

RAILWAY (JANDAKOT TO PERTH) BILL 2002

Discharge of Order of the Day and Referral to Standing Committee on Public Administration and Finance

Resumed from 23 October on the following motion moved by Hon Simon O'Brien -

That the order of the day for the second reading of the Bill be discharged and the Bill be referred to the Public Administration and Finance Committee.

HON NORMAN MOORE (Mining and Pastoral - Leader of the Opposition) [8.28 pm]: When the House adjourned on Wednesday, 23 October I was arguing the case for the Railway (Jandakot to Perth) Bill to be referred to the Standing Committee on Public Administration and Finance. The last comment I made was that the Government could take its pick on the progress of this Bill. If the Government were to agree to send the Bill to a committee, it would expedite the business of the House and would lead, in our view, to a better researched and better understood piece of legislation. The other alternative is for the Government to seek to debate the Bill in the House. If the Government were to do that, it would have a long and convoluted debate that would take up a significant amount of the time of the House.

Today we have discussed the situation that will apply in this Chamber for the next four weeks. It has been indicated to us that during the next two weeks at least, the Government wants to pass six Bills. I indicated to the Leader of the House earlier today that we thought we could handle five of those Bills, but if the railway Bill was not referred to a committee, we could give no guarantee about that Bill. I add further that if the Government wishes to continue dealing with this Bill as the first order of business each day, any guarantee that I give on the other five Bills will be withdrawn. As Hon Peter Foss vividly explained, we need a bit of roughage among the indigestible legislation. The Railway (Jandakot to Perth) Bill is a very hard Bill to digest, not because it is a significant political issue in the context of Liberal versus Labor, but because it is a significant issue for the infrastructure development of the metropolitan area of Western Australia. The legislation, therefore, deserves thorough scrutiny by the Parliament. We believe that scrutiny can be better carried out by referring the Bill to the Standing Committee on Public Administration and Finance.

If the Government were to indicate to the House that it was prepared to agree to this motion that has been moved by Hon Simon O'Brien, I assure the Government that the debate on the referral motion will be minimal. If, however, the Government must be persuaded further and cannot at this time indicate its agreement to the motion, the debate will continue either until the Government has been persuaded or we have run out of things to say. That would be, in a sense -

Hon Tom Stephens: A threat.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: No, I am trying to put it in terms that even the minister can understand. The time of the House would be better spent debating the other five Bills in the next two weeks so that they can be passed. I hope to add another Bill to that list - the Animal Welfare Bill - which proposition I believe the Minister for Local Government would be happy to support. We could better use the time of the House discussing those Bills rather than arguing about the referral of this Bill to a committee.

I do not know whether the parliamentary secretary wants to add to his interjection this afternoon when he said that the Government would not refer it to a committee.

Hon Graham Giffard: I do not want to take up any more of your time.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I have as much time as I need.

Hon Tom Stephens: You bet you do, and you will use all of it too.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: No. I must say in answer to that interjection that I have never used all of my unlimited time, unlike Hon Tom Stephens. If any member of this House has brought into disrepute the speaking rights of members, it is Hon Tom Stephens. Anybody who can speak for three weeks on one Bill must have some sort of a record. The parliamentary secretary today tried to do something similar when he talked for nearly two hours. I was thinking at the time - this is an aside, Mr Deputy President (Hon Jon Ford) - that the parliamentary secretary was trying to encourage the Opposition to support changes to speaking rights by members. However, although he took a long time to respond, he did not persuade us to that view.

I am genuine in what I am saying to the parliamentary secretary. If he is prepared to agree to this motion, we can curtail the debate very quickly. If he is not prepared to agree, we will seek to persuade him. He can take his pick. Has he been persuaded or does he need more persuading?

Hon Graham Giffard: I haven't been persuaded at the moment. I cannot agree with you.

Hon Simon O'Brien: You are missing the point.

Hon Graham Giffard: I am hearing the point very clearly. I am not going to roll over to a threat, so we don't agree.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I am not making a threat.

Hon Graham Giffard: Yes you are, and we are not bowing to it.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I am saying to the parliamentary secretary, and hoping that he will use a bit of his own initiative instead of doing as he is told by the minister, that if he wants to expedite the passage of this Bill - not the motion but the passage of the Bill - he can achieve that by agreeing with the Opposition's motion to send it to a committee. That would ensure that the Bill was properly dealt with, properly debated and returned to the House for what I suspect would be a curtailed debate, as most of the work would have been done in the committee. He could go down that sensible path for which the Government, when it was in opposition, used to argue frequently.

Hon Tom Stephens: And you used to argue the opposite side of the argument.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: Not at all. I did not have the numbers in the past four years to do that. If the then Opposition said that legislation had to go to a committee, I had to accept that because that was where it had to go. For example, the Opposition said that it knew more than we did about the School Education Bill, and it went off to a committee for about three years. This railway Bill is of that magnitude. It is very important legislation. It is about the expenditure of more than \$1.4 billion. It is about leaving a scar on the landscape of the Perth metropolitan area, particularly the central business district. It appears that the Government will persist in debating this matter in the Chamber. All I can say is that our members will make their view known about this matter and if the Government wants to deal with its other five Bills, it should bring them on ahead of this Bill. I know that the parliamentary secretary cannot speak on behalf of the Leader of the House, but he understands that the Government must bring on the roughage soon, otherwise the railway Bill will not be dealt with.

Hon Graham Giffard: I get a fair bit of roughage at the moment.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: It will do the parliamentary secretary good. He could probably use a bit of roughage.

I strongly contend that this Bill must go to a committee. The Opposition has chosen what it believes is the most appropriate committee. It must go to a committee because it must be thoroughly canvassed in the community, it must be thoroughly analysed by the committee and the people of Western Australia need an opportunity to have a say.

One of the great tragedies of the decision by Hon Alannah MacTiernan to run the railway line along the freeway was that it was made without any consideration by the public. The Government simply decided to change the route that had been determined by the previous Government. Had the Government changed the other end of the line from Mandurah to Rockingham, I guess that would not have been as much of a problem. However, it changed the most crucial part of the railway line where there would be the most significant impact. Instead of going down the path that the previous Government had chosen, which would have had minimal impact on the CBD, this Government changed the route to go along the freeway, which will have a massive impact on the existing infrastructure in Perth and on the central business district. I do not believe that this Government has done its sums or its homework on that decision. This Bill is all about the route from Jandakot to Perth, which is the most crucial part of the project. The Government has said it will cost \$1.4 billion. I estimate that \$2 billion would be in the ballpark. By the time the Government gets moving on this railway line - it is two years behind schedule now - and by the time it starts drilling holes in what is a geologically unstable part of the city, I have no doubt that the cost blow-out will be phenomenal. That is not only my view.

