

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 14th November, 1957.

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QUESTIONS.

BULK GRAIN BIN.

Provision at Jerramungup.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Is it correct that it is the opinion of Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. that the responsibility for providing funds for the provision of a bulk grain bin at or near Jerramungup is that of the Government?

(2) If so, has the Government decided to provide the funds necessary?

(3) In either case, when is it likely that this very urgent work will be put in hand?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The Government is prepared to discuss with Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. means of financing the construction of a bin when necessary.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) The whole question of handling and transport of grains east of Ongerup is under review.

PUBLIC SERVICE.

Long-service Leave Entitlement of Senior Officers.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Premier:

What are the names of the senior public servants with a long-service leave entitlement in excess of three months, giving in each instance the respective period of leave due?

The PREMIER replied:

H. W. Byfield—12 months.

K. J. Townsing—6 months.

F. J. E. K. Wright—9 months, less two months taken.

A. D. Hynam—9 months.

R. B. MacKenzie—6 months.

R. H. Doig—9 months.

R. B. Brigdale—9 months.

W. V. Fyfe—6 months.

H. Camm—9 months, less two months.

A. H. Telfer—9 months.

L. W. Samuel—9 months, less one month.

L. Henzell—6 months, less one month taken.

E. J. T. Thompson—6 months.

R. H. Miller—6 months.

A. J. Fraser—6 months.

A. E. Clare—12 months.

W. L. Green—6 months.

G. S. Lindsay—9 months, less two months.

F. M. Kenworthy—9 months.

G. F. Mathea—6 months.

T. L. Robertson—6 months.

J. A. McCall—9 months.

A. L. Young—6 months.

G. K. Baron Hay—12 months.

T. C. Dunne—9 months.

H. E. Smith—12 months less two months.

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

NATIVE WELFARE.

(a) *Well 40 Natives, Source of Information re Food.*

Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

From what source is the "information" mentioned by him in reply to the question relative to the supply of food to natives in the Well 40 area, asked by me in the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday, the 13th November, 1957, being sought?

The MINISTER replied:

From the district officer of the Native Welfare Department at Derby and/or the Commonwealth Department of Supply.

(b) *Well 40 Area, Blood Test of Natives Evacuated.*

Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

Is it possible at this stage to test the blood taken from the two natives evacuated from the Well 40 area for the purpose of determining the serum protein figures?

The MINISTER replied:

No.

TRAFFIC OFFENDERS.

Scale of Fines, etc.

Mr. GAFFY asked the Minister for Justice:

Is there a scale of fines for traffic offenders, particularly first offenders for speeding, or is it left to the discretion of the magistrate?

The MINISTER replied:

Not generally, but in respect of the more serious offences there is a scale for first and subsequent offences, e.g., drunken driving, reckless or dangerous driving, driving without a licence and unlawfully assuming control. Most of the offences are prescribed by regulation. Generally, the regulations prescribe a maximum fine of £20 and the amount of the fine is left to the discretion of the court, except in the case of minor offences. Offences for speeding are dealt with under the regulations, the maximum fine being £20.

TRANSPORT.

(a) *Alteration and Deletion of Bus Stops.*

Mr. GAFFY asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) What is the reason for altering the bus stops on bus routes through Collier, Como, Manning and Salters Point?

(2) Have any bus stops on any of these routes been deleted?

(3) Where bus stops were adjacent to shop verandahs and are now in the open, will shelters be erected?

(4) Will the terrain surrounding the new bus stops be cleared of sand, etc., and made clean and firm?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Stops are being re-located remote from road junctions and intersections to permit better traffic flow.

(2) Regular spacing of stops at reasonable intervals is aimed at. In places this has involved the deletion of some stops where stops were unnecessarily close to one another.

(3) Advantage is taken of existing shelter such as shop verandahs where practicable but shop verandahs situated close to road junctions or intersections cannot be used for this purpose. Shelters cannot be provided at every stop and in selecting sites, regard is had to those stops catering for the greatest number of people. Primarily, the responsibility for the provision of shelters is that of the local authority.

(4) This is a matter for the local authority.

(b) *Interstate Operators, Taxation Legislation.*

Mr. EVANS asked the Treasurer:

Further to my question of the 10th September, 1957, relative to interstate road hauliers' taxation legislation, can he please state if an examination has yet been made of the Victorian legislation and the appropriate High Court ruling?

The TREASURER replied:

Now that the Privy Council has decided the appeal and the legislation is valid, an examination of the legislation will proceed.

(c) *Check on Illicit Road Haulage, North-Eastern Goldfields.*

Mr. O'BRIEN asked the Minister for Transport:

What provision exists whereby any illicit haulage of goods by road transport between Kalgoorlie and northern country towns, such as Menzies, Leonora and Laverton, can be checked?

The MINISTER replied:

Arrangements have been made for periodic patrols north of Kalgoorlie. In addition, the Railways Commission has instructed its staff to report apparent breaches of the Act.

STATE FINANCES.

Details of Interest, Federal Grants, etc.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Treasurer:

For the years 1947-48 to date, what are the amounts of—

(a) Interest and sinking fund;

(b) Commonwealth grants;

(c) item (b) less item (a);

(d) item (c) adjusted by movements of "C" series index over the period?

The TREASURER replied:

Year	Interest and Sinking Fund	Commonwealth Grant	Excess of Commonwealth Grant over Interest and Sinking Fund	Expressed at 1947/48 Price Levels
	£	£	£	£
1947/48	4,044,269	2,977,000	1,067,269a	1,067,269a
1948/49	4,107,724	3,600,000	507,724a	457,409a
1949/50	4,254,104	5,618,000	1,363,896	1,115,205
1950/51	4,497,049	5,839,000	1,341,951	965,432
1951/52	4,870,602	5,068,000	217,398	128,638
1952/53	5,305,493	8,041,000	2,735,507	1,466,760
1953/54	6,073,652	7,800,000	1,726,348	878,549
1954/55	6,928,473	7,450,000	521,527	248,820
1955/56	7,725,391	8,900,000	1,174,609	644,809
1956/57	8,521,300	9,200,000	678,700	301,544

a Shortage—i.e. Interest and Sinking Fund exceed Commonwealth Grant.

PENSIONERS.

Concession Fares on Government Transport.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) How do pensioners who are not in possession of a pension card establish an entitlement to fare concessions on Government transport?

(2) In cases where medical entitlement cards cover two pensioners, being husband and wife, how does the wife establish entitlement to fare concession when travelling at a different time or to a different destination to her husband?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) If in possession of a hospital entitlement certificate, a special card is issued by the Railway Department on the authority of the Social Services Department.

(2) This question is being examined.

RAILWAYS.

(a) New Diesel Cars, Points for Electric Razors.

Mr. EVANS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

Is it intended that facilities will be incorporated in the new diesel railcars to be built at the Midland Junction Railway Workshops, for the purpose of allowing passengers to use electric razors.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

It is not anticipated that travellers on suburban railcars will be shaving en route?

(b) Facilities for Electric Razors, Westland Coaches.

Mr. EVANS (without notice) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

Will he state whether facilities will be made available on the new Westland coaches for those passengers who wish to use electric razors?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No, but if the hon. member cares to place his question on the notice paper, I will find out what the Minister for Railways knows about it.

Mr. Cornell: The answer is to buy safety razors.

"C" SERIES INDEX.

Details of Commodity Prices.

Mr. EVANS asked the Minister for Labour:

Can he please advise details of price movements for commodities and services, etc. reflected in the "C" series (cost of living) index, for the last quarter for the—

(a) South-West Land Division;

(b) Goldfields areas?

The MINISTER replied:

The precise information sought by the hon. member is not available, but it may assist him to know that the "C" series index for the September quarter, as applied to the basic wage, indicated the following movements:

(a) South-West Land Division:

Food and groceries—Increase of 5d.

Rent—Increase of 4d.

Clothing—Increase of 4d.

Miscellaneous—Increase of 5d.

Net increase—1s. 6d.

(b) Goldfields areas:

Food and groceries—Decrease of 2s. 6d.

Rent—Increase of 5d.

Clothing—Increase of 7d.

Miscellaneous—Increase of 3d.

Net decrease—1s. 3d.

WATER SUPPLIES.

Detailed Consumption Accounts.

Mr. EVANS asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

Further to my question of Wednesday, the 11th September, 1957, relative to water supply consumption details, can he please state whether the department has yet reviewed the matter of reintroduction of detailed water consumption accounts?

The MINISTER replied:

Investigations, which are well advanced, are still proceeding.

KANGAROOS.

Royalty on Grey Skins.

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Fisheries:

What is the reason for the retention of the royalty on grey kangaroo skins in the South-West now that an open season has been declared in respect of these animals, which are recognised by the Agriculture Protection Board as pests?

The MINISTER replied:

A proposal to abolish royalty on grey kangaroo skins in areas where the species was not protected was considered by Cabinet last year. It was decided that the slight benefit which might accrue to individuals taking and selling skins would not justify the loss of revenue that would result, and the additional administrative difficulties it would create.

CITY OF PERTH.

