

**LAMBERT TO BUNBURY RAILWAY LINE**

*Motion*

Resumed from 25 May on the following motion moved by Mr P.D. Omodei -

- (1) That this house condemns the Labor government for its failure to resolve problems with the Lambert to Bunbury railway line, which has resulted in the closure of the line and a dangerous increase in the number of heavy haulage trucks using the South Western Highway. In particular, the house condemns the government's failure to -
  - (a) act in a timely manner to prevent the closure of the railway line;
  - (b) upgrade the South Western Highway to protect motorists from the dangers associated with the increase in heavy haulage trucks on the road; and
  - (c) consult with the community on the impact of the rail closure.
- (2) This house calls upon the government to -
  - (a) clearly state its intention in regard to the future of the Lambert to North Greenbushes railway line and the North Greenbushes to Bunbury railway line;
  - (b) provide a clear time line for maintenance work on the Greenbushes to Bunbury portion of the railway, including the anticipated date that the line will be reopened;
  - (c) immediately identify how it intends to address safety issues arising from the dramatic increase in heavy haulage trucks on the South Western Highway, particularly in regard to the need for passing lanes in the areas of Hester Hill and Balingup Hill and a general upgrade of the South Western Highway; and
  - (d) urgently state its position on the proposal for the establishment of a new heavy haulage bypass route around Bridgetown.

**MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie-Wellington)** [7.50 pm]: It is interesting that, since we last debated this matter, there has continued to be carnage on the roads in the south west. Only this week a truck rolled over on South Western Highway when there was not another car on the road. We need to look at why that is occurring. Some members in this house have said that the problem is the road conditions in the south west of the state. I believe we need to look a bit further. We need to make a plan for the overall area, not just the small and narrow bit of road on the South Western Highway between Bunbury and Kirup, because the accidents are happening everywhere. The Auditor General has made some comments in his report about this matter.

*Point of Order*

**Mr P.D. OMODEI:** Mr Acting Speaker, this is a very important matter. I cannot hear what the member for Collie-Wellington is saying.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr J.R. Quigley):** Order, members! The level of noise in the chamber is too high for me to hear also. Would members please lower their voices, or take their conversations outside.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. There has certainly been an increase in the amount of freight that is being transported by road in the south west, in some areas by up to 30 or 40 per cent. I have been talking to some people from Mitchell's Livestock Transport. It is not only woodchip trucks that are causing a problem. Many other different types of transport are also causing a problem. In a few weeks, the livestock industry will be holding a conference in Busselton. I am looking forward to going to that conference. The people in the livestock industry are talking about changing the configuration of their trucks, because they believe they can make their trucks even longer - that will concern some people - and a bit lower, and they will be able to carry the same tare load but will be far safer on the roads. They intend to put a case forward for their industry, because they believe their industry is different from the woodchip industry, the coal industry and the general freight industry. A lot of work needs to be done to make sure there are good standards for the transport of goods by road. The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure is doing some good work on the logs on rail project. That will take a reasonable amount of timber traffic off the roads. However, people forget that a large amount of other freight is also being carried on the roads, so even if the logs are carried by rail, that will just balance out the increase in the amount of other freight that is being carried on the roads. The roads will not be fixed in a day.

All the industries need to work together, and with the minister and the department, to make the roads safer for all road users.

Members may have seen the photographs in the paper this week of the coal truck that travelled 400 metres before the driver was able to stop it. Something must have gone drastically wrong. No-one else was involved in that accident, so either the driver was not aware of what was going on, or the gear failed. I appreciate that the police are working a lot harder to pick up people who are exceeding the limits. A lot of work orders have been put out on the trucks. However, the problem is not only the trucks. It is also the people. People are becoming impatient and are jumping the queue and cutting off other drivers. Another major problem these days is that people are trying to beat the trucks to the end of the overtaking lanes. I take my hat off to Main Roads. Recently I attended a public meeting in Donnybrook, along with representatives of the Shire of Donnybrook and Main Roads, and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning. Main Roads explained at that public meeting that it has been doing a safety audit on that notorious stretch of South Western Highway. I am not sure when that audit will be finished. However, that shows that people are taking action and progress is being made. Moneys are needed to upgrade that road. It is probably a 10-year plan. In saying that, the federal government also needs to come to the party and give us a hand, because these are national transport routes.

**Mr P.D. Omodei:** No, they are not. They are not part of the AusLink road route at all. The AusLink road route finishes at Bunbury.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** The member might not have been listening earlier when I said that the problem not only starts and finishes with that section of road between Bunbury and Kirup.

**Mr P.D. Omodei:** It is a state responsibility.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** I am saying it is an overall problem, not just a select problem.

**Mr A.D. McRae:** If the federal government had given Western Australia its fair share of road freight funding, as compared with the less than six per cent of the national pie that we got -

**Mr P.D. Omodei:** It was 15 per cent.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Order, members! I am interested in the remarks of the member for Collie-Wellington.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. We are doing what I had been hoping we would not be doing; that is, we are having a political bunfight. This is about safety and people's lives.

**Mr P.D. Omodei:** It is about the Labor Party misleading the people in the south west. That is what it is about.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** It is starting to sound a bit familiar. As I have said, this issue is about safety and people's lives.

**Mr P.D. Omodei** interjected.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Here he goes again! Perhaps the member for Warren-Blackwood should do what he did during the milk inquiry. He made a lot of noise but did not turn up to the meetings.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! The Chair wants to hear, and the house wants to hear, the remarks of the member for Collie-Wellington. I will not countenance this argument across the chamber between other members.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Thank you again, Mr Acting Speaker. Point scoring will not fix the problem. It is about working this through and making sure our roads are safe. The problem is not only the increase in the amount of vehicle traffic. It is also the increase in the number of people who are living in the area, and the number of tourists. Recently an email came through to me with photographs of a caravan that had come out of a side track and had been completely cleaned up by a truck. We need to take into account the interaction between the local people, the tourists and the trucking industry. We need to educate people. I am glad to see that the speed limit has been reduced for a trial period. However, I do not think that alone is the answer to the problem, although it might be part of the answer. The trial is a wise move. From my experience, I believe we must consider some of the trailer configurations attached to the trucks. Not many straight semitrailers tip over. Most of the trucks that tip over are pulling another trailer at the time. Many arguments have been made by various people within the industry about the height and length of the last trailer involved in an accident.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.