Hon Tom Stephens: So that is what you are trying to do: delay it to cause more costs. Is that your idea?

Hon NORMAN MOORE: What a serious dope the Minister for Housing and Works is at times.

Hon Tom Stephens: You said that the delays will cause more costs by the time it starts. Presumably you are trying to cause more delays.

Hon Peter Foss: No, it's because we keep finding more costs. You don't even know yourself what they are.

Hon Tom Stephens: You are the ones who will cause them to rise.

Hon Peter Foss: Read your own statements to the House.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I do not believe that the Minister for Housing and Works should involve himself in this debate. When this matter was discussed in Cabinet he must have been somewhere else. His level of understanding of this issue is minimal. If the previous Government had said, "We want Parliament's approval to spend \$1.4 billion", the first thing he would have said was, "Give us an explanation. What is it for? Where is it going? Give us some justification for that sort of expenditure." What little information is available to the

community indicates that that amount of \$1.4 billion is a very conservative figure. I would not mind having a small wager of a bottle of Grange Hermitage with the Minister for Housing and Works that the real cost will be nearer \$2 billion, because that is the sort of project this Government is talking about.

Why is this Government going to spend the extra money? To help the people of South Perth, Applecross, Booragoon, Willetton or Salters Point? Not at all. Half of them will not be able to get on the train unless they go backwards, because there are no railway stations for the people in South Perth. If people from Applecross want to go into town in the future they will have to get on a bus, go down to where Canning Highway meets the freeway, hop off the bus and get on the train.

Hon Peter Foss: Every second train; the first train will be full.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: Of course. If they then want to go to East Perth they will have to get off the train and catch the bus. Is that an improvement for them? That sort of scenario will apply to most people in the relatively inner southern suburbs of Perth. So there is no benefit to be had for anybody. We are told that people coming from Rockingham and Mandurah will get to Perth 12 minutes earlier. That can be disputed. If the Government thinks that \$1.4 billion minimum ought to be spent to save people 12 minutes travelling time from Mandurah to Rockingham, it has rocks in its head; its priorities are absolutely A-about. This is what the public has been denied an opportunity to argue.

Whenever the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure had discussions about this railway line, it was not about the new route, it was about where it went after it got over the Narrows Bridge. The argument has not been about the freeway route versus the Kenwick route, which is what the previous Government wanted to do. That debate has not been had. This Bill is all about the route from Jandakot to Perth; it is all about the bit the Government changed, and it is the bit that has not been discussed by the public. There has been no public consultation and no opportunity for people in the community to give their evidence to a committee or an inquiry or anything of that nature. The Government has a chance now to practise what it preached, and that is that there should be community consultation about issues that are important to the community. There is no more important infrastructure issue that I know of than this project. We heard countless complaints from the Labor Party about the new convention centre, and that will cost \$100 million, paid for by the sale of the gas pipeline. This is 14 times that size of government expenditure!

Hon Murray Criddle: For a start.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I reckon it will be \$2 billion, which will make it 20 times.

Hon Simon O'Brien: If we calculate the cost of its borrowings, even on the Government's own figures, it comes out to about \$3.6 billion by the time the Government has made its 30 years worth of repayments.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: One of the things that worries me about this is that the Government will eventually work out what it is doing and then it will say, "We can't go ahead with it", and it will keep the \$300 million that the Opposition when in government set aside for the project and spend it on something else, which has probably been done already if the truth be known, and then we will not have a railway line at all. Had we still been the Government this project would have started and be halfway to completion. This lot just cannot get it right, but we have an obligation to make sure they do. The best way is to make sure that anybody who has a view - and there are lots of views - is given an opportunity to put that point of view to a properly constituted parliamentary inquiry.

We have a very simple proposition to put to the House. This Government should practise what it used to preach - give people a chance to be consulted, give people a chance to put their point of view, give those engineers who believe the Government has it all wrong technically and financially the chance to put their point of view, and give this Parliament a chance to understand what this Bill is all about in its ultimate application. It will be a gross disservice to Western Australia if the Parliament does not agree to the sort of scrutiny that we are proposing should apply to this legislation. I cannot believe that a Government made up of people I listened to for eight years in opposition telling us about open and accountable government is adopting this approach. Dr Gallop, that great proponent of open and accountable government, is the person in charge of this Government that will not give the people of Western Australia a chance to have their views heard on the expenditure of at least 1.4 billion of their dollars. Imagine what we could do with \$1.4 billion if we had the cheque book? How many hospitals, schools, roads, police stations, policemen and women, schoolteachers, dental therapists, or how many anything could we get for \$1.4 billion? All I know is, a darned lot; yet we are being asked to spend all this money without proper scrutiny and the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure is telling us that everybody else is wrong and she is right. Well, she is wrong in that assertion, because many people who know a lot about this project want their point of view to be heard, and to be heard through a properly constituted inquiry.

I argue strongly that we should agree to this motion. Hon Simon O'Brien has done the right thing in asking the House to consider this matter and I look forward to the Government agreeing to this motion and reassessing its

position between now and tomorrow so that we can deal with this motion quickly and then get on with the chaff, or the other legislation that has been described in various terms today, and not get bogged down for the next two weeks dealing with this Bill. That is what will happen if this Government keeps putting it to the front, because it is a Bill worthy of long and laborious discussion and proper scrutiny. The best way to handle it is for the parliamentary secretary to tell the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure that this House is different from the Assembly; we do not ram legislation through this House if we can help it; we like to review what is going on; we like to fix up the mistakes made by the other House; and we like to tell the public what is happening, especially when we are talking about the expenditure of 1.4 billion of the community's hard earned dollars. I support the motion.

HON PETER FOSS (East Metropolitan) [8.48 pm]: I wish to raise a rather serious matter that I initially raised before you, Mr Deputy President (Hon George Cash), as Chairman of the Estimates Committee. I then proceeded to place a notice of motion on the Notice Paper, which has not yet been debated. I felt that that might be the better way to deal with this issue rather than end up with a confrontation on a question of privilege that I believe will need to be resolved prior to this Parliament dealing with this whole Bill. The motion to which I refer is listed as No 9 on the Notice Paper. I have moved -

- (1) That the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure do -
 - (a) table in the House at the next sitting day three calendar days after the making of this order, full and complete answers to all the questions of which notice was given with respect to the Perth Urban Rail Development Proposal for the hearing by the Estimates Committee for the 2002-2003 Budget together with all the documents requested by those questions;
 - (b) attend before the Standing Committee on Public Administration and Finance at its next meeting after such tabling and thereafter and with such other witnesses as directed by that Committee in order that the Committee may satisfy itself as to the adequacy of such answers and tabling, and on any other matters arising out of those answers or which as a result of its inquiries the Standing Committee consider appropriate to inquire into.