Land for Parking.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Has finality been reached on the land to be made available to the City of Perth for its parking scheme?

(2) If not, which sites are not finalised, and what is delaying finality?

(3) Which sites are finalised?

(4) When will each site be completed, and brought into use?

(5) Will the use of meters coincide in each case with the commencing use of sites?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) It is expected that the City Council will reach a decision at its meeting next Monday with respect to the Government's recent negotiations.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) (i) The area south of Christian Brothers College;

(ii) the area south of the western rotary of the Causeway.

(4) The area referred to in No. (3) (i) is almost completed. Work has commenced on the area referred to in No. (3) (ii) and it is anticipated the council will authorise work on the Wellington-st. and Mill-st. areas at its meeting next Monday.

(5) It is intended that meters will be used simultaneously with the completion of the four areas referred to.

LAPORTE INDUSTRIES LTD.

Tabling of File re Establishment at Bunbury.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Premier:

(1) Has the Government ascertained whether Laporte Industries Limited (London) and its Australian associates, Laporte Chemicals (Australia) Pty. Ltd., Sydney, has any objection to laying on the Table of the House all departmental files dealing with the negotiations to date regarding the establishment of its industry in Bunbury?

(2) If not, will the approach be made and then if the companies are agreeable, will he lay the appropriate files on the Table of the House?

The PREMIER replied:

The company is not agreeable to the publicising of the departmental files.

HOUSING.

Relieving Shortage, Bunbury.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) In view of the present acute shortage of houses in the Bunbury area, will he—

(a) during the remainder of this financial year allocate to Bunbury homes additional to those already allocated;

(b) ensure that, compared with this financial year's programme, there will be a marked increase in the allocation of homes to Bunbury under the various schemes during the next financial year?

(2) If not, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) As loan funds for 1956-57 have been fully committed with the present programme, the number of homes to be erected at Bunbury cannot be increased.

A recent detail survey of applications indicated that the present programme plus an annual vacancy rate of about 35 existing houses, will reasonably cope with the outstanding applications.

(b) The 1957-58 programme will depend on the funds made available and the needs of Bunbury in comparison with other areas, in addition to which, owing to a 50 per cent. greater allocation to building societies from funds made available, it is likely that the commission will have a reduced programme for 1957-58.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

ROADS.

Resurveying Perth-Albany Highway, etc.

Mr. NALDER asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What progress, if any, is being made in resurveying the Perth-Albany Highway?

(2) Is it intended to construct a new road, thus allowing for two-way traffic, or widening of the present road?

(3) Is it correct that the survey is intended to extend from Armadale to the Denmark-rd. turn-off at Albany?

(4) What is the distance?

(5) When will the work on road construction begin?

(6) What is the estimated cost of resummptions?

(7) What is the estimated cost of the survey?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Resumption surveys to provide a widened road reserve are being carried out from time to time by the Lands and Surveys Department.

(2) Progressive widening of the existing road pavement is being undertaken.

(3) Between the limits of Armadale and the Denmark-rd. turn-off, widening of the road reserve is, and will continue to be, implemented where necessary.

(4) Length of the resumptions has not been determined.

(5) Answered by No. (2).

(6) and (7) Sufficient information is not available to provide estimates of the cost of resumptions and surveys.

STATE FORESTS.

Applications for Alienation for Agriculture.

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Lands:

On the 12th November last, the Minister for Forests indicated, in answer to a question, that an area of 321,000 acres was at present under consideration by the State land utilisation committee for inclusion in State forest. What area of this 321,000 acres is the subject of applications for alienation for agricultural purposes and what is the number of such applications?

The MINISTER replied:

Many inquiries for vacant Crown land are received in the Lands Department. It is not possible to say what proportion of such inquiries refer to areas comprising the 321,000 acres which the Minister for Forests indicated in November last were under consideration by the land utilisation committee.

POLICE PROSECUTIONS.

Recovery of Legal Expenses.

Mr. EVANS asked the Minister for Justice:

(1) Further to my question of the 13th November, in how many instances since 1948, have costs been allowed to the respondent in the case of appeals brought by the police, under the provisions of Section 219 of the Justices Act, 1902-1948?

(2) Apart from the provision under Section 219 of the Justices Act, 1902-1948, should not costs be allowable against the police when the latter are unsuccessful in appeals brought by them?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) One.

(2) No. Costs should always remain in the discretion of the court and the proviso to Section 219 of the Justices Act, 1902-1948, extends the power to award costs even to an unsuccessful respondent in certain cases. Prior to the amending Act of 1948, costs were not allowable against a police officer, whether the appeal by him under the Justices Act was successful or otherwise.

AGENT GENERAL.

Date of Appointment.

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Premier:

I have here an invitation from the Lord Mayor who states—

You will know that in a few days Mr. Hoar is leaving for England to assume the office of Agent General for Western Australia.

I did not know that.

The Minister for Lands: Neither did I.

Hon. D. BRAND: I was not talking to the Minister. I would like to know from the Premier on what date the hon. gentleman will take up his official duties as Agent General in London?

The PREMIER replied:

It was with considerable surprise that I received an invitation similar to the one just referred to by the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. D. Brand: I thought it would be.

The PREMIER: No date has yet been decided upon for the departure of the Minister for Lands and Agriculture, the Agent General-elect for Western Australia in London, from Perth.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

The PREMIER: I move—

That on and after Wednesday, the 20th November, Government business shall take precedence of all motions and Orders of the Day on Wednesdays as on all other days.

I do not think it is necessary to speak in support of this motion. It is well understood and I anticipate that it will receive unanimous support. An opportunity will be given to private members who still have business on the notice paper to have a vote recorded on their respective items.

Hon. D. BRAND: We are anxious to co-operate in this regard so long as private members' business still on the notice paper is to be considered in a reasonable time, and at a reasonable time, and that some regard will be given for any special business which they might want to bring forward to the Parliament of Western Australia from time to time. I think that is quite in order, and is certainly justified because private members of this House should be given reasonable consideration in regard to any special measures which they desire to bring forward.

I imagine that in view of the two motions recently passed in connection with the expedition of business in this House, the Premier may be in a position to say whether we will be sitting on Friday, or any Friday between now and the target date.

The PREMIER (in reply): It is not intended to ask members to sit on Friday of this week; but they will be asked to sit on Friday of the following week and, if the House is still in session, on Friday of the week after that, if necessary.

Question put and passed.

BILLS (2)—RETURNED.

- 1, Noxious Weeds Act Amendment.
 - 2, Basil Murray Co-operative Memorial Scholarship Fund Act Amendment.
- Without amendment.

BILL CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Third Reading.

MR. JAMIESON (Beeloo) [2.35]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

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

Ayes	26
Noes	21
Majority for	5

Ayes.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Lapham
Mr. Brady	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Evans	Mr. Moir
Mr. Gaffy	Mr. Norton
Mr. Graham	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Hall	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Potter
Mr. Heal	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Toms
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Sewell

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Ackland	Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Bovell	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Brand	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Owen
Mr. Court	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Crommelin	Mr. Roberts
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Wild
Mr. Mann	Mr. I. Manning
Mr. W. Manning	

(Teller.)

The SPEAKER: As this Bill requires an absolute majority, I have counted the House and assured myself that there is an absolute majority in favour of the measure. Therefore, I declare the question carried.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—METROPOLITAN (PERTH) PASSENGER TRANSPORT TRUST.

In Committee.

Mr. Moir in the Chair; the Minister for Transport in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 7—agreed to.

Clause 8—Appointments to offices:

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: With one exception, the amendments appearing in my name are in conformity with the recommendations of the joint select committee which delivered its report two days ago. If I might mention that one exception, it has to do with the removal of a member of the trust. The first of my amendments deals with the appointment of the initial members. The Bill provides for five-yearly appointments of members of the trust but in order that there shall be some system retained, rather than have all their terms expiring at the same time, the proposal is that the chairman shall be appointed for seven years, the first member for six years, and the second member for five years for their initial appointment, and thereafter five-yearly. All the amendments to provisions appearing on page 5 of the Bill deal with that principle, and I feel that the wisdom of it is obvious. I move an amendment—

That after the subclause designation "(5)" in line 8, page 5, the paragraph designation "(a)" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

On motions by the Minister for Transport, clause further amended by—

Inserting after the word "expires" in line 9, page 5, the words ", subject to paragraph (b) of this subsection,";

Inserting after the word "term" in line 13, page 5, the following to stand as paragraph (b):—

The respective terms of tenure of office of the persons first appointed to office on the Trust expire by effluxion of time—

(i) in the case of Chairman—at the expiration of seven years;

(ii) in the case of second member—at the expiration of six years; and

(iii) in the case of third member—at the expiration of five years,

commencing on the day specified in the notice of the appointment published in "Gazette" as the commencing day of the term.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: We now commence a whole series of amendments dealing with the removal of a member of the trust. If one such is found to be unsatisfactory, there is a course to be followed on parallel and identical lines with what was set down in the recent amendment to the Railways Act. That is to say, instead of the Government having to receive the approval of Parliament to a dismissal or compulsory retirement, it will take effect if the relative papers are laid on the Table of both Houses of Parliament for a period of six sitting days, and unless there be a resolution determining

otherwise, the suspension becomes automatic and the person is removed from office. I move an amendment—

That the words "is removed" in line 15, page 6, be struck out and the words "having been suspended from office on the Trust" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

On motions by Minister for Transport, clause further amended by—

Inserting after the word "Governor" in line 15, page 6, the words "is not restored to office on the Trust";

adding after the word "Parliament" in line 16, page 6, the words "pursuant to section fourteen of this Act."

