty would pay for itself in the first fifteen years of its life. I agree that the present structure is in bad shape, and is very expensive to repair. No doubt he was referring to the saving in maintenance, when he said "the jetty would pay for itself in the first fifteen years of its life."

He was critical of Maunsell and Partners wanting five months to undertake their work. Even the most superficial examination of the position would disclose that work of the important type that Maunsell's have to do in a very difficult area cannot be done any quicker, particularly with the intervention of the "wet" season, which reacts against this type of work.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: One was built there 50 years ago.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: That is so.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: You can walk out there; the tide goes out.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am well aware of that, having spent some time there during the war. No-one knows better than Mr. Strickland that the "wet" season reacts against this type of work.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: You do not get bogged in the sea; the "wet" does not affect it.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Mr. Teahan commented on the possible carrying out of additional railway wagon repairs at Kalgoorlie. This suggestion is already under consideration by the Minister for Railways, but investigations so far do not indicate that any great additional amount of railway repair work at Kalgoorlie is practicable. The Minister for Railways anticipates writing to the honourable member within the next two or three weeks, following his examination of the position.

Mr. Garrigan asked that the Government give full consideration to the establishment of a superphosphate works at Esperance. As I recently told Mr. Bennetts in answer to a parliamentary question, the necessary output to enable a works to operate economically would be about 50,000 tons annually. The superphosphate usage last year in the Esperance district was only 8,000 to 9,000 tons. It is possible that the premature establishment of a works would result in dearer, not cheaper, superphosphate for local users.

Owing to the reducing freight rate per mile with increasing distance, farmers at Esperance are not penalised as greatly as at first might appear. As an example, a

farmer at Newdegate pays £2 15s. 11d. per ton freight from the works at Bas-sendeau. Freight to Ravensthorpe is £2 15s. 11d. by rail, plus 11s. 1d. road freight—a total of £3 7s. The road freight is actually £2 5s. 10d., but is reduced by £1 14s. 9d. subsidy. Freight to Esperance is £3 10s. 5d. per ton, or only 3s. 5d. a ton more than to Ravensthorpe. The establishment of a superphosphate works at Esperance would be a matter for private enterprise, and could be constructed within two years of a decision being made.

Mr. Abbey suggested that many of the pasture experiments being carried out at the Wokulup Research Station could be duplicated at other research stations, and he specifically mentioned the Avondale station. He asked that I convey to the Minister for Agriculture a request that experiments be carried out to ascertain whether it would be possible to establish perennials in the lighter rainfall areas.

In this regard I am advised that the Department of Agriculture is carrying out a vigorous campaign of plant introduction in both the wheat and sheep and dairying areas. Many perennials have been tried at the Avondale Research Station over the last 35 years, including *Phalaris tuberosa* and lucerne, which are much more drought tolerant than Currie cocksfoot to which the honourable member referred. Whilst the work at Wokulup is of great value in demonstrating the use of this plant in the high rainfall areas, and for the distribution of seed, it is felt that cocksfoot has no prospects of success outside the high rainfall areas: in areas, say, under 30 inches.

Experience at Avondale over the years has indicated that perennials have little chance of success, and that pastures must consist of annual types such as subterranean clover and wimmera ryegrass. Consideration, however, will be given to extending trials with promising perennials.

Mr. Garrigan said the Government should have a look at the question of reopening the railways. I inform the honourable member that the whole question of line closures is still under consideration by a sub-committee of Cabinet.

The Hon. J. J. Garrigan: Thank you.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: As Mr. Garrigan is aware, approval has already been given for restoration of services on a limited and trial basis on two of the lines concerned. These two lines were dealt with first as it was considered a greater degree of urgency existed in regard to the areas they serve than elsewhere. This does not mean that the Government's examination of the other lines will be any less careful. By the honourable member's comments it would appear that he has changed his mind since he supported the motion dealing with the cessation of the services on these lines, presented by the previous Government.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: So have other members.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: However, a change of mind is sometimes good for the conscience; and it is only a fool, anyway, who cannot change his mind! The honourable member also asked that consideration be given to the making available of more funds for diamond drilling, and the gold mining industry generally.

The Mines Department is at present drilling at Coolgardie; and it has also despatched a drill to operate on Paddy's Flat at Meekatharra. It has just finished some deep tricky holes at Day Dawn. All these were put down in search of gold deposits.

The other drills are operating on iron deposits, water search, and assisting the Public Works Department in regard to the proposed Fremantle bridge and northern harbours. As I am sure that members who represent Goldfields areas will appreciate, it is becoming somewhat difficult to find gold-bearing areas which warrant deep drilling. The department has of recent years examined its records very carefully in this regard, and has carried out a lot of gold drilling with but spasmodic success. However, any area which offers a reasonable warranty of success will be considered.

I, as Minister for Mines, receive many requests for financial assistance under the Act, and I am always anxious to assist where hope can be given by the inspectors in the area that a particular project has a chance of succeeding; because I believe that in regard to goldmining and prospecting, if we never venture we never win.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: It is an industry that wants assistance.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I appreciate that. For some time now the industry has wanted a boost, and I am endeavouring to give it what assistance I can. Some Goldfields members, including Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Nulsen, Mr. Garrigan, and Mr. Bennetts came to me not long ago and requested that assistance be given for a show just outside Kalgoorlie. Considerable assistance was granted, and I hope the show is doing all right.

As the honourable member is aware, there are a number of influential companies engaged in the search for gold and minerals in Western Australia, and these companies are quite capable of putting up large capital if deposits of suitable size and economic importance are located. They are given all possible assistance and encouragement in their projects by the Government. The Mines Department is an everlasting, willing source of information to anybody who makes inquiries concerning the mining industry.

Mr. Thomson referred to the detention of juveniles awaiting hearing in a children's court. He referred to unsatisfactory conditions at one place but did not mention the locality. If he will advise the

Minister for Child Welfare where this is. —I have consulted the Minister on this point—I have no doubt he will take action in the matter. The Child Welfare Act provides that children awaiting hearing may be—

Taken to a receiving depot, shelter or other government institution and placed therein.

Placed with some respectable person and such arrangement or agreement made as may be necessary or proper for the care and maintenance of such child.

Placed in the dwelling of a police officer at prescribed rates.

Placed in a police gaol or lock-up and kept apart from other prisoners. Provided that no child shall be detained in a police gaol or lock-up unless the charge pending is of so serious a nature that his safe custody is of paramount importance.

The Child Welfare Department maintains the child welfare reception home at Mt. Lawley for metropolitan cases, and has a small cottage available at Kalgoorlie which is similarly used. The cost of providing independent shelters at other centres would be considerable, however. The department favours the use of facilities other than a gaol or lock-up.

That is the advice given me by my colleague, Mr. Logan, who thought it would be quicker and more effective if he gave me the reply to give to the honourable member.

Mr. Thomson's remarks regarding poor accommodation for police officers has been referred to the Minister for Police for his information.

In answer to Mr. Davies, I can advise that the Public Works Department is fully aware of the South Beach foreshore erosion problem, and also other foreshore erosion problems north of the Fremantle Inner Harbour. Funds have been provided this financial year for the construction of a groyne at Catherine Point, which the department considers should be constructed before any commencement is made with reclamation work at the South Beach area. Some funds have been provided for work on a proposed groyne at Muradup Rocks in the Cottesloe area, and financial provision has been made for commencement of work on extensions to the fishing-boat harbour at Fremantle.

I am advised that the stock water supply position appears sound in areas relying on dams, which are almost invariably full, and there is no evidence of serious deterioration in the supply of underground water from wells. Mr. Jones recommended that the Department of Agriculture broadcast and publish articles advising the farming communities on the best methods of water and fodder conservation. I have received information that the importance of fodder conservation is stressed from

time to time through the *Journal of Agriculture* and by broadcasts; that it is a constant feature at department field days; and that it is dealt with by advice to individual farmers.

In recent years there has been greatly increased farmer-appreciation of this aspect of farm management; and, generally, adequate reserves are conserved on most farms. It is common practice for farmers to retain a greater quantity of oats than they require for normal needs, and to sell any surplus after the break of the season.