Instead of moving that motion, I contemplated moving a motion to commit the various people involved on behalf of Perth Urban Railway Development for contempt because of what happened during the estimates committee. Members would not think that the southern railway would be a matter of political contention; it should not have been and it would not have been but for the strange manner in which the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has gone about dealing with it. She was obviously advised by Professor Peter Newman who was on the government payroll and said that the minister's decision was brilliant. At the time he made those comments in the newspaper, he called himself a professor at a particular university, but he did not disclose that he was on the Government's payroll. Having made the decision to build the railway up the freeway, everything has happened in reverse and the Government now seeks to justify it.

The questions asked during the estimates committee were perfectly proper. There is no more substantial expenditure in the State's budget than this railway. The Parliament was interested in knowing not only about the proposed expenditure, but also how realistic the estimate was. Were we being given the proper picture or were we being fed utter bullsh*t? How well was that decision made? If there were reasons for the decision, let us see them. I do not think it is unreasonable for Parliament to ask to be provided with that information. In particular, it is fair for the House of Review to ask the other House, which has said that it has made a good decision, to give us the facts on which the decision has been made. The other House has told us how much the project will cost; it should give us the facts on which that project is based. Is that an unreasonable request? Of course it is not. It is the very sort of question that any proper Opposition in any House of Review should ask, and those questions were asked.

In my opinion, the decision to build the railway up the freeway was made on the flimsiest and most stupid of bases. However, before saying that, I would like to find out whether my gut feeling is correct, based on what I have seen. I happen to think that the financial statements were absolutely absurd. Before making that statement, I wanted to ask the Government to show us what information it has. That is not an unreasonable request. Members will recall that the estimates committee was a Committee of the Whole. It is a committee; it is not question time in the House when a minister has a choice about whether he will answer the question. Witnesses appeared before the committee, and they were obliged to answer the questions. I raised the point then, but I did not persist with it because we had to get on with other matters. However, I regarded it as unfinished business that these witnesses totally defied a committee of the Parliament. I will read to members some of the questions that were asked and some of the answers that were given.

Hon Simon O'Brien: The Premier was going to make an announcement that afternoon.

Hon PETER FOSS: Recently I attended a seminar for the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Many members from some of the other parliaments were indignant about how disgraceful it was that ministers had fallen into the habit of making public statements before they made them to the Parliament. We were asked to defer getting answers to our questions so that we could not find out information in advance. A number of the witnesses answered questions by saying that they would answer them later. Hon Alan Cadby asked -

- (1) What is the proposed cost of establishing the railway stations and platforms for each of the following stations . . .
- (2) What is the presently estimated cost of land acquisitions for these stations, for
 - (a) the station itself?
 - (b) for parking for these stations?
- (3) What is the planned parking capacity for each station?
- (4) How will the line be zoned? And in particular:
 - (a) How many zones will be involved for those travelling from Mandurah to Perth
 - (b) What is the proposed zone structure along the southern line?
 - (c) Which stations will not have park and ride?
- (5) What impact will there be on the travel time of persons who currently travel by bus who . . .

The following answers to the member's questions were provided -

- (1) (a)-(i) Costs for these stations and Leach Highway and South Street Stations will be shown in the Perth Urban Rail Development Supplementary Master Plan.

Were answers provided? No. Were the member's questions answered in the supplementary plan? No. The second answer states -

- (2) (a)&(b) The Perth Urban Rail Development Supplementary Master Plan will contain information in regard to land acquisition.

The fact is that the Government still does not know. Only the other day we heard the nonsensical statement by the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure with regard to the King Kong site. At first the Government was going to take only part of the site, as if that would not lead to a larger claim for compensation. I do not know whether the minister has heard of injurious affection. At least one member of the Government ought to have heard that because she is a lawyer. The minister said that PURD is still working on various things about which it will soon be able to tell us. It is now November and she still does not know. We asked the minister whether she knew about these matters. Instead of saying no, the Government does not know yet, she gave us these rubbish answers. This Government has asked the Parliament for billions of dollars and it will not tell people of Western Australia or us that this decision was made without any knowledge whatsoever. It was made with a few figures drawn on the back of an envelope. We are now being asked to pass the legislation without having received that advice.

On reading the answers provided during the estimates committee, members will find that the Government says it will not give us the answers to the questions that were asked of it. We have been told that the answers will be given after the plan is released. Has the parliamentary secretary honoured that commitment? Has he given me the documents after the plan has been announced? I bet it will not take very long for members to work out the answer. He has not done so because they are not there.

We are being asked to spend billions of dollars. We have been given lying answers and the Parliament has been defied. The minister has made decisions on the back of an envelope. She is working backwards. She starts with a decision and then tries to justify it. We have been told to pass the Bill quickly. The minister is like Noddy. Noddy wanted to build the roof of his house first so that he did not get wet while he built the rest of it. The Government's Noddy has made a decision and now she is building the foundations and the rest of the house underneath the roof. We still do not know what the project will cost. Noddy MacTiernan will do everything back-to-front; she has built the roof first. That is how this Government operates all too often. If it has the information for which we asked, it should give it to us.

It is disgraceful that this Government has not been accountable in the way it has treated the people of Western Australia in regard to this decision. That is the first part of what I find absolutely disgraceful. This useless Government, this mob of unaccountable idiots who cannot even tell me how they made their decision, are so unaccountable they defy a parliamentary committee to which they promised documents but never gave them, and they still do not know how much this will cost the people of Western Australia. What is the reason for this

decision? As was so rightly pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition, the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has said that it is not open for discussion.

I went to various parts of my electorate that have been very badly affected by the decision to remove the railway. My electorate probably has been more affected than most by the decision to change the route. My constituents said they did not want me to raise the question of the Kenwick line because they have been told that if they upset the minister, she will do terrible things to them. She walked into a meeting and said the basic decision to re-route the line was not open for discussion. She said it was a decision made by the Government and it was not open for discussion. She made it clear that if they tried to discuss it, she would get very upset and they could not expect any concessions from her. This is a democracy. Is not every decision of government open for discussion? Since when has a Government been able to say in that arrogant manner - members opposite are arrogant - that a decision is not for discussion? When did we last have a blackmailing Government which threatened people who defied the Government with nasty things? It was the Labor Government under Brian Burke, whose method was "defy me and pay for it"! This Government has taken up where Brian Burke left off, which is not surprising since the Premier, Deputy Premier and Attorney General are all ex-ministers from the last Labor Government. They are using the same blackmailing methods as the Burke Government. My constituents have been told that they are not allowed to discuss this because if they upset the minister, they cannot expect any concessions.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: And the Government will take their railway line away!

Hon PETER FOSS: I thank Hon Derrick Tomlinson. I was trying to identify which people she said that to. The member is dead right.