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 9 to 13—agreed to.

Clause 14—Suspension and removal of members of the Trust:

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: The next dozen or so amendments will complete the operation of the suspension of a member of the trust from office. I move an amendment—

That the word "declares" in line 29, page 7, be struck out and the words "does not" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

On motions by Minister for Transport, clause further amended by—

Inserting after the word "resolution" in line 29, page 7, the word "declare";

striking out the words "removal from" in line 30, page 7, and inserting the words "restored to" in lieu;

striking out the words "Governor shall cause" in line 31, page 7;

striking out the words "to be removed from" in line 31, page 7, and inserting the words "shall be restored to" in lieu;

striking out the word "accordingly" in line 32, page 7;

striking out the words "does not so declare" in line 33, page 7, and inserting the words "by resolution declares that the member should be restored to office on the Trust" in lieu;

striking out the words "cancel the suspension and thereupon" in lines 33 and 34, page 7, and inserting the word "cause" in lieu;

striking out the word "shall" in line 34, page 7, and inserting the word "to" in lieu;

striking out the words "during the period of" in line 36, page 7, and inserting the words "On and from the day of the" in lieu;

striking out the words "but if the suspension is cancelled, he is entitled to salary for the period of the suspension" in lines 38 and 39, page 7, and

inserting the words "unless each House of Parliament declares otherwise" in lieu.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 15 to 22—agreed to.

Clause 23—Functions of the Trust:

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: The next several amendments are to embrace within the scope of the Bill the ferry services which might be conducted under the Western Australian Tramways and Ferries Act. When introducing the Bill, I think I mentioned that there was so much concentration upon the road services that the isolated little link of waterway service in the metropolitan area was overlooked. It is in order to repair that damage that the next several amendments are being submitted. In order to give effect to a commonsense decision, I move an amendment—

That after the word "area" in line 19, page 10, the words "and if necessary by ferry services on ferry service routes in that area" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 24—agreed to.

Clause 25—Powers generally of the trust:

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I move an amendment—

That after the word "and" in line 22, page 12, the following be inserted to stand as paragraph (b) of Sub-clause (2):—

power to acquire Government ferries provided, maintained and worked under the Western Australian Government Tramways and Ferries Act, 1948; and

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: The next amendment is consequential and involves only the alteration of a designation. I move an amendment—

That the designation "(b)" in line 23, page 12, be struck out and the designation "(c)" be inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: The next amendment involves a new principle. Where there is a limited liability company, it is proposed that subject to certain action being taken by the company—which action is based on somewhat similar provisions in the Companies Act—the company concerned, being the property of one of these bus operators, may require the trust to take over the business. If the holders of not less than four-fifths of the shares in that company so determine, the trust shall take over that business, or the portion belonging to

those shareholders, being not less than four-fifths in value of the shares by the acquisition of the shares.

This step will impose no burden on the trust itself, but it will give an advantage to the affected people by way of taxation. There is no need for me to go into detail in respect of that matter. It is the wish and the desire of the Government that there should be as fair and as reasonable treatment of the bus operators as the circumstances warrant. If it is possible, without detriment, to do anything that will improve their position under the new circumstances after their businesses have been taken over, then the Government will be only too happy to be accommodating. Again this proposition is one of the recommendations of the joint select committee. I move an amendment—

That after the figures "1895" in line 23, page 13, the following be inserted to stand as Subclause (5):—

(a) In this subsection, unless the context requires otherwise—

"proprietor company" means a limited liability company which is proprietor of an undertaking mentioned in paragraph (a) of subsection (2) of this section; and

"shares" means all of the shares in the subscribed share capital of the proprietor and includes stock.

(b) Where a contract for the transfer of the shares in a proprietor company to the Trust within three years after service of notice on the Trust to acquire the shares, is approved by the holders of not less than four-fifths in value of the shares,

- (i) the proprietor shall serve on the Trust written notice to acquire the shares within three years after service of the notice;
- (ii) the Trust shall by written notice served on the proprietor company, acquire the shares within three years after the service of the notice;
- (iii) the shares when acquired by the Trust shall for the purpose of this Act be deemed to have been acquired by agreement, but if any question arises relating to the acquisition, including any question as to the consideration payable for the shares, the question shall, subject to subparagraph (iv) of this paragraph, be settled by arbitration; and

(iv) the provisions of section one hundred and sixty of the Companies Act, 1943 apply *mutatis mutandis* in respect of the acquisition for which purposes, the proprietor company shall be deemed to be "the transferor company" mentioned in that section; the Trust shall be deemed to be "the transferee company" mentioned in that section; and the Trust may give to any dissenting shareholder notice under that section that it desires to acquire his shares at any time within two months after the expiration of the day on which the Trust serves on the proprietor company the written notice referred to in subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph; but the provisions of this subparagraph do not prejudice the power of the Trust to acquire the shares of a dissenting shareholder by compulsory acquisition under this Act.

Amendment put and passed.

On motion by the Minister for Transport, clause further amended by striking out the subclause designation "(5)" in line 24 and inserting in lieu the subclause designation "(6)."

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 26 and 27—agreed to.

Clause 28—Interest on compensation:

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: When introducing the Bill, I explained the basis of payment of interest, which was to be 1 per cent. in excess of the long-term bond rate. This is to be adjusted annually. That formed the basis of discussions and preliminary drafts of the Bill; and I was somewhat astounded subsequently, on being questioned by the member for Blackwood, to find that the Bill as printed did not contain that provision, which was the basis of negotiations and the understanding between the bus operators and myself. I think the circumstances were explained when the Bill was introduced; and the joint select committee agreed that the damage should be repaired. I move an amendment—

That the words "of the compulsory acquisition" in lines 11 and 12, page 18, be struck out with a view to inserting in lieu the words, "when the interest payable under this Act is paid".

Amendment (to strike out words) put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I move an amendment—

That the words proposed to be inserted be inserted.

Perhaps I should explain that the original conception was that on a certain day—say, the 1st July each year—there should be a review. But it could be that the interest payments would be made on some date different from that. In any event, whatever the intervals they will not be less frequent than annually; and it is proposed, as a matter of machinery, that the adjustment up or down shall be made at the time of the regular payment of interest.

Amendment (to insert words) put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 29 to 32—agreed to.

Clause 33—Assessment of compensation:

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: The Deputy Under Treasurer, when appearing before the joint select committee, expressed the opinion that there was some redundancy of words; that to a very great extent the same matters were being expressed in different phrases over and over again. Later on, when the president of the Omnibus Proprietors' Association came back on the second occasion, questions were asked of him in connection with this matter, and he agreed that no injustice would be done if what were regarded as superfluous words were deleted. The committee recommended accordingly. I move an amendment—

That the words "loss of profits, loss of income on reinvestment of capital and," in lines 18 and 19, page 21, be struck out.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 34 to 54—agreed to.

Clause 55—Profit and loss:

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I move an amendment—

That the words "Treasurer directs" in line 18, page 43, be struck out and the words, "Trust determines" inserted in lieu.

It will be recalled that one of the recommendations of the joint select committee was that profits which might be made by the trust should not automatically or possibly be lost to it—that is to say, be paid into Consolidated Revenue—but that after meeting any outstanding or accumulated losses or other debts incurred with the Treasury, the moneys should be placed into the trust's own funds to be used for its own purposes. The amendment gives effect to that. This gives further emphasis to what appeared to be the general desire of members. It removes still a little further any suggestion of ministerial or political control or influence.

Amendment put and passed.

On motion by the Minister for Transport clause further amended by—

Striking out the word "direct" in line 19, page 43, and inserting the word "determine" in lieu;

striking out the words "which in the opinion of the Treasurer" in lines 24 and 25, page 43, and inserting the words, "after providing for any accrued losses and after payment of all current liabilities due and payable by the trust" in lieu;

striking out the words "Consolidated Revenue Fund" in line 27, page 43, and inserting the words "Trust into the Account." in lieu.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 56 to 79—agreed to.

New Clause:

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I move—

That after line 8, page 51, the following new clause be inserted:—

Division 4.—Exemption.

79. The State Transport Co-ordination Act, 1933, does not apply to the Trust or any of its functions.

The joint select committee, which recommended this course, felt that if the trust was worthy of its responsibilities—there is no reason to doubt that it will be—it would know best what should be done regarding fares, time-tables and routes, and so it would be ludicrous for it to have to make submissions to an outside body not so well qualified or experienced.

The opinion was also expressed—as against the initial one—that a body exercising a virtual monopoly should have some control over it. There is such a thing as buyer resistance, and a falling off of patronage would be the last thing any bus operator would desire. Also, in an extreme case it would be possible for Parliament to have another look at the legislation.