The honourable member again submitted advice that the Government take action to stabilise the price of fat lambs. My advice is that it is extremely unlikely that there will be a shortage of fresh meat next year. Past experience clearly shows that frozen meat is unacceptable to the public, and that any supplies killed now and kept frozen for many months are unlikely to find a ready sale on the local market.

Although the price of lambs has been much lower this year than previously, it is considered that the industry is a solid and stable one, and unlikely to decline appreciably due to what is only a temporary setback. The price of meat is governed by the law of supply and demand according to the qualities available; and, naturally, lamb is cheaper at this time and dearer in the autumn. There are appreciable difficulties associated with any form of stabilisation; and any attempt to develop a uniform or stable price of meat for the consumer is almost certain to be a failure. I think Governments over the years have come to that conclusion.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: That is responsible for the rise in the basic wage.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: One aspect is that those farmers who practise supplying good quality meat in periods of the year when the market is lowly supplied must necessarily get a higher price for their stock because of the greater cost of production at that time of the year.

Mr. Jones also referred to a subject he had previously mentioned—the nuisance of exhaust fumes from diesel vehicles, and their possible future effect on the city's air conditions. The Chairman of the Metropolitan (Perth) Passenger Transport Trust has advised that a certain amount of noticeable fumes is inevitable when diesel vehicles are accelerating through their gears. The main cause of fumes at other times is faulty fuel injectors. The rigid maintenance carried out by the trust and on Government buses keeps this to a minimum.

The trust's newly appointed maintenance engineer, who hails from England, has stated that buses in Western Australia compare more than favourably with those overseas so far as the fumes problem is concerned. I might mention that diesel fumes are comparatively innocuous compared with those from petrol vehicles. The

carbon-monoxide content in petrol fumes is much greater than in diesel fumes. Unfortunately petrol fumes are not visible, whereas the soot content makes diesel fumes noticeable, and consequently they attract all the attention. The Commissioner of Police has been asked to do all possible to have this nuisance mitigated.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: On Saturday it was not possible to see anything in Hannan Street because eight vehicles, which were being taken to the Trans-train, were blowing out fumes and smoke everywhere.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Mr. Willesee also mentioned the question of rents in the North-West, and I regret to say that he was off the target in respect to the matters about which he complained. He told the House that it had been the policy of the previous Government—and in this regard he was quite correct—to assess North-West rents on a new basis. A decision was made by the previous Minister for Housing on the 26th February, 1959—a noticeable date because it was just a little while before the recent elections—and members were notified that rents in the North-West were to be assessed on a new basis; it was considered to be good news.

The new arrangement was that the rents were to be calculated on a family-income basis after making a special allowance for North-West living conditions. At that time there already existed a special condition which applied to North-West rents, but this other provision was additional to it. The concession was to apply from the 6th April, and it was to the effect that the rents would be calculated on an income basis after deducting the first £5 of income in respect to each person in the house who earned an income.

Questions were asked by an honourable member in another place earlier in the session, and whilst I appreciate that I cannot relate the answer given, I would like to tell members that this decision was made in February, 1959, and its effect was as I have outlined. The previous Minister for Housing advised North-West members of the new proposal on the 27th February. Then Mr. Willesee went on to say that he did not know that this reduction or assessment in rent was subject to a means test; and, if it were, he felt that that test must have been applied by the present Government. He was wrong in such an assertion. This question of rebates for rents on houses built under the State Housing Act has applied since 1957. I am almost certain that that is the right date.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: It was prior to that.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It might have been prior to that, but it has applied to the whole State.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Which concession do you mean?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am referring to the means test which the commission applies—the £200 provision. It is similar to the conditions imposed in regard to social service applications. The applicant has to undergo a means test. On the 12th March, 1959, a letter went to all tenants. That letter read as follows:—

You are advised that the Commission has approved of a new basis of assessing rents of North-West houses.

The new rents will be calculated on the family income, after making a special allowance for the North-West living disabilities.

The concession will be granted as from the 6th April, 1959—provided you forward a complete and accurate declaration to the Commission's Perth office by the 2nd April, 1959.

Cash in the bank, or its equivalent, having a value beyond £200—but not including household effects—must be declared in the "Assets" column on the attached declaration, to which, also, you are required to attach each employer's statement showing gross weekly earnings of each working member of the family.

As it is to your advantage to provide this information, the Commission has decided that failure to supply will mean that you will be required to pay the present rental until such time as the application is received and approved.

I am informed by officers of the State Housing Commission that that letter went out with the knowledge and approval of the previous Minister; it was not something that I, personally, imposed.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: Do you not agree that it is an imposition?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: No, I do not. I have continued the practice. We must remember that North-West rents, prior to that, were already calculated on a basis fixed on the cost of construction at Geraldton, less 40 per cent.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: To offset the high costs.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I appreciate that; and, as Minister for Housing, I have been quite satisfied to carry on with that proposition. Not long ago, in respect to another group of houses being built in the North-West, I applied to the Treasury for a similar grant, and it cost that department another £1,000.

In my opinion, the £5 income concession, in respect to each person in the family earning an income, is a generous contribution. It means that if a man is earning £19 a week, his income, as regards rental, is calculated at £14 a week. But if a person has £200 in the bank is it not reasonable to say that he can pay his rent?

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: No. That £200 would not enable him to fly to Perth if he were sick.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: What does the honourable member suggest would be the position if he owned a house in Carnarvon and I was renting it? Would he say, "Poor Arthur Griffith hasn't got £200 in the bank, so I won't charge him full rent"?

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: I couldn't care less whether you had £1,000 in the bank. Good luck to you.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Would the honourable member expect me to pay my rent?

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: If your income is sufficiently low, surely you are entitled to a rebate.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I am only entitled to a rebate if I occupy a State rental house; and the honourable member knows that.

The PRESIDENT: I do not think this cross-examination should take place.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: First of all, this was something for which I got the credit. Now that the honourable member finds that I was not responsible for it, he still thinks I am wrong.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: That is entirely misrepresentation on your part, and you know it.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: No; I read a copy of the letter.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: You have taken text out of context, and you are switching it to suit yourself. Confine yourself to the issue.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: For the honourable member's information I will confine my remarks to the manner—and I hope I do not give offence—in which the event took place. I am trying to tell him that, contrary to what he believes, the provision we are discussing was not imposed by the present Government; it has applied over the whole State for a number of years.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: The whole £200 provision.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Apparently there was some misunderstanding between us. I understood the honourable member to say that I as Minister imposed this restriction.

The Hon. W. F. Willesee: I am surprised you should say that.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I did not apply it in the first place, but I think the provision is a reasonable one. The commission grants rebates to people who are out of work, to women whose husbands go to gaol, to widows who have no capacity to earn an income, to indigent people who are not able to pay the full rent, and to all sorts of people who come to the commission and say they are not

in a position to pay the rent required under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement; and, what is more, they are given a rebate.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: In short you are running a social services department.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Of course.

The PRESIDENT: I think you have stressed the point quite sufficiently.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: As I have stated before and, with your permission, Mr. President, I would like to say again, we have arrears of rent to the extent of £110,000. The taxpayers of Western Australia are meeting that because some people do not think they should pay rent. The previous Government thought it was quite reasonable to give this rebate; if a man had £200 in the bank, it was felt that he should not expect it.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: It applies if a man owns a motorcar too, does it not?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: It reads—

Cash in the bank, or its equivalent having a value beyond £200—but not including household effects.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: That is the objection.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I think it is quite reasonable. Many people in the North-West do not apply for this rebate, because the family income is such that they are not in a position to apply. That is the position; and when the honourable member was speaking the other night I thought I would let him talk without interrupting him, because I wanted to make sure of the facts; and I have already informed him that these provisions were applied by the previous Minister for Housing. In my opinion it is a reasonable proposition, and I have continued with it.

To the best of my ability I have endeavoured to answer the questions members have posed during the debate on the Supply Bill.

The Hon. J. M. Thomson: May I inquire of the Minister whether my remarks concerning the specialised dental treatment have been referred to the appropriate department?