The minister has made that threat everywhere. I spoke to officers of the City of Perth, who also did not want to upset the minister. She told them that she would not discuss the Kenwick route, only the various options through Perth. They were told that if they upset the minister, she would do all sorts of things to them. Is that not wonderful? Are government members aware that is what the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure is doing and how she is behaving? The Government is arguing indefensible propositions. What is wrong with this whole thing is the basic decision for the railway not to go to Mandurah via Kenwick. If that decision is left out of the argument, we are left with indefensible arguments. Let us deal with this.

If I had to summarise the proposition, it is that the Government has taken a railway from people who want it and who will use it, and given it to people who do not want it and who cannot use it but will have to use it because they will be made to use it. The people in the south eastern corridor want it because they see a real benefit to them.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon George Cash): Order! We are dealing with a motion to discharge an order of the day for the purpose of referring that order to a committee for consideration. Relevant to this debate is whether the order of the day, firstly, should be discharged - that being, in the main, procedural, there is probably no real need to spend a lot of time on that - and, secondly, whether the matter should be referred. Whether there should or should not be a railway through Kenwick or some other place is not necessarily relevant to the matters that should be discussed. We have to hear why the matter should or should not be referred. It is quite proper to raise the various questions that the member thinks the committee would be interested in, but not to go into great discussion on what the constituents think about something or do not think about something.

Hon PETER FOSS: I should have given a preamble. The big problem in all this is that the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has said that this is not open for discussion. In fact, this Bill has come before the House without discussion. One of the things that we should do, why we should discharge it now, and why we should send it to the committee now is that that is the only way the people of Western Australia will be able to raise those points without fear of recrimination. I do not see any way in which these issues will be properly aired unless this goes to a committee with a full opportunity to discuss it.

One of the real benefits of the Legislation Committee in particular - the others can follow the method - has been that it gives an opportunity for the public to have input and for both sides of the Parliament in a non-partisan circumstance to hear what people have to say. The reality of the matter is that there has been no outlet for that because the minister has threatened to punish people who wanted to raise those issues. The unspoken issue that is not even in this Bill is, if we pass the policy of this Bill, whether we will even be able to raise it. Once we decide that the railway should go along a particular route, how does the question of whether that should be the route be discussed by the public? This is another example of how this Government has sought to suppress proper democratic discussion of this principle. The Government forced this Bill through. It has stopped discussion of this issue every inch of the way and at every opportunity. Unless we send it to the committee, where will the people of Western Australia have an opportunity to debate these issues? They are important issues. Members have only to examine those issues to say these questions need answering. They need answering for two reasons. The first is that proper accountability through the estimates hearings requires it.

There was a breach of privilege by the people who refused to answer those questions. However, we can bypass dealing with all that by sending it to the committee. The very thing I hope to do with this motion could be done by that committee. That would be a sensible approach. We should not deal with this Bill until we deal with that breach of privilege because it relates to the same matter. We should not have to make a decision on this Bill until we have those answers. The second reason is how can we decide to authorise the construction of this railway if we do not know why the decision was made? How can we authorise the construction of this railway if we do not know what it will cost? Yet we are being asked to make that decision without that knowledge and without giving people the opportunity to be heard. Where will the people of Western Australia get the opportunity to raise those points if this does not go to a committee?

A number of points have been raised with me which I believe must be considered prior to the discussion of the second reading of this Bill. The most important question is why the railway will go that way. The Government has taken the railway away from my electorate and put it in somebody else's electorate. The people in that electorate do not want it; we do. My electorate wants it because it is a greenfields site and will allow the development of industry, commerce and housing along the railway line. There will be tremendous benefits in the future. My electorate saw it as the end of the neglect of the south eastern corridor. How do they get the opportunity to say it to the Government if we do not provide them with that opportunity in the committee?

The Leader of the Opposition asked what the people south of the river thought. The Government's plan claims there will be a huge number of extra people using the railway line. The biggest single increase in patrons using the railway line will be at Thomsons Lake because of reprojecting the population increase. The Government says that is because of its decision. Was the Government responsible for that population increase? I would like to think it has been that busy, but it cannot say that more people will be living at Thomsons Lake because of its decision on the route. That is the most important issue. What is the rest of it? People are being forced to transfer at Canning Bridge. People who would rather go by bus, because they have a pretty good bus service now, will be forced to get off the bus and catch every second train. Members may ask why every second train. Only every second train that will arrive will not be full of people. They will catch the trains that will be reasonably empty; and that will be every second train - not every train, but every second train. Those people will have to stand around for possibly seven to 10 minutes - a wonderful thing! People will not save 12 minutes. Twelve minutes is an approximation. It is actually 10 to 14 minutes. That is one answer we did get in the estimates committee hearings. At one stage, an answer I got was that five minutes must be allowed for the train to slow down and speed up at every station. The report does not say that, but that is what we were told in the estimates committee hearings. Therefore, with one or two stations, the whole benefit will be lost. Ten to 14 minutes will be saved from Mandurah, but it must be added to the travelling time for the people who must get on the train at Canning Bridge and who do not even want to get onto it. What about the people in South Perth? They cannot get onto it. What about the fish? They are not going anywhere anyway. Fish are on one side and a fence is on the other side. People cannot get to the railway line; there will not be any stations. This train will travel over this huge distance, yet nobody will be able to get onto it.

Why do we have public transport? We have it so that in areas of dense population, people can use it. People will not be able to use this train. There is no population on one side, and on the other side people cannot get onto it. What nonsense! Do members know what those people who cannot get on the train will have to do? It was explained to us that currently there is an on ramp to the bus area there. Of course, once the train goes where the bus ramp is currently located, the down ramp will not be able to stay there; it must go onto the road. Therefore, it will be bent. We asked what it meant to bend it. It means that it will be demolished. The Government did not want to say that it would demolish it because it does not like to admit to wasting money. However, it will demolish it and make the new ramp tighter. People travelling in the centre lane of the freeway will then enter at 100 kilometres an hour. Can members imagine this? People will be going down Canning Highway in a bus. The bus will make a sharp left turn, because that is what this bend involves, shoot down the ramp, and at the bottom the bus will travel at 100 kilometres an hour and join the centre lane.

When I explained this to some elderly people in Applecross, I could see them holding onto the chair in front of them. The idea of making a sharp left turn off Canning Highway and reaching 100 kilometres an hour on the way down did not appeal to them. We were told that it meant that it would be simple for the traffic to merge. Has anybody ever been on a road and seen Western Australian traffic merging? Where does the freeway totally and utterly gum up? It is where Western Australian traffic merges. Drivers do not know how to do it. Anywhere that Western Australian traffic is called upon to merge, there is a traffic jam. Therefore, after a sharp left-hand turn, buses will be shooting down the ramp at 100 kilometres an hour and be required to merge. There will be one or two possibilities. Either it will not happen, which is the higher likelihood, or there will be a great pile-up, like that one in the fog in Los Angeles that was reported in the newspaper the other day. This is the nonsense that has come out of the decision by the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure when she decided,

Noddy-like, to put the roof on first. She needs a Big Ears. Why does not Big Ears, the Attorney General, tell her not to do it? Apparently she does not have a Big Ears to tell her not to do it.