With regard to the routes to be followed by the operating authority, naturally there would be consultation and the greatest possible co-ordination with the metropolitan passenger rail services. Before being permitted to operate services along routes in new areas, there would have to be consultation and agreement with the local authority and the traffic authorities, to determine whether the road was sufficiently wide and strong to carry the heavy vehicles and so on.

I do not think there would be any difficulty over time-tables, as the trust would provide the best and most frequent services that the economics of the situation warranted. As it will be operating all services, I have no doubt it will provide reasonable services in areas where there is not, from an economic or financial standpoint, sufficient traffic to pay for the venture. In other words, such services will be subsidised by

the better paying ones. This new clause, if agreed to, will represent a vote of confidence in the trust and demonstrate our belief that it will handle this matter efficiently and without the necessity of any other organisation interfering or vetting its activities.

Again—and this ties up with the whole theme of the Bill—the Transport Co-ordination Act and, under it, the Transport Board, are subject to the Minister and so it would be possible to exercise quite a measure of political control over the trust through the Minister for Transport, but if we removed the trust from the operations of that statute entirely, such a course will not be possible.

New clause put and passed.

Schedule:

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I move an amendment—

That after the word "created" in line 1 of paragraph (a) of Clause 1 of the schedule the words "and registered by the trust shall bear interest, subject to" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I move an amendment—

That after paragraph (b) on page 53 the following new paragraph be added:—

(c) The Trust may purchase any of the debentures or inscribed stock.

This could be a double-edged sword, but with advantages, because if the stock or debentures are quoted on the open market at less than par that would present the trust with an opportunity, if it had sufficient financial resources, to acquire some of its own debentures, or in other words, to part-purchase some of the bus operators at less than the assessed compensation. It would benefit to that extent, and also to the extent that it would save in interest payments.

On the other hand—and this perhaps more particularly inspired the committee after hearing representations from the Omnibus Proprietors' Association—if there were circumstances such that there was a depreciation of this inscribed stock or debentures, the mere fact of the trust purchasing some of them on the open market would tend to increase their value on that market and so give greater stability to the debentures or stock, and in case any of the holders wished to dispose of them there would then be no loss, or a much lower loss than would otherwise be the case. This is a mutually satisfactory arrangement which should, perhaps, have been thought of earlier.

Amendment put and passed; the schedule, as amended, agreed to.

Title:

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I move an amendment—

That after the word "Streets" in line 5 of the long title, the words, "and by Ferry Services on Ferry-Service Routes," be inserted.

That amendment is necessary in order to make the title fit the Bill as it now reads, by including the ferry services.

Amendment put and passed; the Title, as amended, agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments and an amendment to the Title, and the report adopted.

BILL—SWAN RIVER CONSERVATION.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. T. Tonkin—Melville) [3.33] in moving the second reading said: The matter of river pollution is one of considerable concern in various parts of the world and in our beautiful Swan River we have a wonderful heritage and we ought to take steps as quickly as possible to preserve it. In other countries steps have been taken for this purpose, but none have been taken in Australia, so the Bill which is now before the House is unique in that regard.

Industrial pollution contributes the greatest amount of stream degradation and prohibition of serious pollution from new sources must begin immediately. We should also take such steps as are economically possible to remove existing sources of pollution.

For very many years people thought that something ought to be done to set up a statutory body with the necessary power to look after the Swan River, but nothing has ever been done in that connection. We have had appointed several advisory bodies which have done very good work, but it has not been completely effective because those bodies lacked executive power. I find that back in 1949, during an inspection of the Swan River with the then Minister for Works, I had something to say in this connection about the Swan. I quote now from the file on the matter under the date of the 2nd March, 1949, where it is recorded—

Mr. Tonkin saw, however, the necessity for an overriding authority powerful enough to carry out necessary work on the river. There was need for somebody to declare what was offensive. If not, the time would come when the river would inevitably be in a very dirty state. The weakness in the past has been that certain things had happened which should not have

been allowed. There should be established a sub-committee with power to ascertain and determine where offences were committed and to undertake immediately remedial action.

Having given expression to those sentiments in 1949, I am very happy today to be in the position to present to this House legislation designed to do what I said was necessary then in the interests of this river.

Hon. D. Brand: Why did you take four years to do it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the Leader of the Opposition will check on his arithmetic, he will find that from 1949 to 1957 is eight years and not four years.

Hon. D. Brand: I mean that you have had four years in office as Minister for Works. What has been the difficulty?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Surely the Leader of the Opposition does not expect that everything which one desires to do can be accomplished in the first five minutes of being in office!

Hon. D. Brand: There is some difference between five minutes and four years.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member gives this matter any thought, he will know that almost from the time I took over the portfolio of Minister for Works, consideration has been given to what ought to be done effectively to deal with this situation. Last year I foreshadowed that legislation would be submitted. I had a report submitted by the Swan River Conservation Committee to prepare the ground for the reception of this legislation. It was necessary to have discussions with local authorities in order that they might familiarise themselves with our ideas and in order to get them on side with the Government, so that the financial aspect would be satisfactorily tied up.

All that activity cannot happen overnight, but happily we have now reached the stage where I am in a position to introduce this Bill. It was my desire to introduce it early in the session, but owing to the fact that the Under Secretary for Works—who had been very closely connected with the work which had been done and was familiar with my views on the subject—had to take his long-service leave, this delayed the preparation and early discussion in connection with the legislation, and I very much regret that this inadvertent delay has occurred.

The Bill might have been delayed until next session in order to give members an opportunity to consider the Bill for a longer period, but I felt that, being in a position now to introduce the Bill, if the House was prepared to accept it, 12 months would be gained. If it is not prepared to accept it and more time is required for its consideration, then the responsibility will be on Parliament and the matter can be deferred. However, it is my view that the

Bill will not be very controversial; that the principles contained in it will be generally acceptable. There might be some difference of opinion on detail which can easily be adjusted on discussion, but I am extremely confident that this legislation will receive general approval and that there will be little difficulty in securing its passage.

Before dealing with what is proposed in the Bill, I intend to give a short history of river pollution to show that it is not a problem which has recently developed. I find that complaints regarding river pollution date back as far as 1870, when a publication which is not now extant and which was called the "Inquirer and Commercial News," drew attention to the intolerable stench in the vicinity of Mill-st. and William-st. jetties. This was promptly cleaned up by an officer who was then known as the inspector of nuisances.

The Premier: Bring him up here!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He might be a good sort of officer to have around.

Mr. Oldfield: He could clean this place up.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Frequent Press references and official reports since those early days have indicated a recurring problem. There is ample evidence that flood waters bring down alluvial soil and fertilising agents—including nitrogen and phosphorus—in considerable quantities, so that increased agricultural development in the upper reaches produces in the river a richer nutrient medium for the growth of algae. We know the unsatisfactory conditions which follow from large accumulations of algae on our river beaches. The proposal for the appointment of a conservatory board with statutory powers was first made in 1922.

A conference was held in March, 1922, attended by members of Parliament, representatives of local government and aquatic clubs and of Government departments at which the Commissioner of Public Health urged the appointment of a conservancy board with statutory powers. Nothing eventuated from that meeting until 1943 when an advisory committee was set up. This is known as the Swan River Reference Committee and it is still operating in a voluntary capacity. Originally its deliberations covered such matters as foreshore maintenance and improvements, but later its field was enlarged in scope to cover all matters affecting conditions of the river.

This advisory committee, which is most valuable so far as its powers go, consists of representatives of local governing bodies, sporting bodies using the river, State and Commonwealth Departments responsible for river administration in some form and representatives of those departments able to make a contribution to the problem from the technical angle. The committee meets every two or three months and makes recommendations to the Minister for Works

on matters submitted by a sub-committee which arranges regular inspections and samplings of the river. The committee also considers matters submitted by the various Government departments which have to face problems of river control and development.

Unfortunately a weakness of this committee is that it has been without legislative backing. It is acting in an advisory capacity only and in itself lacks the power to take corrective action. Its members have done an excellent job over the years under difficult conditions and they have initiated action designed to remove causes of contamination and pollution. There is also in existence another honorary body known as the Swan River Conservation Committee. This committee comprises representatives of local governing bodies and other public bodies interested in the condition of the river. It holds regular meetings, makes inspections of the river and considers ways and means of improving river conditions.

Mr. Oldfield: Would that committee have a representative on this board?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member will be a little patient and take things in proper sequence, he will have an answer to his question in good time.

Sitting suspended from 3.46 to 4.5 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I was making some reference to the Swan River Conservation Committee, and I wish to place on record my appreciation of the excellent service which the members of that body have rendered to the community in a voluntary capacity. They have all been actuated by worthy motives, and they have given a great deal of time and attention to the problem of keeping the river in a satisfactory condition.