The PRESIDENT: I think the honourable member had better put that question on the notice paper.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Thank you, Mr. President; that helps me considerably, and I shall not carry the debate further.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

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

Third Reading

Bill read a third time and passed.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING

1. Traffic Act Amendment Bill (No. 3).
2. Road Districts Act Amendment Bill (No. 2).
3. Municipal Corporations Act Amendment Bill (No. 2).

Received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. L. A. Logan (Minister for Local Government), read a first time.

STATE HOTELS (DISPOSAL) BILL*Assembly's Message*

Message from the Assembly notifying that it had disagreed to the amendment made by the Council further considered.

In Committee

Resumed from the 22nd October. The Chairman of Committees (the Hon. W. R. Hall) in the Chair; the Hon. A. F. Griffith (Minister for Mines) in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: The Council's amendment is as follows:—

New Clause.

Page 4—Insert after clause 3 a new clause to stand as clause 4 as follows:—

4. Before a hotel is offered for sale or lease, the Licensing Court shall prepare and make available the requirements of the Court in regard to additions, alterations, renovations, repairs, maintenance and conduct of the hotel covering a period of the ensuing three years from the date of purchase or lease.

Progress was reported after the Assembly's message had been partly considered.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

There has been a great deal of debate on this matter, and I would ask members who voted for this clause to give it further consideration. It was said in the previous debate that the Licensing Court already assumes this function; and I am told that a completely practical example in the course of being carried out at the present time is that the community of Bolgart is entering into negotiations to purchase the hotel. I am informed the Licensing Court is making its report to the community on the point that this very clause says it should. But the clause makes it obligatory on the Licensing Court to report and lay down for a period of three years a programme of improvement to be undertaken by the intending purchaser over that period.

As Mr. Heenan said, it will put the community that intends to purchase the hotel at a complete disadvantage, because it might easily find that it is up for a great deal of money over the ensuing three years for repairs and renovations to the hotel.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: Does the Government base the purchase price of the hotel on the report of the Licensing Board?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: No, I do not think so. The Government will fix its price; and the Licensing Court, upon request, will give to the intending purchaser an idea of the repairs and renovations the Licensing Court will require when the licensed premises go out of the control of the State Hotels Act, and pass over to the Licensing Act; bearing in mind that the Licensing Act has no power over the State hotels at present. But the legislation provides for the necessary conveyance from one to the other. Having this example of the Bolgart community before us, surely Dr. Hislop's amendment is not necessary!

The Hon. J. G. HISLOP: We are growing too used to having amendments made in this Chamber rejected out of hand. Firstly I would criticise deeply the statement contained in the second paragraph of the reasons given by the Legislative Assembly, namely, that the amendment could reduce the value of a hotel to a purchaser. It is shocking to see a statement like that given as a reason.

This committee went into the fact that people purchasing a hotel should be told the truth about what they are going to buy; and then we have a statement like this made by the Assembly. It is most reprehensible. It means that the purchaser should not be told the details because it would lessen the purchase value of the hotel. I drafted my amendment because I thought it would be in the interests of the purchaser. While putting my amendment a whisper came to my ears that the Opposition members in this Chamber—if we may call them that—were supporting me wholeheartedly because they felt that if the amendment went through, the Licensing Court, having been appointed by the Opposition, would ask for such a degree of improvements to the hotels that they might possibly never be sold, and so would remain State hotels. A few moments later I heard Mr. Thompson get to his feet and say exactly that. He said he would vote for it, because if the amendment went through no hotel would be sold.

The Hon. R. Thompson: It would not happen for a long time.

The Hon. J. G. HISLOP: When first introduced, the Minister himself agreed that my amendment was innocuous and in the interests of the purchaser. Surely the Minister was in no doubt! Or did he believe the whisper? If he did, the Licensing Court must be under considerable discussion.

I believe that any court appointed by a Government will abide by the law as laid down by Parliament, and not carry out the policy of the Government by which it was appointed. We have been told the reasons the Assembly has rejected

the amendment. I hope this was not due to the fact that the Minister in charge of the Bill has the same fears as have other members in this Chamber that the Licensing Court will work in a manner which is opposed to the Government in office. If that is so, I believe an immediate inquiry into the Licensing Court is warranted.

I have said enough. I am not going to vote either way. In all the 18 years I have been here I have never seen such a paragraph appear before us as that which contains the second of the Assembly's objections to the amendment. I have never known before that a court could raise such fears in the minds of members.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I hope that the Committee will vote against the Minister's motion and insist on the amendment, which has for its purpose the protection of the purchaser. In this case, the purchaser is, in effect, a shareholder in the property which he is going to purchase. It belongs to the State, and therefore he has an interest in it. Surely when the Government is going to sell such property, it is going to lay all its cards fairly and squarely on the counter and let the purchaser know exactly what he is purchasing.

The Bruce Rock Hotel, four or five years ago, required an expenditure of something like £15,000 to bring it up to reasonable requirements. The late Mr. Fraser, the then Chief Secretary, drew the attention of the previous Government to that fact. Surely anyone who is tendering to purchase that hotel should know what the court will require to be built there. Had there been some private owner of the hotel over the years, the requirements would have been insisted upon by the court, and the hotel would have been kept up to reasonable standards. For that reason alone I ask the Committee to stand by its previous decision and vote against the Minister's amendment. As Dr. Hislop has pointed out, the reasons given for the Assembly's disagreement are strange ones. The first one is that the Licensing Court already has power upon request to give details of requirements to bring hotels up to a required standard. That is a funny sort of power—only if it is asked.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Oh, no!

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The court has power—upon request. Surely the court should have power to request or to insist. That is the position in regard to every other hotel.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What about the hundreds of pieces of legislation that stipulate: "The Minister may"?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: One of the reasons the Assembly gave for refusing to accept the amendment which requires the court to do certain things is that the court has power on request.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That is right.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: It has no power at all, unless requested. We want to protect the people. We have communities interested in the hotels, but what are we afraid of? Are we afraid to tell the community exactly what it is buying? Fancy a community buying the Bruce Rock Hotel! In regard to the Bolgart Hotel, the court is making an inspection and will give an assessment of the requirements; but why should not that be the case with all the hotels?

The second reason has been dealt with very effectively by Dr. Hislop. This reason was that the amendment could reduce the value of the hotel to a purchaser. Surely the Government does not want anyone to pay more than he should for a hotel?

The last reason given is that the amendment could reduce the time of nine months now available to a community for negotiation purposes. It could only reduce the time if the Government desired it to. The period of nine months is a minimum time inserted in the Bill. This reason is just as ridiculous, in my opinion, as the other two. In regard to the first reason, who is going to make a request?

The Hon. F. D. Willmott: Anyone who is going to buy a hotel.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: If a private individual requests the Licensing Court to make an inspection, is the court going to make that inspection immediately?

The Hon. F. D. Willmott: Yes.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Of course not!

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Has it occurred to you that that is the explanation of the third reason given for the Assembly's disagreement?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: No, because the Government can extend that time to nine years or 99 years if it likes. Nine months is only a minimum time. On the other hand, if the amendment is carried, the Government simply states that it wants an assessment made of all the court's requirements before it calls for tenders for these hotels—if it is going to call for tenders. If, on the other hand, it is going to put a price on the hotels, surely to arrive at that price it wants to know what the expenditure is going to be for the next three years! Any Government would surely take that attitude.

The Hon. E. M. HEENAN: When this amendment was before the House I opposed it, and I still intend to oppose it because I cannot see any virtue in it or necessity for it. The motive behind it—as explained by Dr. Hislop and those who supported him—is to protect the prospective purchasers. That is the sole reason given for this amendment. If we analyse

that argument, we will realise that countless hotels have been sold in Western Australia over the years without any necessity for protection. What harm has come to anyone as a result?

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: They have orders against them, though.

The Hon. A. L. Loton: The Licensing Court has authority to go on to these premises.

The Hon. E. M. HEENAN: The Licensing Court has authority, certainly, to go on to those premises, and also into State hotels.

The Hon. A. L. Loton: Not to make an inspection.