These are the arguments that have not been, and will not be, heard by this minister and this Government unless something is done to give them the opportunity to hear them. We have this bizarre situation. One wonders why the Government is doing it. Hon Norman Moore has mentioned the conspiracy theory. Maybe the Government is doing this so that it can eventually decide to abandon it. I must confess that the Government has managed to put off spending a bit of money for a few years already. It says that it is building railways, but all it has done is to put off the building of the railway for two years. How can it say that it is the Government for building railways? It has put off the building of this railway for two years, and it will probably be a lot longer. That is building railways!

A conspiracy theory is that it is doing this on purpose to get the \$300 million from AlintaGas. I do not believe that. I happen to think that the Government has such a knuckleheaded, obstinate minister that she has persuaded government members that it is a good idea. Do members know that the other design won an Australian design engineering award as a brilliant piece of design engineering and consultation? The man who is now promoting this railway is the man who collected that award. He is now telling us that the other design is an absolute load of rubbish and that the current model should have been adopted in the first place. Something fundamental must be queried in this. Should we blindly pass this legislation and tell the minister to go ahead because we are sure that when she shot from the hip she got it right?

The fact is that this could bankrupt the State, more so than was the case with WA Inc. It would have been lovely if the coalition Government had inherited government from someone like Bjelke-Petersen, when squillions were in the bank. The coalition Government inherited an enormous debt. It had to tighten the belt to pay back that debt. This Labor Government is lucky that it inherited from the previous Government a \$225 million current account surplus, which someone managed to call a black hole, and not much debt. The coalition Government had paid back a lot of it. Do members know what really frightens me? It is that when Labor loses government, the incoming Government will have massive debts to pay off, and a non-working railway that goes up the middle of the freeway, with nobody able to get onto the train, except those people who are forced onto it at Canning Highway and the rapidly growing population at Thomsons Lake. We still will not know how much it will cost to knock down the King Kong building or to bore a hole underneath Perth, or what the Government will do to keep it looking good.

The more we ask these questions, the more interesting it gets. The Parliament must have this lengthy process. It is what we must do. Earlier I asked what the Government will do with the bus lane. Will it keep it where it is currently located or dig it up? The interesting thing is that if it is kept where it is and ballast and rails are put on top of it, it will be elevated quite considerably. The more it is elevated, the worse it will look. If the Government did it that way, people who drove down the freeway would be able to see a pile of blue metal, which is the ballast - a wonderful view - then the train, and above that the wires. Of course, people could not get onto the train; they could just drive past it and see it, because people will not be able to get onto the train from South Perth or Como; they will be able to get onto it only at Canning Highway. If people are going into the city, what is the point? There is a real visual issue.

The interesting point is that the Government spent \$40 000, I think, on producing a video so that people would get an idea of what the railway line would look like. I asked what the video did. I was told that it just gives people an idea of the appearance. I asked whether it tells us anything about what it will be like, and I was told no, not at all; it just gives people an idea of the visual appearance. I said that the visual appearance that was projected was the train being lowered as it went along the Narrows Bridge. I asked whether it would be lowered as it went along the freeway. The Government was a bit evasive about that. Eventually, it said that it would dig up the busway. Can members imagine that? Has anybody driven along there while this work has been going on? Can anyone imagine the hours that will be wasted in digging it up again? People will save 12 minutes a day from Mandurah, but it will cost people from Como half an hour a day. People do not want to come from Mandurah by train. That is one thing that came out of the survey. If the previous Government can be criticised for anything, it is for proposing to extend the railway from Rockingham to Mandurah.

This whole project has been justified on the basis that people from Mandurah, who do not want to travel to Perth anyway, will save 10, 12 or 14 minutes on their journey time. Many of those people want to go to Canning Vale. Can they go to Canning Vale? No, not unless they travel into Perth and then travel back out again, or catch a bus. People cannot go to the places they want to; the people who wanted access to the railway cannot have it; the people who do not want access to the railway have it; the people who do not want to travel by train have to. What is the benefit of moving people off buses, which are part of public transport, onto trains? We want to get the people who currently do not have any form of public transport onto public transport. That is what the Kenwick route would do; it would lead to getting people out of town. Everybody is coming into Perth. Why do

we want more people to come into Perth? Should we not be sending people to some of the industrial areas, which is where they want to go? Where is the planning in all of this?

The bus lane has been a fantastic success in getting people quickly into town and getting them to use public transport. What will happen? It will be dug up. That will probably take two or three years. For two or three years the journey times of people from everywhere south of the river will increase enormously.

Hon Paddy Embry: They only finished it a few weeks ago.

Hon PETER FOSS: Exactly. Instead of having ballast there will be concrete, which will cost a whole lot more money. What a surprise! The Government will try to reduce the effect of the overhead wires, which are pretty ugly. How much will be spent at Geraldton to try to get rid of the railway that is in the way of the foreshore?

Hon Ray Halligan: It is \$87 million.

Hon PETER FOSS: Yes, to get rid of the railway. The Government is now contemplating spending money putting a railway on a foreshore. The Government intends to put an eyesore between the people of Perth and their river.

Hon Kim Chance: There is a freeway there.

Hon PETER FOSS: Yes, and we do not need a railway as well. Has the Leader of the House been anywhere around that place and seen it?

Hon Kim Chance: It is a bit different from Geraldton. There is no freeway on that foreshore.

Hon PETER FOSS: I agree that it is different, but why make it worse? I would like the freeway to be sunk.

Hon Kim Chance: At the moment 50 000 cars an hour are travelling along the freeway. Do you reckon that you will notice the odd train?

Hon PETER FOSS: A train with four carriages will pass every two and a half minutes. It will not be the odd train. People will not be able to board the train from one side of the railway line, and there will be fish on the other side. That is ridiculous. What is the point of building it there? Why have trains running through an area where people cannot get on them?

Hon Bruce Donaldson: The Government has not yet worked out how to get the trains across the Narrows Bridge.

Hon PETER FOSS: It is quite clear that the Government will have to have another bridge built.

Hon Kim Chance: Have you ever been to the northern suburbs and noticed that trains run along the centre of the freeway? This project will be similar to that, if you wonder what it will look like.

Hon PETER FOSS: Exactly. Has the Leader of the House noticed the large number of houses overlooking the northern suburbs freeway? There are none.

Hon Kim Chance: In some places there are.