However, I repeat that one of the weaknesses of the existing position is that neither the Swan River Reference Committee nor the Swan River Conservation Committee has had other than advisory powers. It is as well to know what has already been accomplished to the end of looking after our river. Some people are of the opinion that very little has been done. On the contrary, very much has been done. Over the past few years the Government and the local authorities have had monthly chemical tests carried out and a close examination made of likely points of pollution.

Noxious trade wastes have been removed from stormwater drains and disposed of in sewers after suitable treatment. Other noxious wastes have been connected to septic tanks. Sewerage systems have been extended, thus reducing contamination from improperly functioning septic tanks, and financial assistance given to local authorities has assisted in the removal of algae from the foreshores.

An inspector has been continuously appointed to patrol the river, to locate troublesome areas, and to initiate action to remove promptly the offending weed or waste. This is all right as far as it goes, but it is not nearly adequate for the purpose we have in mind.

Although the Bill looks to be fairly large, it is comparatively small. When we take out the essential detail regarding the constitution of the board and its routine procedure in administration, we find that what is left is easily understandable and contains just a few basic principles. The aim of the measure is to improve and maintain the condition of the Swan River and to keep the waters free from pollution as far as is humanly possible. The Bill, in addition to being considered necessary by me and the department, has been asked for by a number of responsible public bodies and individuals. These public bodies agree in principle to the Bill and to several of the specific provisions contained in it.

I feel that whenever legislation is presented to the House, reasons justifying it should be advanced. Some legislation is presented because it is necessary to correct a mistake that has been made. Other legislation is introduced because it is in accordance with policy which the Government wants to implement. There are special reasons why this Bill is now before Parliament. If the advisory committees—the Swan River Conservation Committee and the Swan River Reference Committee; both admirable bodies—had been adequate, then there would be no need for this legislation. But they are not adequate because they lack statutory authority. It is in order to confer statutory authority upon some organisation that the Government feels legislation should be introduced.

So, in the first instance, there is a need for a central body to formulate a policy of river improvement and to co-ordinate the activities of a multiplicity of authorities having an interest in, and control over, river waters. Then, too, there is a need for a central body to determine what effluent or other matter can be allowed to go into the river; and if so, under what condition that effluent can be allowed to enter it. Thirdly, there is a need for some statutory power to prevent pollution nuisance and to prevent things being done on the foreshore which will render the river unsightly. Fourthly, there is the need for prompt action by a central body to clean the river beaches and remove decaying weed and algae.

The Swan River Reference Committee has, on the basis of a co-operative approach, achieved much already with regard to these objectives, but with the growth of population and industry, the time has undoubtedly come when this committee must be given legislative backing; and the Bill seeks to achieve this purpose.

The measure is based broadly on the recommendations of a special sub-committee of the Swan River Reference Committee, contained in an excellent report which was printed in 1955. This report has been supplied to members, and I commend it to them. It provides for the creation of a Swan River conservation board consisting of 15 members. At the outset, I admit that this is a somewhat larger committee than ordinarily I would favour because it is my experience that large committees are difficult bodies. As a rule they do not function efficiently, and the smaller such organisations are made, the better. But we must not lose sight of the fact that the Legislative Assembly is a committee of 50 members. When we go into Committee on a Bill, we have 50 members who are entitled to express their point of view.

Mr. Bovell: We have a wider range than the Swan River.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The reason we have 15 members here is because of the necessity to give adequate representation to the people whose views need to be expressed; and that is the sole reason for my introducing a Bill proposing an organisation with 15 members. It is because I cannot reduce the number and still give adequate and proper representation to those bodies and departments which, I feel, should be represented. As we proceed with a consideration of the Bill, I think members will appreciate that point.

To start with, it is necessary to have an independent chairman who will not be representative of any particular interest. The local authorities will be called upon to subscribe one-third of the cost of administration, and it is an old and very true saying, "No taxation without representation." So if local authorities are to provide a substantial part of the cost, they cannot be denied substantial representation. Therefore, it is proposed to give them six representatives, and they will include an engineer and a representative of the City of Perth.

The City of Perth is the largest municipality concerned in the matter, and it is felt that it should be entitled to a direct representative, and not be dependent upon general representation from local authorities. So of the six representatives of local authorities the Bill stipulates that one must be a representative of the City of Perth. I do not think that we can with advantage reduce that number.

Then it is proposed that there should be one representative of sporting bodies who use the river for recreational purposes. We could not give them less representation, unless we decided that they should not be represented at all; but I think their point of view ought to find expression because they have a very definite interest in the river.

A number of Government departments are very directly concerned. For example, there is the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department, which has to carry out extensive drainage works, and which already uses the river to some extent for its drainage works. It is essential that there should be somebody on the committee capable of presenting the department's point of view, because we must not lose sight of the fact that this Bill breaks new ground inasmuch as it gives this organisation the power to control Government departments as well as private individuals. Because it does, it is essential that Government departments shall have the opportunity of presenting their points of view before any decisions are made in connection with matters with which they are vitally concerned.

Then there is the Health Department. It is very essential that there should be somebody on the committee representative of that department and, quite naturally, a department like the Public Works Department, which is engaged in extensive constructive works, should have a representative on this important board. Also, one could not exclude the Harbour and Light Department, and as there is a matter of chemical analyses and a degree of pollution, it is desirable that there should be a representative of the Government Chemical Laboratories. The Lands and Surveys Department is very naturally concerned because it has the power to give or withhold leases of river foreshores. It is desirable that its point of view should find expression.

Then, of course, one could not for one moment think of excluding the Town Planning Board which must have a very sound contribution to make in all discussion involving the construction of river foreshores, and the use to be made of land contiguous thereto. So when one goes through the list which I have enumerated, I think one must agree that although at first sight the number appears to be somewhat large, it cannot reasonably be reduced.

The Bill provides that no polluting matter of any description which is likely to—

- (a) impair the physical, chemical or biological condition of the waters, or
- (b) adversely affect the cleanliness of the foreshores, or
- (c) adversely affect the waters or foreshores for navigational, recreational or other beneficial uses

—can be discharged into the waters, or along the foreshores, without the prior consent of the board. If consent is given, it shall be subject to such conditions as the board shall determine so that the board will have

complete power over the discharge of polluting matter into the river. This is a very onerous responsibility, but one which the board must accept because it is absolutely vital in any plan of river control and improvement.

We must regulate the quantity and quality of trade waste and other deleterious effluents and discharges which find their way into the river from time to time. The board is also empowered to remove algae and weed from shallows and river beaches. It is expressly provided in the Bill that in order to save expense and avoid duplication of equipment and services, the board shall co-operate with local authorities and Government departments. There is also provision in the Bill for parties who feel aggrieved because of some decision of the board to make an appeal to the Minister.

One can imagine that some trade establishment has planned to discharge an effluent into the river, and believes that it ought to have a perfect right to do so; but the board declines to give permission, or gives permission under conditions which the establishment considers onerous. Power is in the Bill, if such a circumstance occurs, for the establishment to be able to make an appeal to the Minister.

Mr. Crommelin: Will local authorities still be responsible for collecting algae from the foreshores?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. Use will be made of such equipment as they have to carry out the work; but it will be done in co-operation with the board and under mutually satisfactory conditions.

Mr. Crommelin: But will the owner of a river frontage be responsible for removing algae?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It depends upon the circumstances. If he is responsible for its being there, the answer is, "Yes."

Mr. Crommelin: Obviously he is not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is not, "obviously," because he might be doing something which is contributing to a prolific growth of algae in the vicinity.

Mr. Crommelin: That is so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is proposed to pay modest fees to the members of the conservation board, but not the advisory committee. The members of the Swan River Conservation Committee, and the Swan River Advisory Committee, up to now, have been rendering their services to the State voluntarily. But this board will have a very big responsibility, and it will have a considerable amount of work to do in carrying out inspections, especially when applications are made for permits to do certain things.

It is not considered reasonable that members of the board should be expected to give a lot of time without some remuneration; and so it is proposed to pay three guineas per meeting, with a maximum of 36 guineas in any one year, and £100 per annum to the chairman. Up to now, the members of the Swan River Advisory Committee, and the Swan River Conservation Committee, have laboured without even getting out-of-pocket expenses. One can only have admiration for them for the way they have stuck to their task, at considerable sacrifice to themselves, and without any remuneration whatever.

Mr. Ackland: Will that remuneration apply to the eight civil servants?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, to those nominated by their departments. The men who will represent those departments will not be the departmental heads, and the work done will be additional to the work they are required to carry out in the ordinary way.

Mr. Ackland: The work will not be done in office hours.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Have you made any preliminary estimate of the costs?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. We believe that in the early years the cost of administration will not exceed £5,000, of which the Government will find two-thirds and the local authorities one-third. It might, in subsequent years, according to the State's development and when we have 1,000,000 people in the metropolitan area, reach £10,000. But if the work is well done in the initial stages it should not become a very expensive matter to maintain the river in a clean condition. We are very fortunate inasmuch as we are tackling this question now, when it is comparatively easy to do so.

Other States have neglected to do it, and now they are reluctant to do it because of the great expense involved. In Western Australia, where development has not been as rapid as it has been elsewhere, we are in the fortunate position of being able to grapple with this problem before it becomes too expensive.