The Hon. E. M. HEENAN: What for then? However, I am not going to be distracted from my line of argument. Over all these years, what dire results have occurred or what protection has been necessary in regard to the sale of hotels? The plain fact is that people who buy a hotel know—or should know—something about what they are buying, the same as would a man who wanted to purchase a farm, an orchard, or a butcher shop. He would take adequate precautions to make sure he did the right thing.

Although I do not know very much about the subject, I do know the situation in regard to the Gwalia Hotel. The people who, on behalf of the community, are interested in that hotel, are sensible. They come from various walks of life, some being very knowledgeable. They are going to study this position, and the Licensing Court is ready, willing, and only too glad to give advice.

These people know the hotel, so why ask the court to lay out a programme for three years? The court would err, I should say, on the conservative side. I would sooner the community paid the lowest possible price and then spent its money by degrees on improvements.

The Hon. L. C. Diver: They would discount the turnover by that amount.

The Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I cannot quite follow the honourable member. What is going to happen next year at Gwalia? Is the mining industry going to revive? Is the Sons of Gwalia mine going to collapse? There are many unpredictable features. I would have no fear about a community buying a hotel, because some of the people concerned would know something about the hotel trade. Those people can look after themselves. All I am worried about is some assurance as to the future of the goldmining industry.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: During an earlier stage of the Committee, I made a statement which has been proved completely wrong. I did not think that a local community would buy a State hotel, but now we have Bolgart and Gwalia; and a man who stayed with me over the weekend tells me that the people at Dwellingup are, in view of this amendment, interested

in the local State hotel. What Dr. Hislop said at that stage appears at page 2065 in *Hansard*, and I agree that I was wrong. I still oppose the sale of State hotels other than to local communities, but if they are prepared to buy the hotels, I think we should support the amendment.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: This amendment has not, as Dr. Hislop alleged, been rejected out of hand. Amendments made here are disagreed to by another place, and vice versa. Dr. Hislop asked had I any doubt about the Licensing Court; and he said I quickly changed my mind, having first said I would accept the amendment. I did say I would accept the amendment; but changed my mind after hearing Mr. Heenan's lucid explanation, and not because of any doubt about the Licensing Court. I changed my mind a long time before the incredible statement made by Mr. R. Thompson.

The Hon. R. Thompson: Incredible?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes, incredible. I asked Dr. Hislop to withdraw his amendment, and he agreed to do so, because it sounded incredible for a member to suggest that if we were to agree to the amendment we would have the State hotels for many years. It was a foregone conclusion when Dr. Hislop attempted to withdraw his amendment, because Mr. R. Thompson would have called, "No" because that suited his book. He did not want the State hotels sold. The amendment reads—

Before a hotel is offered for sale or lease the Licensing Court shall prepare and make available the requirements of the court in regard to additions, alterations, renovations, repairs, maintenance—

It is all right so far, but let us examine the next words. They are—

and conduct of the hotel covering a period of the ensuing three years from the date of purchase or lease.

How is the court to lay down what shall be the conduct of the licensee over any period? I never heard of anything more ridiculous. Would the court say, "You shall put clean pillowslips on the bed twice daily," or something of that nature?

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: But it does not do such things.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I agree, but the amendment requires it to do them. When one refers to the conduct of a hotel, one does not refer to the hours of trading, but to the fact that the licensee shall conduct the hotel in a manner pleasing to the public. The amendment would lay down how he shall conduct the hotel.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: The Licensing Court lays down how he shall run it.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: Yes, but not how he shall conduct it. Section 117 of the Licensing Act requires that no

structural alteration or enlargement of any premises shall be made without the permission in writing of the court; but when it has been made, with such consent, the premises as altered or enlarged are deemed to be licensed premises. Under that section no alterations can be made without the permission of the court.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: But the court can order alterations to be made.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: The licensee cannot carry out alterations without the permission of the court, but the court can order such alterations to be made. I have never heard anything sillier than the suggestion that the court shall lay down how a community which buys a hotel shall conduct it. As has been said, when people buy hotels they make sure, to the best of their ability, what they are buying.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: They go to the Licensing Court.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: They ask what the court's requirements are in respect of the premises, and the court tells them.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Anyone buying a hotel would naturally inquire at the Licensing Court. I suggest that 50 per cent. or more of the licenses that are renewed annually have an order against them regarding something that the court has directed shall be carried out. I know a licensee who conducted a hotel in the north before refrigeration was available. He had a Coolgardie cooler, lined with perforated zinc under the hessian, to keep vermin out; but the Licensing Court—a magistrate with power delegated to him by the court—ordered the perforated zinc to be taken out and would not listen to the licensee's reasons for wanting it there.

It is likely that in Goldfields areas the court would delegate its power to a magistrate; or it might not be conversant with the conditions regarding the hotel in a particular area. When buying a hotel that is under the jurisdiction of the court, the buyer knows what he is getting; because the license is renewed only after an inspection by the police, the health authorities and so on, and often a personal inspection by the court. In the case of the State hotels the court has no records and has made no such inspection; and so it could not provide a prospective buyer with that information.

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON: I voted for the amendment, which is now disagreed with by the Legislative Assembly, because I thought it would be in the interests of those intending to purchase State hotels. However, the discussion that followed Dr. Hislop's amendment and the enthusiasm that was shown by some members on the other side of the Chamber to have the amendment carried—especially the remark

made by Mr. Thompson that State hotels would carry on for many years if the amendment were agreed to—weighed heavily on my mind.

Therefore, I now propose to vote according to the wishes of the Legislative Assembly, and I do so because what has taken place in the Chamber this evening has shown me that it is a question of conduct. This point escaped my notice previously. It has now been pointed out that there is no need for this provision in the amendment; and, if we allow it to pass, in view of the enthusiasm that was shown previously and tonight by some members, it would indicate that there was a nigger in the woodpile. I therefore propose to vote in favour of the question before the Chair.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I take exception to the references that have been made by Dr. Hislop and Mr. Thomson concerning the enthusiasm shown by some members who voted for this amendment. Dr. Hislop referred to the fact that he had heard a rumour that we intended to support the amendment for some particular reason. I do not know whether he heard a rumour or not, but I had only one object in mind when I voted for the amendment.

Mr. Thomson now states that he intends to reverse his decision because of the enthusiasm that was shown by some members for this amendment. I do not think his statement is correct because if the honourable member cares to check the record, he will find that three members of the Labor Party voted against the amendment. I therefore cannot see how the honourable member can say that several of our members were enthusiastic about Dr. Hislop's amendment. I think every member voted according to his conscience.

The Hon. A. L. LOTON: I voted for this amendment previously, and I have not changed my mind. I was opposed to Dr. Hislop's withdrawing his amendment. Dr. Hislop seemed to think that he should do so because he had heard some whisper concerning it. The purpose of the amendment still remains; that is, that the intending purchaser shall be acquainted of the amount that is owing on the hotel and the requirements of the Licensing Court concerning it.

When the Bill was before the Chamber previously we were told that the Licensing Court had no authority to enter upon any State hotel; that it could enter a State hotel only on the authority of some other person. I do not know whether the words "upon request" means that it can enter a State hotel upon the request of the intending purchaser, or a person intending to make inquiries about the hotel, or upon the request of the Chief Secretary who, I understand, is in charge of the State hotels.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I am informed that it is upon the request of the intending purchaser.

The Hon. A. L. LOTON: Despite what the Minister says, the words "upon request" still leave me in some doubt.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It can also be on the request of an accredited agent of an intending purchaser.

The Hon. A. L. LOTON: I take it the Licensing Court could also enter upon the premises of a State hotel upon a request of the Chief Secretary. Previously we were told that a certain time had to elapse before the hotels were made available for sale. It is only fair that the intending purchaser should be acquainted with the financial and staff commitments of any State hotel before he purchased it. I do not change my mind, and I think the Committee should insist on its amendment.