Hon PETER FOSS: No, because the route was planned. There is no river on the other side of the route.

Hon Kim Chance: There is land.

Hon PETER FOSS: I suspect the Leader of the House should visit the northern suburbs. He has obviously been listening to Noddy too much. The reality of the matter is that this is a ridiculous plan. The extra expenditure acknowledges the fact that the route will be ugly. The next thing that the Government will do is reduce the number of wires. Of course, to string the wires in a different way requires a considerable amount of extra expenditure. An extra rail was a possibility, but it would have created problems because people would have to be prevented from walking across it.

Hon Murray Criddle: It was another \$200 million for metropolitan Perth.

Hon PETER FOSS: Yes. Members can see why I am rather keen to understand. My first reaction to this was to ask why the Government did something so stupid voluntarily. I think the reason is that somebody got the ear of the minister who was somehow taken by this and has brought the rest of the government members along with her. This will be the Government's albatross. I do not mind the Government having an albatross around its neck because it will get it chucked out. However, I am concerned about what it will do for Western Australia and my electorate, which wants the trains that would result in people travelling by public transport who currently do not.

Hon Jim Scott: You could use it yourself.

Hon PETER FOSS: It will not be going to my electorate. That is the problem.

Hon Bruce Donaldson: I do not think that Hon Jim Scott knows where it will go.

Hon Kim Chance: You already have a rail service in your electorate. Now you want two.

Hon PETER FOSS: It will not be going there. That is the problem.

Hon Kim Chance: No, it goes south; you live in the east.

Hon PETER FOSS: Let me put one thing simply: the biggest difference with this railway is that after it departs the old route, it will be almost impossible to get on it. Is that not a wonderful idea for a railway line? Many people will not be able to use the railway, and those who currently have a good bus service will be forced to transfer and travel by train. People who want to travel from Mandurah to my electorate will also have to transfer to a bus service. They cannot go by light rail, because, as has been explained, the engineering factors would make it impossible.

Hon Barry House: It would slow up every bus and vehicle on the freeway.

Hon PETER FOSS: Yes. The theoretical people from Mandurah who will not go anywhere - that fact is in the Government's report - will save 10 to 14 minutes. It will probably take much longer than that because of the five minutes at each stop. The truth about that was told in the estimates committee. One must take into account the slowing down at each station. The Government either does not know what it is doing, which is highly likely, or it is lying in the report. We are being asked to pass this legislation. Does the Government not think that this is an important debate that should be had at some stage?

Hon Kim Chance: Let us get on and have it.

Hon PETER FOSS: No, it is not in the Bill. This is a debate before the public.

Hon Kim Chance: If you do not understand it, get a briefing.

Hon PETER FOSS: One of the problems we have whenever the Leader of the House leaves the Chamber is that he comes back in and wants me to start at the beginning of my argument. If the House is prepared to give me the extra time, I will be quite happy to go back to the beginning of my argument. If the Leader of the House wishes to raise matters dealt with at the beginning of my speech, I would appreciate his being in the Chamber and participating at that stage rather than now. I intend to finish my speech in a logical manner and not go back to the beginning again.

Hon Kim Chance: Do you want a briefing or not?

Hon PETER FOSS: No. Would the Leader of the House like a briefing? I have had briefings on this.

Hon Kim Chance: The difference between you and me is that I understand them.

Hon PETER FOSS: No, the difference is that I understood them and the Leader of the House took them blindly.

I want to return to the motion. It is unfortunate that the Leader of the House must start referring to matters dealt with at the beginning of the speech, showing his ignorance because he has not listened to the well-developed argument. It is a shame that he did not listen to my argument. It would have been good had he been in the Chamber because he might have heard something that he had not heard from the minister.

Hon Kim Chance: You are filling in time. Why not admit it?

Hon PETER FOSS: I am not. I raised a very serious point at the beginning of my speech.

Hon Kim Chance: You are filling in time. Why? It is because you are allowed to do it.

Hon PETER FOSS: It is a shame that the Leader of the House says that. It is unfortunate that he does not take seriously the matter that I take seriously and that I raised at the beginning of my speech. I believe that a serious breach of privilege occurred. Rather than move a matter of privilege, I moved notice of motion No 9. One way of dealing with it, without reference to the question of whether there has been a breach of privilege, is to allow this matter to be referred to a committee. Those matters need to be answered before we deal with this legislation. I believe that it will be impossible for us to proceed with the second reading debate until we have dealt with that matter of privilege. There are two alternatives. Either we let this go to a committee and allow all these matters to be properly dealt with and washed up in that committee or, if we do not, I will have to move as a matter of urgency that this motion be defeated and that we deal immediately with notice of motion No 9 as a matter of privilege.

I would be quite happy for this matter to be dealt with in the ordinary course of events. It is a serious matter, not just because of the serious breach of privilege that is involved, but also as a matter of principle. I did not want to deal with this matter in a party political context. I was hoping to deal with it in the context of what is proper if this House is to have a proper estimates committee process. However, if I am forced to deal with it as a matter of urgency because this Government is not prepared to be accountable and open and to give the public the

freedom to speak on that basic decision, then I will have to act. That is not my preferred position, because I would like to establish the point of principle of how we can make the estimates process viable and realistic. I think we all have an interest in that. The Greens (WA) have an interest in that and One Nation has an interest in that. The Government also has an interest in that, because one day - it may be sooner than it thinks - it may be in opposition, and it will then want a proper process of accountability for the expenditure of money. The reality of the matter is that throughout this process, the Government has ducked, weaved, avoided and blatantly disregarded committee questions that should have been answered and that it was a breach of privilege not to answer. The Government has been unaccountable in this matter. We are giving the Government the opportunity to deal with this matter properly and get it right. However, the Government does not want to deal with it in that way. That is fine. I take this matter seriously; the Government does not.

I suggest that if the Government wants to read something interesting, it reads *Hansard* of the Thirty-sixth Parliament, first session, supplementary information and questions on notice, at around page E866, and looks at the answers that were given to the questions that I asked. I think the Leader of the House was one of those people who wanted someone to be fined \$1 500 for not answering a committee question, and that was supported by this House. If the Leader of the House were to read that, he would find that time and time again, a civil servant refused to answer a committee question. That is far worse than anything that happened in the Murphy case. Look at the number of documents that were asked for and were refused. I can see no possible reason for refusing to provide those documents. The Government should be consistent and stop being hypocritical.

Hon Kim Chance: Was there a request to provide information?

Hon PETER FOSS: No.

Hon Kim Chance: Then you cannot draw the Murphy case as a parallel.