Mr. Crommelin: Will all the local authorities subscribe to the fund or only those whose boundaries front the river?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will explain as we go on and give the hon. member the basis of contribution. I decided, only after considerable thought, that a technical advisory committee should also be set up under the Bill, but the members of this committee will not receive any remuneration. They will be departmental officers who will be expected to tender their

advice on matters referred to them as part of their ordinary duty. This committee will consist of the following:—

Chairman of the body known as the Swan River Conservation Board.

Chief Engineer, Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department.

Commissioner of Public Health.

Director, Government Chemical Laboratory.

Director of Works.

Director, Industrial Development.

Director of Agriculture.

Commissioner of Main Roads, and

Member of the board being such one of the six persons representing on the board the interests of local authorities as is nominated from time to time, by the body known as the Local Government Association to represent those interests on the advisory committee.

So it will be left to the Local Government Association to select from one of its six representatives on the Conservation Board, one of those persons who will act on the advisory committee in conjunction with the heads of the various departments that I have enumerated. These public officers are highly skilled in their respective fields, and can render valuable assistance to the board on the multitude of technical aspects that will have to be considered, as well as in the general field of research.

The Bill sets out that it is the duty of the board to refer to the advisory committee any matters relating to standards. The conservation board will have to declare a standard in connection with effluent, for example; and before that declaration is made, it will be incumbent on the board to obtain the advice of the technical advisory committee with regard to what is a satisfactory standard to establish. A further advantage of the advisory committee is that it will take, and encourage the board to take, a reasonable and overall view of its responsibilities.

It must be remembered that the condition in which we seek to retain the river depends not only on what is desirable but also on what is practicable. I was somewhat surprised last evening to hear the member for Stirling say that what is practicable is a matter of opinion. That is an entirely new idea to me. I think that what is practicable is a question of fact. A thing is either practicable or it is not; it does not depend on one's opinion. One can either do it or one cannot, and however much one thinks one can do it, if one cannot, it is still not practicable. There might be a number of things one might like to do with regard to the river which might not be practicable.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Finance plays a big part.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. There may be a lot of things we feel we would like to do, but we find we cannot do them for one reason or another. Accordingly, it is a question that must be approached from that angle. There will always be the objective that we must do as much as is humanly possible to improve the river and maintain it in an improved condition, but it cannot all be done overnight. One thing we can do is to prevent new sources of pollution from occurring.

If there is no established business there already, we can prevent from being established one which wants to pour into the river effluent that would pollute it. It is easier to do that than to stop a business which is already operating, and which has been pouring effluent in for many years, because obviously a good deal of financial compensation is involved in cases of that nature, and remedial action might have to be deferred for some time. For example, we have a case like Mount Lyell Fertilisers, which has had a franchise to do certain things for many years.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: It has done more than it has the right to do.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That may be so, but I am only dealing with this aspect at the moment. It is much easier to take remedial action when a lease has expired by effluxion of time than to take it when it has 20 or 25 years longer to run. In the first instance no compensation would be involved, whereas in the latter the payment of considerable compensation might be necessary.

Hon. D. Brand: What other major problems associated with effluent from industry have you at the present time?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: As the hon. member knows, a few have been corrected already. We had some disturbing discharges from the gas works and the State Electricity Commission. Attention was drawn to them and remedial action taken. Then it was also established that some pollution was resulting from the abattoir at Midland Junction, and action was required there in connection with settling pits and so on, and very considerable improvement has been effected as a result. Those are two instances that I can give in reply to the hon. member's question.

Hon. D. Brand: What are the ones that remain? It is those in which I am interested.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I would rather not give prominence at this stage to that aspect, because I do not want to stir up a lot of trouble unnecessarily in regard to some existing sources of pollution. There are some.

Hon. D. Brand: How you have changed since you were on this side of the House!

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: My role has also changed.

The Premier: Which one?

Hon. D. Brand: Is it the left role or the right role?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: After all, one is entitled to adjust one's demeanour to the circumstances of the time, and I am most anxious to get ready acceptance of a most desirable piece of legislation, and I want to be careful not to tread on anyone's corns.

Hon. D. Brand: The Swan Brewery was one that I left, and I was just wondering.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member said that; I did not.

Hon. D. Brand: I can get hold of the appropriate Hansard and point it out to you.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is recognised now that it is difficult to deal with something that has been long accepted as practice, but the objective must always be to effect improvement when such improvement becomes practicable. The conservation board to which I have referred will be expected immediately to take steps to see that nothing happens that can make the condition of the river any worse than it is at present, and that successively it must develop its policy to achieve improvement over the years that follow.

When I was led off into that alley-way by the Leader of the Opposition, I was referring to the fact that it had to be remembered that what was required to be done was something which was not only desirable but practicable. Accordingly, this should represent a proper balance of interest between all those who use the river, those who discharge into it and think they have a right to do so. Yes, it includes all the things that members are thinking and implying by their laughter.

Hon. D. Brand: That is a practical problem, of course.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It may not be in all circumstances. In the previous context, I refer also to those who take water from the river.

Hon. D. Brand: It reminds me of those pictures you see running back!

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It refers to all those who use the water for boating, fishing, bathing, for navigation or even as an attraction to the countryside. An important aspect of the Bill is, necessarily, that of finance. I have already said that it is not expected at any time that the expenditure will exceed £10,000 and possibly for many years it will be in the region of £5,000 per annum.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You do not envisage that there will be any river craft operating on the river on behalf of the board?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. The Government will find two-thirds of the expenditure and the local authorities in the metropolitan region will find one-third. The one-third payable by local authorities will be split among those in the region in the proportion of 75 per cent. on the basis of population and 25 per cent. on the basis of river shore line in each district. Considerable difficulty has been experienced in arriving at a satisfactory formula and this was one of the reasons for the delay in the preparation of the legislation.

It became necessary to consult with local authorities on a number of occasions to consider their points of view and endeavour to reach a decision which would be regarded as being completely satisfactory. I am pleased to say that the Local Government Association has expressed agreement with the Government's financial proposals. So that is the big hurdle already successfully negotiated. We have devised this formula to place the financial responsibility on all local authorities in the region which will be the subject of control by the conservation board for the maintenance of a river which we consider is virtually an asset to all.

It is not only an asset to the local authorities that have a shore line in their districts and to the people residing in them, but the Swan River is also an asset to the whole of this State and it behoves us to take necessary steps to preserve it. I think it will be generally admitted that some loading ought to be placed on those local authorities which will derive the greatest benefit from the improvement to be effected because the ratepayers in those particular areas who are living close by the river will, in the main, naturally spend more time on the river foreshores than people from outlying districts.

Therefore, it is quite right that in those circumstances those local authorities should contribute more than others that are further removed from the river. This aspect should not be lost sight of, either. If we can get the river into first-class condition and substantially improve it, inevitably that will result in a fairly large increase in land values in the areas of those local authorities that have a river shoreline. As a result, the ratepayers will benefit directly from a communal effort. It has to be expected that in those circumstances they should be prepared to contribute a little more than persons residing in those districts which will not benefit directly in the same manner. This formula has been designed to meet that point of view. I repeat that the Local Government Association has expressed its satisfaction with the formula the Government has adopted.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: When you had regard to this formula, did you consider the feasibility of including care and maintenance of ocean beaches in it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, we did not, because this initial legislation is purely and simply a measure for the conservation of the Swan River. It is expected that after the period of experiment and experience, it may become desirable to enact similar legislation covering other rivers and also ocean beaches. This legislation is a start. Its introduction is unique in Australia and I think it requires experience in order to enable us to reach firm opinions about the advantages to be gained and whether they are worth the cost involved. That is precisely what is proposed in the Bill, but I have very little doubt in my mind that this legislation will prove to be very successful and the need for extending the authority will become apparent within a very short time.

An important feature of this measure—one which I have already mentioned—is that Government departments are bound under it and particularly those departments involved in any construction work or which are responsible for the granting of foreshore or river leases or licences. This measure will ensure that the board will have an opportunity to assess whether any harm to the river is likely as a result of construction work. For instance, the granting of a foreshore lease by the Lands Department or a jetty licence by the Harbour and Light Department will be given consideration by this board.

Reference to the Health Act has been deliberately excluded from the Bill because of the necessity for quick remedial action in the case of a hazard to health and because the provisions of the Health Act are designed to improve rather than destroy the quality and condition of the waters. In other words, action under the Health Act will not be hindered in any way. It will still be possible to take action under the Health Act which will remain unaffected by this legislation.

It is necessary for members to know the particular part of the Swan River that is to be subject to control. It will be controlled within these points: That part of the boundary of the Fremantle harbour which traverses the Swan River and which is established, at the time of coming into operation of this legislation, by the Fremantle Harbour Trust Act, 1902. That point will be approximately the existing road bridge. Point No. 2 will be the junction of the Southern and Canning Rivers. The Scott Road bridge over the Helena River is Point No. 3 and the Middle Swan Road bridge over the Swan River is Point No. 4.