The Hon. G. BENNETTS: I was not present when the previous debate took place on this amendment, but tonight I have heard some members refer to the Bruce Rock State Hotel. The Leader of the Opposition stated that one hotel in the North had an obsolete Coolgardie cooler installed. In 1947 I was travelling from Ravenshorpe—which is in my province—and I called in at the Bruce Rock State Hotel for a drink; and if ever a hotel was fitted with obsolete equipment, it was that one. The beer was kept in an ice chest, and when served to the customers it was quite warm. Such conditions would never have existed if the hotel had been in control of private enterprise. The fact of the matter is that this State hotel is not under the supervision of the Licensing Court. The Bruce Rock people desired to take over this hotel as a community undertaking, but the request was refused, and, as a result, they established a club which has taken most of the trade.

Together with the member for Merredin-Yilgarn, I was one of a deputation that waited upon Mr. Hawke, who was then Premier, to make a request that the Bruce Rock State Hotel should be brought up to date. Mr. Hawke agreed to spend sufficient money on this hotel to bring it up to the required standard. I understand that he agreed to spend £25,000 on it instead of £15,000. The patrons of that hotel now enjoy decent sleeping accommodation and modern facilities for drinking.

Any purchaser intending to take over a State hotel should be able to make up his own mind on the establishment before he makes an offer. If he has not enough business acumen to sum up the position correctly, and subsequently he finds he has to spend a great deal of money to bring the hotel up to a decent standard, he has no-one to blame but himself. I consider that the Government will have to continue to run the Bruce Rock Hotel. Also, no State hotel should be sold other than to the local people in the centre in which the hotel is situated. Some time ago I made inquiries about the hotel at

Renmark in the Eastern States, and I disclosed a great deal of information to the House concerning it. It was remarkable what had been done with that hotel.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: What about the one at Gwalia?

The Hon. G. BENNETTS: The Gwalia people will be sensible enough to make inquiries about that hotel before they purchase it. The Goldfields people have good sense, and they will find out what their commitments are before they buy the hotel.

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: For the benefit of Mr. Loton, I point out that when the Bill was last before a Committee of this Chamber, I said that I had been advised that the Licensing Court would make a report upon a State hotel at the request of an intending purchaser or his accredited agent in respect to the purchase or lease of the hotel; and I repeat that statement.

Question put and a division called for.

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

Division taken with the following result:—

Ayes—14.

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

(Teller.)

Noes—10.

Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. A. L. Loton
Hon. J. J. Garrigan	Hon. H. G. Strickland
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. J. D. Teahan
Hon. G. E. Jeffery	Hon. W. F. Willse
Hon. F. R. H. Lavery	Hon. R. Thompson

(Teller.)

Majority for—4.

Question thus passed; the Council's amendment not insisted on.

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

ARGENTINE ANT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 22nd October.

THE HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [19.16]: I support the Bill the object of which is to establish a permanent control committee to be vested with the necessary powers for continuing the Argentine ant campaign. This measure is similar to the existing Argentine ant control legislation; the only difference is in the contribution which is now being made by the local authorities and other parties. In future the cost of control measures is to be borne by the State out of Consolidated Revenue. Parliament agreed to the continuance of the Argentine ant control legislation until the 30th June next, after which it will expire.

The Argentine ant was first noticed in Western Australia during the war years. There appears to be no doubt that the pest was introduced from overseas countries, as is the case with many of the pests found here. Unfortunately, much expenditure was used in an attempt to eradicate the ant. The Argentine ant first appeared in the ports of Fremantle and Albany. These places became infested, and the infestation became widespread and extensive.

Because of the threat to agricultural production resulting from a spread of the Argentine ant, it was necessary to introduce legislation for the purpose of establishing a committee of control. The co-operation of the Local Government Association, the Road Board Association, the Municipal Councils Association, the Perth City Council, the State Government, the Agriculture Protection Board, and the committee of control appointed under the Act has been effective in preventing the spread of the ant. Their work is entitled to commendation; they have performed a marvellous task in view of the extensive spread of the ant to many parts of the metropolitan and country areas. It was necessary for eradication measures to be taken; and those charged with that responsibility did a very good job.

It was necessary to extend the operation of the existing legislation for 12 months, and it is estimated that the annual cost for the immediate years following the main campaign will reach £20,000 per annum. The Government has agreed to accept the financial responsibility up to that amount, and provision for this contribution is made in the Bill before us. I appreciate this action of the Government in taking over the responsibility, because there are still areas of infestation in and around Perth which will have to be watched. Although it is anticipated that the expenditure in the future will be less than that in the years past, it is still necessary to continue eradication measures with a view to eliminating the Argentine ant altogether.

If you, Mr. President, do not raise any objection, I would like to deal with another pest which is not covered by this measure. There is in our presence another ant which is causing some concern, and I ask the Minister whether consideration can be given to spraying areas affected by it. I refer to the Singapore ant.

Some people have confused this pest with the Argentine ant, but the entomologists have assured us that one is the Argentine ant while the other is the Singapore ant. To all intents and purposes, the Singapore ant is proving just as much a pest to the householders, as is the Argentine ant.

In considering this matter I ask the Minister to provide ways and means by which local authorities can be empowered to spray, as they do in the case of the Argentine ant, and eliminate the Singapore

ant. Many householders have found this pest to be very troublesome, because it penetrates into refrigerators just the same as does the Argentine ant.

All of us will agree that the Bill before us is essential. It is gratifying to note that the Government appreciates the efforts which have been made by local authorities, and the rates subscribed by the rate-payers over the past five or six years, for the purpose of eradicating the Argentine ant.

THE HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland—Minister for Local Government—in reply) [9.23]: I thank the honourable member for his contribution to this debate. In regard to the Singapore ants, I share his views, because I was one of those who was subjected to an invasion by those ants over a considerable period of time. I had to go to the expense of spraying in order to get rid of them.

The Hon. A. L. Loton: Has that had much effect?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: It had the effect of getting rid of the Singapore ants. I sprayed around an area so that they were not able to come from outside. The difference between the Singapore ant and the Argentine ant is that the former mainly attacks foodstuffs, whereas the latter attacks articles of furniture and clothing as well. The Argentine ants invade the bedroom, the wardrobe and other articles of furniture. They can cause damage to clothing.

On the other hand, the Singapore ant attacks only foodstuffs, but he has also proved to be a confounded pest and a mighty difficult insect to eradicate. The spraying unit which I engaged to eradicate this ant was effective, and for a period of 18 months after spraying, the house was completely free of the pest.

The Singapore ant was referred to me by the residents of Geraldton. It is very prevalent in that district. Representations were made to me that the contributions under the Argentine ant control legislation should be used for the purpose of eradicating the Singapore ant in Geraldton. It was my desire to bring that about, until I learnt that the Act would not be continued, and that local authorities would no longer be required to contribute to the fund. I consider the suggestion put forward by Mr. Davies to be worthwhile. I shall confer with the Minister for Agriculture to see what steps can be taken in this direction, and whether the present spraying unit used for spraying against the Argentine ant can be utilised for eradicating the Singapore ant.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

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

COUNTRY AREAS WATER SUPPLY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 22nd October.

THE HON. A. L. LOTON (South) [9.32]: This is only a small Bill, divided into two parts. The first part is easy to understand. It seeks to alter the definition of country land to bring it into conformity with a town site. This has been necessary because certain land has come within town sites, and the amendment is required for rating purposes.

It is on the second point that I do not agree with other members. The Minister who introduced the Bill in this House said that it is considered that the concession is no longer warranted. The Party to which I belong has, over the years, stressed a policy of decentralisation and a policy of uniform rating for water. Here we find that a Government, elected early this year, has within a short space of time taken on an orgy of raising taxes. For the benefit of Mr. Logan, I refer him to a statement he made in this House on the 14th November, 1956. I have had a bit of time on my hands during the last few days, and I thought it would be interesting to look back to see what members have said during the last few years in regard to raising taxes. Mr. Logan had the following—amongst other things—to say—

I do not intend to say very much on this measure . . .

I was taken to task by Mr. Wise for criticising the Grants Commission, when I said that that body was dictating the financial policy of the Government. Having chided me, the honourable member went to great lengths to prove that I was right, as members will see if they read his speech. I made the statement I did after due consideration, since it is obvious that the Grants Commission penalised this State because our licensing fees were not as high as those in other States; it penalised us to the extent of some hundreds of thousands of pounds. It also penalised us because our vehicle license fees were not as high as those of other States. We were told in 1948 during the term of the McLarty-Watts Government, that we would be penalised if we did not increase our rail freights by 40 per cent.