Hon PETER FOSS: I will tell the Leader of the House what the parallel is. I have put a notice of motion on the Notice Paper to give that direction and make it an order of the House. I raised that matter with the chairman of the committee, and he said we could deal with that matter but he would prefer not to because we had the rest of the estimates to go and it would interrupt that. Therefore, in order not to interrupt the estimates, I did not persist with that matter. I was very tempted at that stage to ask the committee that he be ordered to answer those questions. I believe that, in future, questions on notice should be submitted to the committee, and unless the committee sees any reason otherwise, there should be an order that they be answered. The process that we have is imperfect, because if I had pursued that matter during the estimates, we would have lost some time.

Hon Kim Chance: Without a direction, there is no parallel.

Hon PETER FOSS: I see the point, but does the Leader of the House see mine? My point is those questions were asked. I believe I could have persisted and obtained an order from the committee that they be answered. There is no reason that those questions should not have been answered. In an ordinary committee, a witness would have been ordered by the committee to answer the questions. They were perfectly proper questions and perfectly proper documents to be tabled. If we had a proper estimates committee process, that is what would have happened. However, I did not persist with it at that time because I felt that would have interfered with the use by other members of the House of the estimates committee process. Furthermore, I then gave notice of motion to take it to the next stage. I thought I was being reasonable by doing it in that way. I did not do it on a political basis. I did not move as a matter of privilege that he be ordered to answer the questions immediately. I have been reasonable and even-handed and have behaved properly; however, I do not believe the Government has. The Government has defied the right of a public to know. We should know about this matter. Until now I have stepped back. However, I will not let this Bill go through without that matter being resolved. It has to be resolved. We can resolve it by sending it to committee, and we can deal with it in that way, or I will bring it on as a matter of privilege. One way or another we need to deal with this matter, because I want that information that I have reasonably asked for and about which I have been defied.

HON JIM SCOTT (South Metropolitan) [9.34 pm]: I have given serious consideration to supporting the motion to send this Bill to a committee. I have done quite a lot of investigation since I spoke with the parliamentary secretary and said that I was considering supporting the motion. I have had mixed feelings about the motion, because on the one hand I personally favour the current route to Mandurah to the Kenwick route that the previous Government had proposed. Even though Hon Peter Foss has said that people do not want to come from Mandurah to Perth -

Hon Peter Foss: That is what the report says, not me.

Hon JIM SCOTT: Both lines are proposed to go there -

Hon Peter Foss: I agree, but there is a problem about that, as the report shows.

Hon JIM SCOTT: I have spoken to a few people for whom I have quite a lot of respect who have expressed concerns about the process and about the engineering components and the underground development that will be required for this route. People have told me that they are concerned about the probable cost of the central route as opposed to the western route around the city. A lot of these things were put to me. In some cases it was very hard to decide what the truth was, because I am not an engineer and I do not know how to cost the quite complex tunnelling that will be required, particularly in the shifting mud near the Narrows and so on, nor what will be found underground in the city in the form of cables and the different things that will have to be done to get the rail into Perth station.

I was also concerned about the immediate choice of heavy rail without any real discussion about whether to have light rail. This Government made the switch from Kenwick to the central route without sufficient debate. However, conversely the previous Government also announced the Kenwick route despite all the south west area transit studies that have been done to look at a link from Fremantle rather than Kenwick, which favoured light rail rather than the heavy rail that the previous Government was proposing to use. The Government in doing what it wanted to do made a political decision rather than one that was based on consultation and broad community support, despite the fact that there has been much debate in the community about this issue. In Rockingham in my electorate, for instance, people felt very concerned about having to go to Kenwick, which a lot of people said would turn them off using the train. I do not agree with Hon Peter Foss that there were no patronage problems with the Kenwick route.

Hon Peter Foss: I did not say there were no problems.

Hon JIM SCOTT: Hon Peter Foss said that people would want to go to Canning Vale and so on. From where would they want to go to Canning Vale? The study on destinations was not conducted adequately, particularly when one considers that the Kenwick route travelled through to Jandakot Airport, where there would never be development; across the Jandakot water mound, where there is a great restriction on development; through Ken Hurst Park, where there would be no development; and through a golf course, where there would be no development. The majority of people between South Lake and Kenwick, who would have used that line, would have had to drive or catch a bus away from the city to access it. There were many variables, therefore, that meant that was not the perfect route. I had many concerns about the Kenwick route, which I expressed many times in this place and, therefore, do not need to go over them again.

I considered supporting this motion because I continue to believe in the overall concept of both plans which have an emphasis on getting down to Mandurah. I am not sure whether that is because that area has two marginal seats. My belief has always been that we must deal with the traffic problems that exist today and with the development of subregional centres. Fremantle, South Lake, Armadale and those areas are very important. I considered supporting the motion before the House because I believed we were rushing ahead with this rail without a proper analysis of the need to develop the subregions. If the subregions are not developed, facilities will occur in a straight line development rather than in subregional centres and people will have to travel to access them rather than being able to access them in their own areas. Important facilities, therefore, will be pulled away from subregional centres and placed along the railway line, or in Perth because that is where the line is headed. That has been the conceptual mistake in both cases. For those reasons I would like a committee to examine the Bill. One of the problems with referring the Bill to a committee is that it will deal with the Perth to Jandakot line, although it could still deal with the concept of the development of subregional centres and the linkages that are required for those centres.

Hon Peter Foss: A committee could not examine the policy of the Bill if it is referred after the second reading but it could if it is referred before the second reading. That is why we moved now to refer it to a committee.

Hon JIM SCOTT: The Bill is about the Perth to Jandakot line, not the Perth to Mandurah line or the other concepts I have talked about. Referring the Bill to a committee would make it more difficult to have those issues properly examined.

Hon Peter Foss: As long as you refer it before the second reading, the committee could look at whether the principle is correct; that is, whether the line should go up the freeway. If you refer it after the second reading, you are quite correct, the committee could not look at the underlying principle. However, if you refer it now it can look at anything it likes in the principle.

Hon JIM SCOTT: But the Bill designates specifically where the line will go.

Hon Peter Foss: Precisely.

Hon JIM SCOTT: That is the reason for referring it to a committee, not for a committee to examine the issues around it. It is only a referral of the Bill to a committee.

Hon Peter Foss: That is why it must be referred before the second reading. If it is referred after the second reading, the committee cannot look at the underlying principle. The principle is that the line must go up the freeway. If it is referred to the committee before the second reading, the committee could examine the underlying principle; however, if it is referred after the second reading it could not. Therefore, if you want the committee to consider sending a light rail system down south from Fremantle or through the Kenwick route, you should refer the Bill to the committee now. If you don't want it to consider that point, refer it afterwards; that is why it must be referred now.