The reaches of the river between those four points will be controlled by this board. That is to be the initial area. Provision is made in the Bill for an amendment of the area by proclamation. If it is considered desirable to extend the area, an extension can be made by proclamation. This is necessary to meet any sudden demand, such as the establishment of a new

industry outside these boundaries, or of a different type of effluent from an existing factory similarly placed outside the existing boundary. Whilst it is felt that the boundaries already indicated are sufficient for present needs, power must be provided in the legislation to deal with any circumstance which might subsequently arise and endanger the work being carried out within the confined area.

The metropolitan region is also to be defined by proclamation. That is necessary in order to indicate the local authorities that will be obliged to contribute to the scheme. The reason for making provision for this to be done by proclamation is because of rapidly changing conditions and the possibility of alteration of boundaries or amalgamation of authorities. It is proposed in the first instance to include in the region all the authorities in the metropolitan area which come under the Traffic Act, except the Darling Range and the Cockburn Road Boards. Both of these are remote, and the latter has a responsibility for ocean beach maintenance.

This legislation, which I have already said is unique in Australia, will create problems in the preparation of regulations and the fixation of standards, but it is a practical attempt to get off on the right track before it is too late to do something for the river, otherwise greater expenditure will be involved.

The control which it is proposed should be exercised by the board can only result in a better and cleaner river. Industry is protected not only by the advisory committee but also by the right of appeal to the Minister, and the general authority which he exercises in the administration of the Act and the responsibility which he has to accept—and to account for to Parliament—for the decisions of the board and the committee. I feel there are adequate safeguards against unfair and high-handed action which might be detrimental, but at the same time there is sufficient power for the board to take the necessary steps to improve the river.

This Bill represents a very practical step on the part of the Government to give legislative effect to a belief which it has held for a long time; that is, it is necessary to establish an authority with the requisite power to take action, and not merely to make suggestions. Because the Government is sincere in this intention, it has not excluded Government departments from the control of the board. What other steps the board considers necessary for the improvement of the river and for its maintenance in a satisfactory condition, can be taken by it.

Mr. Crommelin: Would the board have power to recommend that dredging be carried out in any part of the river to bring about a freer flow of water?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, it would. If the board feels that it is in the interests of the preservation and improvement of the river to carry out certain works, it will have power to recommend that work to the appropriate authority. It will not have the power to undertake the work itself. I have no doubt that the Minister receiving such a recommendation will agree to that work being placed on a high priority when he is considering the works to be undertaken with the funds at his disposal.

I am very happy indeed that it has at last been possible to introduce this Bill to Parliament. I look forward with a great deal of interest to seeing this board in operation. I feel that this is an important point in the history of this State. Those who come after us will, I am sure, show their appreciation of the practical steps which are contemplated to preserve what is a wonderful heritage, prized by many of the people of this State, and which will be prized even more by those coming after us.

In this connection I might be pardoned for referring to the fact that in designing the Narrows bridge now in the course of construction, the Government had in mind the building of a bridge over the river in a position where the structure would add to the beauty of the river and would contribute to the aesthetic attractions which can be appreciated by the people. Therefore, no expense has been spared in the construction of the bridge. We have been assured by the highest authorities that the bridge will indeed be a structure of beauty and will add to the attractions of this city. If at the same time it is possible to have, flowing under the bridge, a beautiful river free from pollution, which can be used by sporting bodies and by people congregating on the foreshores, a great attraction will be available. If that can be achieved, a great contribution to the development of this State will result, which will enhance the enjoyment of the people who live here. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Crommelin, debate adjourned.

BILL—MIDLAND JUNCTION- WELSHPOOL RAILWAY.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 31st October.

MR. HEARMAN (Blackwood) [4.45]: This Bill really seeks to carry out the intention of the legislation that was introduced by the McLarty-Watts Government five years or so ago. It was the intention to construct a chord line from Welshpool to Bassendean, with the establishing of marshalling yards at Bassendean. However, for various reasons although the Bill passed through both Houses of Parliament

and the Royal Assent was given, the project was not proceeded with. That means from then until the present, the Railway Department has not been able to give effect to the planning of new marshalling yards.

There is a very real need for additional marshalling yards. It is a project which should be supported by country members, although it will mean the expenditure of Government funds in the city. The benefit of the new marshalling yards to country people will be great. It is all very well to talk about greater efficiency in the railways and such matters, but we should recognise that the existing marshalling yards in the centre of Perth are completely inadequate and render the efficient working of the railways impossible.

It has always been accepted that in the establishment of marshalling yards there must be allowance made for great length. With the increase in size of locomotives and in the strength of drawgear over the years, the need to break trains into two or three sections before they can be stowed in the existing yard has rendered the work in the present marshalling yards difficult. Coupled with that is the fact that the goods yard is located next to the marshalling yards in Perth, through the centre of which run the metropolitan railway services. These difficulties increase the cost of working of the Perth yard to a great extent.

If the proposed marshalling yards can be established quickly, they will not only effect savings in railway operations, but also bring about greater efficiency. Primary producers should give every encouragement to the proposal contained in this Bill, particularly those operating in the South-West because they are the ones who are placed at the greatest disadvantage in regard to stock transport to the Midland Junction saleyards. In tracing various movements of trucks which appeared to be delayed, I have found not infrequently that it takes as long to get a truck from Perth to Midland as it does from Bunbury to Perth. That is very largely the result of the difficulties that are experienced in the existing marshalling yards.

From the railway point of view, I think possibly the Bassendean line might have been preferable. It would have been shorter and I think it would have provided a substantial saving per year in working costs. However, the Stephenson plan envisages the present West Midland-Welshpool line and I think if we are to stick to the Stephenson plan—and I believe we should—we must accept the additional inconvenience that plan will impose on railway working and realise that, although it will be an additional inconvenience as compared with the other proposition, there will be none the less real and tremendous savings in working and operating costs of the railways.

Last week, in company with an officer of the Civil Engineering Branch of the Railway Department plus the land resumption officer of the Public Works Department, I looked over the general area where it is proposed to put the line. From the resumption point of view, the impression I gained was that for a project of this size the resumption problem is a comparatively easy one. Much of the land and area that will be interfered with is apparently occupied by small farmers, poultry farmers and such like and there do not appear to be any new building or housing projects in the area. It is true that some houses, including some new ones, will have to be resumed, but I was agreeably surprised at the comparatively speaking small interference with existing private property that will be involved.

The Minister for Transport: You have noticed the appearance of an aerial photograph.

Mr. HEARMAN: Yes, I think the aerial photograph also helps to illustrate the nature of the project. There appears to be only a small area where there is any density of houses and that is at West Midland. Most of these houses are pretty old and although a considerable extent of earthworks is involved at that end of the line, it seems that the plan generally will interfere as little as reasonably possible with private property.

Incidentally, there is no crossing of the Swan River under this scheme as there is in the Bassendean proposal. However, it is necessary to cross the Helena River at the back of Guildford. Generally speaking, there does not seem to be any great engineering problem at the Midland end, and the country is fairly flat and mostly of a sandy nature. I think there are one or two areas at that end which will probably require some drainage.

The real drainage problem, I think, arises in the actual marshalling yard area. Without wishing to be dogmatic, I think possibly that the actual site for the proposed marshalling yard is about the lowest in the whole area. A study of the aerial photograph rather indicates that the area is particularly low-lying.

I understand that a considerable amount of filling will be necessary and the railway authorities, from an engineering point of view, recognise this to be so. I believe they are looking for a sandhill to cart in order to get the levels right in the marshalling yard. However, they do not anticipate great engineering difficulties as far as drainage is concerned. I feel the matter of drainage is most important, because I do not think any real success can be achieved until there is a comprehensive drainage scheme for the whole of that general area.

In that respect, I do not mean just the area for the marshalling yards, loco. depot and goods sheds; I have in mind the general

surrounding area. I think it will be necessary to do that in any case as an engineering requirement. I would like an assurance from the Minister that it is the intention of the Government to ensure that a thoroughly comprehensive drainage scheme in that area will be implemented, particularly as the area has been set aside under the Stephenson plan as an industrial area.

Existing industries at Welshpool have a very definite drainage problem. Some are constantly being asked to spend money to put in something in the nature of a local drainage scheme. I am informed that there is some land in that area owned by Eastern States firms—as well as local firms—who wish to build factories but cannot proceed until there is a comprehensive drainage scheme. It seems to me to be most desirable that the marshalling yard should be put at Welshpool and that a drainage scheme is necessary in order to give stability to the surrounding areas as well as the actual area involved.

This would encourage industry to go there. This seems to be desirable, particularly if there are firms which own land in that locality that are unable to proceed with development because of the lack of drainage. It may be that the additional drainage scheme will involve some extra finance, because it could be that the scheme would be more comprehensive than envisaged by the railway engineers. After all, I presume they would be thinking in terms of trying to keep costs to the bare minimum in regard to railway requirements.

I think the Minister pointed out that the loco. depot and the goods sheds are to be shifted to Welshpool and that it is also envisaged that the Metropolitan Markets will ultimately be placed there. I think fruit-growers generally would welcome that, particularly country fruit-growers. The present siting of the markets is not very fortunate. It is impossible to get railway access to the actual markets because of the levels, and it costs an appreciable amount to cart the fruit.