He continued further on—

I repeat that the Grants Commission is interfering too much in the financial policy of the State Government. When we talk about taxing we refer to taxes imposed by the State Government. When I spoke on the taxing measure I said it was essential

for Governments to tax, but we got to the stage where people were being overtaxed to their detriment.

A very interesting statement!

The Hon. L. A. Logan: That was nearly four years ago!

The Hon. A. L. LOTON: Unlike the leopard, he evidently can change his spots. On the 18th December, 1956—one month and four days later—Mr. Logan had the following to say—

The Hon. L. A. Logan: What have I said about this water rate?

The Hon. A. L. LOTON: I am talking about increased taxation on the people of the Goldfields. To proceed: Mr. Diver made an interjection, followed by Mr. Logan, who said—

It has proved it. Look at the taxation measures before us—one after the other—and all because the Grants Commission has told the Government to increase taxes! The Government has increased them readily, because the Grants Commission has said it will penalise the State to the extent of £750,000 in some cases. If the Grants Commission said it would penalise the State to the extent of £1,000,000, what would the Government do?

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Nothing wrong with that statement, either.

The Hon. A. L. LOTON: The Government is now intending to raise the rating in the towns from Parkerville to Kalgoorlie, and in other towns including Darlington, Glen Forrest, Mundaring, Toodyay, Spencers Brook, Beverley, Goomalling, Shackleton, Belka, Nungarin, and Westonia.

In 1949 the present legislation was agreed to, fixing the rating in those areas at two shillings from that date; and all towns supplied from then onwards were to be three shillings. However, it has now become obvious to the Government that it must raise additional revenue; and, by the proposal to increase the rating from two shillings to three shillings, it will obtain approximately £58,000.

Working on the basis last year of the water retailed in the metropolitan area at 1s. 6d. in the £ on the annual value, the Water Supply Department received by way of payment for the water retailed—and this is not excess water or water for sewerage—£905,687. The year before it received £841,653. If the Government had been prepared to raise the annual rate by 3d. in the £, it would have received the sum of £150,948, which would have meant that the sum of £58,000 to be obtained by the imposition on Goldfields residents would not have to be obtained, and the sum of £250,000 that it is proposed to raise by other taxation, could be reduced by £90,000. Drivers' licenses would not have to go up to £1, but could be increased to, say 15s., and so on.

Mr. Wild said that there is also strong justification for a more uniform basis of rating in all country towns. Why he did not use a more uniform basis of rating for all water users, I do not know. I cannot understand why in the metropolitan area 1s. 6d. is paid on the annual rating, yet the towns I have mentioned are going to have their rate increased to 3s.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Do you know what it costs to get 1,000 gallons of water to Kalgoorlie?

The Hon. A. L. LOTON: The water comes from the same source. I would also like to refer to a statement made by Sir Ross McLarty in 1958. As all members know, he was at one time the Leader of the Opposition. He was later the Premier and Treasurer, and again the Leader of the Opposition. He then retired and became a private member. He must, therefore, be a man of whom notice should be taken when he makes comments, particularly in regard to taxation. On the 9th September, 1958, he had the following to say—

It is time we resisted the imposition of additional taxation. Surely there is a limit; and I think that limit has now been reached. The more funds the Government can get, the more tax it can collect from the people, the more it spends and the more extravagant it becomes. The Government is like a schoolboy. If the father of that boy is prepared to hand out anything the boy wants, it will be taken and spent, and the boy will spend it extravagantly. That applies equally to the Government.

Mr. Sleeman: Where is the Government spending it all?

Sir Ross McLarty: It is time we stopped becoming "yes" men and stopped agreeing to every imposition of tax the Government likes to introduce.

It is evident that Sir Ross had satisfied himself that the limit of imposition of taxation had been reached; and I fail to understand why less than 12 months later he thinks that a new spring has been uncovered and that the taxing can be continued. The provisions in this Bill do not apply to the South-West, but having had the experience he has had, he must surely realise that the people on the Goldfields are having a further imposition placed upon them. Certainly 1s. in the £ as far as they are concerned might not amount to much, but to the Government it is an extra £57,000. But why not go the other way around the problem. If that amount is to be raised, raise it in the metropolitan area instead of further burdening the country areas. I support the Bill; but when it comes to the Committee stage, I will support any move taken to amend this portion.

THE HON. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM (South-East) [9.43]: There are two points to this Bill. One of them seeks to bring country areas within townsite boundaries for the purpose of rating; and the other, and, as far as we are concerned the more important, is to raise the actual rating on specific country areas. I did not speak last week on this measure, and I probably came under the group which was described as being conspicuous by its absence. Had I spoken last week in company with other members, I may have fallen into the same trap as others; but having had some time to make research into exactly what the full purport of this Bill will be, I am indeed glad that I did not address myself to the House on the very limited knowledge I had then as to the results of the present measure.

Some very wild statements were made. Like a lot of other people, including the Goldfields people who are interested in this measure, my immediate reaction, when I heard it stated here and in other places that the intention of the Bill was primarily to increase the cost of our water by 50 per cent., was to get a mental picture of my last assessment for 12 months' supply of water. As it was £16, an increase of 50 per cent. meant that my next bill would be somewhere within the vicinity of £24, so I, too, felt somewhat angry and bitter; and I resented an apparently unjust increase.

I heard statements that the mining industry could not bear this unjust impost. I agree; it could not. But things are not what they seem to be. I took the opportunity of getting a domestic assessment for the Goldfields area and applying the new rates to it. It was most interesting. The valuation for the property was £70 and the consumption for the 12 months' period was 112,800 gallons. The charge for the year was £17 6s. arrived at in this way: On a valuation of £70, at 2s. in the £, the water rate was £7. That allowed for a rebate on a consumption of 31,100 gallons, and the balance, 81,700 gallons, was charged for at the rate of 3s. per thousand for the first 5,000 gallons—a total of 15s.—and the balance at 2s. 6d. per 1,000, making a total of £9 11s. 3d., or a grand total of £17 6s. 3d..

To that actual assessment I applied the new rate, and while I expected it to be, in the first instance, a figure of £24—working on the 50 per cent. increase which was mentioned—I found the increase to be only 30s. for the whole year. The consumption of water for that household is above the average, and the valuation is above the average on the Goldfields. So, in actual fact, the shocking increase about which we have heard so much, and about which so many members are perturbed, will mean something like 15s. to 30s. a year for householders on the Goldfields.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: About 8d. a week.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: A little less.

The Hon. A. L. Loton: It is still a 50 per cent. increase.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: The 50 per cent. increase will make the rate 3s. in the £, and that will apply only to the valuation of £70 in the case I mentioned. Therefore the annual rate will be £10 10s. instead of £7. But that increased rate also carries with it a rebate on a greater quantity of water than previously—46,700 gallons instead of 31,000. The actual assessment, with the increased rate on that property, will mean £18 7s. 9d. instead of £17 6s. 3d. That applies to householders; and, so far as I am concerned, they are the ones in whom we are primarily interested.