Hon JIM SCOTT: I understand that. However, I am saying that the proposal now is that the line goes from Perth to Jandakot, which does not preclude the ability to have those linkages. The Greens (WA) have always favoured the proposal for a network because the major traffic movements in that south west region are east-west, not north-south. We had always believed in the idea of having a hybrid line - that is, including a light rail system that can also travel on heavy rail tracks - which would go from Perth to Rockingham, and then building a heavy rail straight down the freeway from that point. East-west lines could then be put across South Street and continue past the freeway.

Hon Barbara Scott: How fast can a light rail go?

Hon JIM SCOTT: About 130 kilometres an hour, which is as fast as anyone needs. It also has the ability to turn around in much tighter corners and can come off major tracks and go into suburban streets to pick up passengers. It can also get onto heavy rail tracks and travel at quite high speeds. A lot of nonsense has been talked about people equating light rails with trams. Those days have gone; technology has changed.

Hon Barbara Scott: Do we have those rapid light rails in Australia?

Hon JIM SCOTT: Yes, in Melbourne, going down to St Kilda.

Hon Barbara Scott: Trams?

Hon JIM SCOTT: Yes.

Hon Barbara Scott: They are not rapid!

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon George Cash): Order! The discussion is not an argument about what constitutes a light rail system. Members should let Hon Jim Scott get on with his comments and in due course the committee, if the Bill goes to a committee, can worry about what constitutes a light rail system.

Hon JIM SCOTT: Thank you, Mr Deputy President. It appears that some members who have not had the personal experience that I have had do not understand the truth of the matter, but that does not stop it being so. When considering this proposal to refer the Bill to a committee, I talked to a lot of people, such as Professor Martyn Webb, Ross Stanton and a number of engineers. Quite a few people who had concerns about this Bill came to see me. I sought answers to pretty well all of their concerns from the minister, the minister's advisers and other people. I also spoke to engineers who are not employed by the Government but who are members of the Institution of Engineers Australia and who believe that the current proposal is very good.

Hon Murray Criddle: How much will it cost?

Hon JIM SCOTT: The costs per metre were given to me the other day, which sounded pretty plausible. According to the information I have, it was costed by people who are expert at doing that type of work. The committee that was set up by the minister consisted of some independent, hard-headed people, such as Mr Frank Bryant from BSD Consultants Pty Ltd; Dr Richard Day, the general manager of rail development at the State Rail Authority of New South Wales; Mr John Hoare, a railway planning consultant -

Hon Murray Criddle interjected.

Hon JIM SCOTT: A wide range of people attended. I do not know what their political affiliations were, but they had the expertise to understand whether this could be done for the price quoted. In reality nobody in this House can tell me the precise information, because none of us is an engineer; we must rely on the experts. I have gone out and talked to people who had both viewpoints.

Hon Ray Halligan: They have differences of opinion.

Hon JIM SCOTT: That is right.

Hon Ray Halligan: Which one did you choose?

Hon JIM SCOTT: I did not choose either, because I do not have that expertise; neither does the honourable member; neither does anybody in this House. At the end of the day what I have to worry about is the process - whether the process was correct and whether people who were critics of the process had input into it. I have had a look at that and I have been given significant information about the process.

Hon Ray Halligan: So the process looked good, even though the information was rubbish?

Hon JIM SCOTT: Which pieces were rubbish?

Hon Ray Halligan: I am asking the question.

Hon JIM SCOTT: We are politicians and not engineers; we are not experts in that area. At some stage or other we must accept that some people actually tell the truth or make a good estimate. I remember the former Minister for Transport, who still sits in this House - Hon Murray Criddle - talking about the fact that we must allow for overruns on large projects.

Hon Murray Criddle: Which projects had a huge overrun?

Hon JIM SCOTT: I cannot tell the member now, but I bet I could find some. The Kwinana Freeway southern extension was contracted out and had to be rebuilt. That must have cost a bit extra.

Hon Murray Criddle: I was not the minister at the time.

Hon JIM SCOTT: It was the previous minister in the same Government. The reality is that we as politicians must look at the process and ensure that the right accountability measures and scrutiny are put in place, that people are allowed to have input and make appropriate criticisms, and that those criticisms are tested. That was one of my concerns. I had been told that people had not been given the opportunity to make those criticisms, but documentation I was given showed who was consulted and the alternate proposals that were put forward. Many proposals had been put forward but those involved could not possibly examine all of them. The proposals were reduced to the 16 most likely.

Hon Peter Foss: The minutes of every public meeting start off by saying that the route is not for public discussion. That is the big problem the public has.

Hon JIM SCOTT: It is true that the Kenwick route was not for public discussion, but the other two routes were compared. If the member reads these documents, he will see that the routes were compared.

Hon Peter Foss: What do the people of Gosnells do? They are hugely impacted by this issue and they were told they could not discuss it. What sort of democracy is that?

Hon JIM SCOTT: Who told them that?

Hon Peter Foss: The Government. I went to the City of Gosnells and they said they were told they could not discuss this issue. They said they were allowed to discuss the Thornlie extension. The minutes are on the Internet, and the minutes of every single public meeting state that they cannot discuss the route.

Hon JIM SCOTT: I had this discussion tonight, and I was shown the discussion in the documentation.

Hon Peter Foss: It is not my documentation; it is the Government's. Every set of minutes state that they could not discuss the route.

Hon JIM SCOTT: That is what I said at the very beginning. It has been admitted that this change from the Kenwick route was not good process. That was a political decision, based not only on political whim but also on the belief that the Kenwick route was not the right way to go.

Hon Peter Foss: Should people not be able to discuss that?

Hon JIM SCOTT: They should. We then looked at the analysis of the number of people who will be moved and the frequency of the trains that will operate on this route, and it is certainly better than the Kenwick route. I asked questions in this place about the Kenwick route and pointed out to the then minister that only 20 000 cars a day travelled over the Narrows Bridge from south of South Lakes and continued up the freeway - only 20 000. A total of 65 000 vehicles a day travelled on the western route into Fremantle along Rockingham Road, Cockburn Road and Forrest Road. When I put this to the minister at the time, Hon Eric Charlton, and asked him how many people travelled from Rockingham and Kwinana to Kenwick, he gave me a figure for the year 2020 when a railway line was proposed. He would not give me the figures for that time, because he knew they would be very small. The decision he made was based on future population growth and the sale of land. In a debate I was involved in with Roger Nicholls, the then member for Mandurah, he blatantly said that the Government was not building the railway line for the people of today, but for people of the future. It was to be built to help development along the route. The former Government was about helping developers along the route; not getting people off the road.

Hon Peter Foss: It is good planning to build the route there first and then let the people come.

Hon JIM SCOTT: It is not. The 260 000 people who travelled over that one bridge every day from the south as it was at that stage still had to be dealt with. Now a lot more people than that will travel across it.

Hon Barbara Scott: What about the 300 000 people in Rockingham who travel from Mandurah every day and the thousands of people from Rockingham who travelled to Mandurah -

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