I was also vitally concerned about the goldmining industry, because I know that, generally speaking, the goldmining industry as a whole cannot bear any more increases in its cost structure. When people realise that the difference in the cost of producing an ounce of gold, and the price received for it is less than 1s., they will realise how fine the margin is, and to what a peak of efficiency the industry has been developed. Even a small increase in the price of water to the goldmining industry could have a big effect on the industry because the mines use a great quantity of water. But I find, on inquiry, that the goldmining industry will not be affected. That industry operates under a special agreement known as the Mines Water Trust. The Minister mentioned a figure of 7s. per 1,000 gallons as being the cost of getting water taken to the Goldfields. That is approximately the sum that the goldmining industry pays for its water.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I think it costs more than 7s. to take water to the Goldfields.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: It could cost a few pence more than 7s., but that is the charge the goldmining industry has to meet, and the figure is near enough for my purpose. Furthermore, the industry realises what a boon the water is to the district, and it does not buck about having to pay 7s. per 1,000 gallons for it. In times of stress, when water is restricted, the goldmining people ask for permission to use salt water which is pumped from the mines. Permission is granted even though the industry has to pay the same price for that water as it pays for water which is taken to the Goldfields by the scheme.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: It would cost about 12s. a 1,000 gallons to get the water there.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I will not debate the issue, but the Minister said it was something in the vicinity of 7s., and I think that would be a reasonable figure.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I did not say that. I asked Mr. Loton whether he knew that that was the figure.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I thought the Minister said it was 7s. per 1,000 gallons. If it costs 12s. per 1,000 gallons, the position is more shocking than most of use realise.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I will find out how much it costs.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: In any case, the goldmining industry will not be affected by these increased rates, and the rates under which it operates are not likely to be altered because they are the highest paid by any consumers. But the mining people do not object to the price they pay for the water they use; they accept it. The market gardeners have been mentioned. One member said that the increases they will have to pay for their water rates will mean an increase in the cost of living because of an accompanying rise in the price of vegetables. There again a practical application of the increases proposed could mean that many market gardeners will have a lower assessment than they have had in recent years. It seems fantastic but, nevertheless, it is true because of the rebate system.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Are you calculating the rebate at 2s. or 3s.?

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: The rebate for the market gardeners will be on the present rate because they do not come under the change.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: What are you calculating the rebates on?

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: At the correct figure—3s. in the £.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: At 3s.?

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: Yes. If I am correct in assuming that the reason for these increases is not only to get a greater income, but also to get a £ for £ grant from the Commonwealth Government—

The Hon. A. L. Loton: What for?

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I understand that the Commonwealth Government will pay us £ for £ on the money collected.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: No. You are mixing it up with the matching money under the traffic fees.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I understood the same position applied in this instance.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: No.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: No, that was for the comprehensive water scheme.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: These increases will give the Goldfields people a good stick—

The Hon. L. A. Logan: A good lever.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: Yes, that is a better word. It will give them a good lever for getting more amenities in the future.

I am not happy about paying more for the water I use, but in the circumstances, as these increases will probably mean more amenities for the remote areas, and as we are still in the happy position of being able to get water at the turn of a tap, and as we want to see others getting the same privileges, I am sure that the Goldfields people will join with me in grumbling like blazes about it but accepting the responsibility so that others may enjoy the same amenities as we enjoy at present.

If the Goldfields people accept these higher charges, it is to be hoped that in the future there will be more possibility of getting swimming pools in the country towns, grassed playing fields at places like Norseman, and better sports facilities throughout the Goldfields; and I am sure that if the people get those amenities, they will not buck about paying an extra £1 or 30s. for their water each year. As my colleagues on the Goldfields well know, there are areas along the line that have not been reticulated as yet, but in regard to which we are receiving endless requests. It is to be hoped that these increased charges will enable something to be done for the people in those places.

The people concerned are quite happy to pay a meter rent of £25 each so long as they can get water at the turn of the tap. I know of one man who is willing to pay for a meter on each of his three paddocks if it will mean that his neighbours can get an assured supply of water. When we have no water supply, we are prepared to ask for it in pounds, but when we get it, we resent paying for it in pennies. I feel sure that the increases proposed in this Bill will be far less than we were led to believe in the first instance. People panicked when they heard of a 50 per cent. increase in water rates and imagined a flat 50 per cent. increase on the whole of their assessment. I had the idea that as I paid about £16 last year, a 50 per cent. increase meant paying £24 this year. But such is not the case.

The Hon. J. D. Teahan: I cannot see where the £400,000 is coming from if the increase is as small as you say it is. The Government is claiming that this will mean an increased income of £400,000.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I have not heard that figure mentioned in regard to this Bill. A lot of people will be affected, but just how many are from the Goldfields and how many are from other centres, I do not know. I did not ask anyone about their assessments; I used my own to make my calculations. I had heard that the average valuation on the Goldfields was £120, but in actual fact the average valuation would be about £60, and the average consumption would

be less than 112,000 gallons per annum, which I used. In that figure is included the water used for my septic tank system as well as a garden.

THE HON. W. R. HALL (North-East) [10.0]: I rise to oppose the Bill, because the second part of it certainly seeks to place a further imposition on the people of the Eastern Goldfields—people for whom the original Goldfields water pipe line was put down. This was put down in the days of Sir John Forrest to serve the Eastern Goldfields, and it has done a remarkable job. It has been the means of supplying water to a lot of districts east of the metropolitan area. When one travels from Perth to Kalgoorlie, one cannot help but feel how wonderful it is to have that pipeline there. There is no doubt that it has been the life blood of the goldmining industry and the people of that industry. I refer to the people on the other side of the ranges. Whichever way we look at this Bill, it will certainly impose an extra charge on these consumers.

After all these years we should try to reduce the charge for water supplied to the country areas rather than increase it. I appreciate the fact that there is a tremendous amount of maintenance required on the pipelines from Mundaring to Kalgoorlie, but it does serve a very useful purpose indeed. Water is something we cannot do without, and without it we would not have our large goldmining industry. Were it not for this pipeline supplying water to Kalgoorlie, that industry would be in a bad way.

The only thing that gives us some consolation is that the quality of water we get from this pipeline is extremely good as compared with that in the metropolitan area, which is 80 per cent. bore water. There is no doubt that it stinks. One only has to compare it with the water pumped from the Goldfields pipeline to see the difference. I realise that the charges in the metropolitan area for water in some cases have gone up 100 per cent. compared with what they were a few years ago; and it looks as if they will go higher.

There is one point, however, which we must not lose sight of, and that is that the people in Kalgoorlie have never been able to grow vegetables, lawns, or trees so necessary in that arid part of the State—they have not been able to do this since the inception of the water supply—without incurring a charge for the excess water used. There is a tremendous number of people in Kalgoorlie and Boulder who have to pay a charge for the excess water that they use. There would be very few who would use the 31,000 gallons mentioned by Mr. Cunningham. I know that I always had to pay an excess charge, and I certainly had no garden; and I refer to the time when water was allowed more or less on a rating basis.

I would oppose any increase in the charge for water supplied to the people of the Goldfields or the country areas. It is noticeable that there is a double pipeline going from Mundaring to Kellerberrin. I would say it is an extra 3 ft. pipe which proves conclusively that sufficient water cannot be pumped through the old pipe for those who are consumers under the Goldfields water scheme. In view of the number of years that this pipeline has been in existence, I do not think there is any necessity for an increased charge to be made.

Down the years local authorities and other associations have pressed for a flat rate for water, but of course nothing has come of their efforts; and it looks as if nothing ever will. I oppose the Bill because I do not want to see an extra charge placed on the people of the Eastern Goldfields, or those who draw water in the country areas from the Goldfields water scheme.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: It is a crying shame.

THE HON. F. R. H. LAVERY (West) [10.7]: I realise that costs have gone up quite a bit in the last five years, but that is no reason why the Government should wish to place added costs on water used by people in remote areas.

The Hon. R. C. Mattiske: You think the people in the metropolitan area should pay the extra.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: The only cost in regard to water is the pumping of it. God has provided us with the water, and it is for us to pump it at a minimum cost. He also supplied us with a river, but we are spending our time filling it up with mud in order to build a bridge over it. Other countries are opening up their rivers, but we are filling ours up with mud. I do not care which Government or which Party is concerned, but we do hear a lot of hypocrisy as to what we must do for the country people. Western Australia's economy is bound up with the country irrespective of the fact that four-fifths of our population is in the city. Even though the greater part of our industry is in the metropolitan area, it would be very parochial of me if I cast a silent vote and agreed to this increased charge on water being levied on the country people. Ever since I have been in Parliament, one of the greatest things to my mind has been to watch that pipeline travel down to the South-West—to Katanning and similar places.

Any extra costs in relation to the supply of water to the country areas should be met from loan funds. People in the future will pay pro rata for what is happening in the present. A further increase in the rates of the people who are supplied with water in the country areas is not justified until there is a more equitable system of rating. The system of rating is all wrong. I have heard members from the Goldfields say what we should pay in the metropolitan

area; I heard an interjection asking whether the city people should pay. The city people do pay. The city has been re-valued in the last 10 years; little by little this has taken place.

The Hon. J. D. Teahan: This was also the case with the Goldfields.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I am not denying that. In referring to the remarks made by Mr. Loton—rather facetiously, I think—as to what was said by the Minister for Local Government (Mr. Logan) two or three years ago, I think there is considerable truth in the statement that the Grants Commission is running this country of ours. They seem to frighten every Government. They certainly frightened the previous Government out of office, because they told that Government it should reduce to a certain figure the amount in relation to school bus transport. Did not the Trade Bureau whack us with that by flying kites over the Causeway saying, "Dismiss the guilty men"? On the one hand the Government has the audacity to reduce taxation in one sphere—entertainments tax—by £80,000.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: £1,300.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: On the other hand we find the same Government wanting to increase the water rates to a total amount of £400,000. We have the Premier telling us what we will receive by way of equalisation moneys from the Grants Commission, and immediately he arrives back in the State he finds he is £1,000,000 or £1,500,000 out in his estimate. What sort of accounting is that?

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What are you talking about?

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I am talking about the grants made by the Grants Commission to this State.

The PRESIDENT: The honourable member should be dealing with the country water supply scheme.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I know what I am dealing with, and I want the country people to know that I oppose this extra impost in regard to water that may be supplied to them.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You have before voted for plenty of extra prices.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I cannot agree to this extra charge being made. Water has been put here by God for us to drink, and it is our job to pipe it to the people at the minimum cost.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I hope He provides a bit more.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: If we provide a service to the people, we must show a loss. We have shown this loss on the railways because we have provided a service to the people in the sparsely-populated areas. If we are to supply water to the sparsely-populated areas, then we must show a loss on that. I oppose the Bill.

THE HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland—Minister for Local Government) [10.13]: I have no objection whatever to members referring to back numbers of *Hansard* and quoting what I said yesterday, three years ago, or ten years ago, because I stand by every statement I have made in this House since I have been here. I am sure that I, too, could go through the various *Hansards* and quote what other members have said on various occasions. The statements referred to by Mr. Loton were perfectly good statements.

The Hon. A. L. Loton: I, too, think they were.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: If the honourable member will look at my speech on the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply, he will see that I reiterated what I said in relation to the Grants Commission. However, the reference he quoted was what I said in 1956; and we are now nearly in 1960. It is possible that Mr. Loton was President of the Council at that time, but had he been a private member I wonder whether he would have been content for his salary to remain at the figure it was in 1956.

He would not like to go back to the salary he was getting in 1956—had he been a private member then—as compared with the salary he is getting today. The cost of everything has increased since 1956. Just what is the latest rise in the basic wage going to mean to the Government of this State? We have not assessed it yet, but it will be plenty.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: Get the Grants Commission to pay it!

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The position is that we have two properties alongside each other, and one person is paying 3s. and the other is paying 2s. There are two alternatives: Bring the person paying 2s. up to 3s.; or bring the person paying 3s. down to 2s.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: What Government did not put it up?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: That situation exists in two towns on the Goldfields line now.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: What towns?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: If the honourable member looks along the line, he will find them. I would remind members—and Country Party members too if they want this matter on that basis—that we have restored school bus routes at a cost to the Government; and we have instituted a system of septic tanks in country schools at a cost to the Government.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: They will be paying for over 20 years.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Yes; but it is a cost to the Government. We have to find the interest and sinking fund on all loans raised.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I have signed the papers for quite a number of schools in connection with this loan. We have promulgated a policy on electricity changes which will cost the Government a lot of money. This will benefit the country people. We have also agreed to electricity extensions which will possibly cost the Government a lot of money. We have altered the Administration Act which has passed both Houses of Parliament. This is a concession which is also going to benefit the country people.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It is still before this House.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: That is so. We have also instituted the reopening of two railway lines at considerable cost to the Government.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: And instituted a Royal Commission on Betting at considerable cost to the Government!

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: If members will think, they will realise that we have done something for the benefit of country people. This charge, in regard to some country people, is not what certain members tried to make out. Even members who knew that it was not a 50 per cent. increase used that figure in an endeavour to make other people believe them.

I think Mr. Cunningham put forward a very good case. He summed up the position well. I do not like increasing charges for anybody. Mr. Loton mentioned that if we increased the charge in the metropolitan area there would be no need to increase drivers' licenses, which had nothing to do with this matter. Members will get the facts of that subject tomorrow; and they will find out that £115,000 is going to be paid out of Consolidated Revenue to matching funds in order to obtain more money for the construction of roads. That is a loss to revenue of £115,000.

All members of this House are asking the Government for assistance. Mr. Thompson tonight asked the Government for assistance in regard to the home in Fremantle. Mr. Davies and Mr. Lavery asked for assistance in regard to the Applecross School.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: We are only asking for a loan. You cannot give us a loan.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Mr. Willesee was chasing something for the North.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Which we are not likely to get.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The North is getting quite a fair cut.

The PRESIDENT: The Minister had better get back to the Bill.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: We got £5,000,000 for you.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: And we will spend it for you!

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: There is no doubt about that!

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I will stand up to everything I have said in the past. I have accepted a position of responsibility, and I hope and trust that I will be able to carry out that responsibility to the best of my ability.

The Hon. A. L. Loton: You do not want to be the "Taxus Rangers."

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Are we to bring the 3s. down to 2s., or raise the 2s. to 3s.?

The Hon. G. Bennetts: Raise the metropolitan area another sixpence.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: We might yet.

The Hon. J. J. Garrigan: Tell us about the flat rate.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: If Mr. Lavery and Mr. Bennetts will support us, we might provide an increase for the metropolitan area.

The Hon. J. J. Garrigan: Wishful thinking.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I say that we might. Members must not think that the Government did not look at this problem. When we took office, water supply rate notices had to go out. As a Government, we had no time to formulate our policy before the rate notices were sent out.

The Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: That sounds ominous!

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: What will happen in the future, I do not know. If members do a little thinking, they will realise the Government is not as bad as they think it is.

On motion by the Hon. A. F. Griffith (Minister for Mines), debate adjourned.

ADMINISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 20th October.

THE HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [10.23]: I obtained the adjournment of this Bill in order to have the opportunity of looking into it. There remains very little for me to add to what has been said by the Minister, by Mr. Wise, and by Mr.

Watson. I am going to support the measure. I think it is fully justified; and it has been rendered imperative by the decision of the Privy Council in 1958 in what is known as Chick's case.

The effect of that decision makes it incumbent on the taxing authority to interpret gifts *inter vivos* in a much stricter way than the authorities have done for the past 20 or 25 years. I think the decision in the Chick's case has brought about a state of affairs which was not envisaged by the legislature when the measure was originally introduced in 1934. Over the years, the authorities have certainly not applied the section in the way that the Privy Council has now indicated they should have. Therefore, we have this Bill before us, which I think deserves the support of the House.

It simply provides this: Gifts made within a period of three years will be exempt from duty if the other provisions of the Administration Act are complied with. There are also some restrictive applications which deal with the implications arising out of Chick's case; and I also support that aspect of the measure. We have to bear in mind, when dealing with a taxing measure, that people frequently adopt ingenious means of saving death duties; and I suppose, in a way, it is reasonable that they should do so.

We have accepted the principle that taxation is raised per medium of taxing the estates of deceased people; and, while we adopt that principle, we have to bear in mind that loopholes cannot be allowed so that people can avoid their obligations under the law. The measure, as introduced, meets all the requirements of the present situation.

I notice there is an amendment on the notice paper. I have looked at the amendment, but this is not the appropriate time to deal with it. However, I will say that I will not go so far as supporting the amendment. The Bill as it stands at present, is as far as I am prepared to go. I support the second reading.

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban --Minister for Mines--in reply) [10.28]: I wish to thank members for the remarks they have made in connection with this Bill, which now becomes a Committee measure because there has been no opposition to it during the second reading debate. Reference has been made to amendments placed on the notice paper by Mr. Watson. I think it would be improper of me to speak to them at this stage; they can be left until the Bill goes into Committee.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 10.30 p.m.