The markets may have been regarded as modern when they were built, but as they are today, they are rather inadequate from the viewpoint of access of large motor trucks. Generally speaking, new markets would be designed on somewhat different lines which would make for the cheaper handling of fruit and possibly a better quality fruit would be presented to the customers. Therefore, fruit-growers in particular have a distinct interest in getting the fullest possible facilities incorporated in this proposal.

As near as I can ascertain, the actual site proposed for the new metropolitan market is reasonably stable, but throughout the whole area the watertable is unquestionably high. A comprehensive scheme will be necessary in order to make much progress with the drainage there. I

would like an assurance from the Minister that it is the Government's intention to do this job thoroughly. Co-operation will be needed between the Public Works Department and the Railway Department; and unless the scheme is completely adequate, the benefits of the new goods yards and the marshalling yards will, to some extent at least, be lost to us. It is always possible to fix these things up afterwards, but that can be very costly.

One matter that the Minister did not mention, which should come into our thinking in connection with new railway construction in or about the metropolitan area, is that of Government planning in connection with the standard gauge. We all seem to give lip service to the idea of a standard gauge railway from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle, and obviously any new construction must make provision for the ultimate inclusion of standard gauge.

So far, the Government has been silent as to just what it proposes or wishes in connection with the standard gauge, and although I discussed this matter with a representative of the railways last week—and I think the railways are fairly clear in their thinking on the matter—obviously he could not in any way commit the Government. I think we should have some real knowledge of what the Government envisages in regard to the standard gauge before embarking on any large scale railway reconstruction or rebuilding as this might be termed.

The estimated cost is £4,700,000, and I do not think I would be regarded as being unduly pessimistic, particularly as I wish to ensure that the place will be properly drained, if I say that the figure will be £5,000,000 before the project is completed. It would be tragic if we spent £5,000,000 on a railway project in the metropolitan area and did not ascertain just how the undertaking was to fit into future standard gauge planning.

I realise there are many ifs and buts about this and that standard gauge planning, so far as the metropolitan area is concerned, can be greatly influenced by the actual route that will be taken by the standard gauge line from Northam. I would like the Minister to give some explanation of the Government thinking in connection with this matter and an indication of the extent and manner that the proposals before the House are incorporated in that thinking. It seems to me it is something that we should give definite thought to, particularly as the Federal Government appears to be making a move towards rail standardisation—or a degree of rail standardisation—throughout Australia.

As is so often the case in railway planning in this State, there are certain limitations that will be imposed by our present coupling system. But, so far as I can ascertain, there would, under this particular proposal, not be a great deal of

change so far as the general lay-out is concerned, even if we did have universal couplings. It might be as well to bear in mind that under this proposal it will not be possible to run a train direct from the Great Eastern line to the South-West line. It will be necessary for the train to go into the marshalling yard and out again in order to have the chopper on the coupling facing in the right direction. With universal couplings it would be possible to run the trains direct.

This is a problem that has confronted the W.A.G.R. for many years; and there are lines at present in operation which may possibly present even greater problems in this connection than do the present proposals. It is as well, however, that members should bear in mind that this proposal will not mean a direct route without going in and out of the marshalling yard. I do not know whether the Government thinks it will ever be necessary to run metropolitan suburban passenger trains over them, but I hope not. If, however, it is necessary to do that at any time, the passengers will have to get used to the idea of going in and out of the marshalling yard, having the trains turned there and the engines put on the other end and so on.

It is as well that we should appreciate the shortcomings and difficulties that our present unsatisfactory system of couplings presents. But I do not think this proposition will be substantially affected if universal couplings are introduced. It would simplify everything and then we could, perhaps, run trains direct from one system to another.

It occurs to me that in the not very distant future it will be possible to run complete stock trains from the South-West to Midland Junction. At present we have a perishables train which is running satisfactorily ex Bunbury at 10 p.m. This goes through virtually non stop to Perth, and included in the freight is fruit. Obviously under this proposal it could go into the marshalling yard, drop off the fruit and then proceed straight on to Midland Junction with a minimum of delay. I do not think I am a visionary when I suggest that development in the South-West will probably soon arrive at the stage where we may have complete stock trains and in this event obviously the additional delay caused by shunting would be bad, and it could be overcome if the trains could be run straight through.

Although, perhaps, from a strict railway point of view, the proposal is not as convenient as the one put forward some years ago, I think it is one that the House should support. I shall be particularly interested to hear what the Minister has to say in connection with the drainage requirements of the area and on the question of standard gauge planning.

MR. WILD (Dale) [5.18]: I rise to support the measure. I am not actively engaged in the House on the question of railways, but it is one that must concern us all. Over the years I have been concerned about the future of the railways in this State. Like other members I am afraid I find it difficult to think clearly as to exactly where we are heading in this regard. However, I feel that we must still have railways because it seems that there is no country in the world, even with all the new discoveries and achievements such as atomic power, nuclear power, sputniks and so on, that has yet been able to do away with the good old railway system.

So it is obvious that for the present at least we have to apply our thinking to determining the best way by which we can reach a solution of the problem confronting us in regard to railways. I think all members will agree that the question of the marshalling yards in the metropolitan area is one that has concerned not only railway people but also business concerns, civic authorities and local government bodies for many years. In the past three or four years we have seen two different plans put forward for moving the active part of the railway system from the metropolitan area to an outer region.

The first decision was to shift the marshalling yards to Bassendean and the later decision is to move the yards to Welshpool. I am not concerned as to which of those courses is followed, as I do not hold myself up as a railway expert and I feel that we can quite safely depend on men such as Mr. Stephenson and others who know, from their knowledge of this and other countries, where would be the best place to establish the new marshalling yards.

Anyone who has had to move about in the East Perth marshalling yards must realise that in a growing city such as this, it is becoming physically impossible for those concerned to carry on their work efficiently in the area available. In the course of my own business, I have to make a considerable number of trips to Perth in certain months of the year and I have always been amazed at the way the railway traffic is handled with a minimum of delay on such a small area of ground.

While I would not express an opinion as to whether the marshalling yards should be moved to Welshpool, instead of Bassendean, or vice versa, speaking purely as a layman I think the proposition before us is a sound one, because for many years I have believed that the development of this city must take place south of the river. One has only to see the development that has taken place from Victoria Park outwards in the last six or seven years, in order to realise that development, as in any city of the world, always follows the water.

Around the Welshpool area we find that today large Eastern States firms are taking up land, knowing full well that in the not distant future it will be required for their activities. Only a few weeks ago what is probably one of the largest emporiums in Western Australia purchased an area of land at Cannington and is now about to erect a £250,000 store there. People who have made their way in big business recognise that development in the metropolitan area must move south of the river and in the direction of Armadale.

One of the great problems which has beset the development of that area—I am glad my colleague the member for Blackwood mentioned it—has been that of drainage; and I join with him in the hope that the Railway Department and the Public Works Department will co-ordinate their efforts in order to see that this comprehensive drainage scheme, which has been promised for so many years and put aside from time to time because of possibly more important work elsewhere, is now put into effect in order, firstly, that the Welshpool marshalling yards may be sited successfully and, secondly, in order to relieve the many thousands of people living in that area from being inundated, in varying degree, by water in the winter time.

Quite apart from the necessity for siting the new marshalling yards, the implementation of the drainage scheme will have a twofold effect. From an examination of the aerial photographs at present on the wall of this Chamber, and knowing the district reasonably well, I feel that it will be impossible to undertake the work contemplated under this development scheme unless, in conjunction with it, there is put in hand at least the first part of the comprehensive drainage scheme. The work that is to be carried out will involve, of necessity, a considerable amount of land resumption.

I would point out to the Minister that over the years there has been a great deal of backing and filling with regard to what was originally called the chord line. The word "chord" now seems to have been dropped and instead the projected line is known as a link line. I do not mind what line it is, but obviously it will cut through a considerable extent of private property and involve considerable resumptions. I have no doubt that the member for Beeloo has had many approaches from people who desire to know whether their land will be involved in the resumptions, as they have seen the surveyors there and have been told that the line may take a certain course.

When they are informed that only a survey has so far been done and that no further definite information can be given to them as to when the project is to be commenced, they do not know whether to

sell their properties and get out or remain on them and possibly undertake expansion of various kinds. If the decision is made—I can see no reason why Parliament should not agree to this measure—I hope the Minister will look upon it as a bounden duty of the Government to inform the people to be affected as early as possible and then pay up quickly for any resumptions that are made.

It must be obvious to the Government that a Kathleen Mavourneen approach to compensation for resumptions is no good either to the people concerned or those who have to administer the affairs of the State. This measure carries my full support and with the reservations that I have mentioned—that I hope there will be full co-operation between the Public Works Department and the Railway Department to ensure that a comprehensive drainage scheme is implemented as soon as possible, and that the people affected by resumptions will be informed and compensated as early as possible—I support the second reading.

MR. W. A. MANNING (Narrogin) [5.27]: I support the Bill, firstly because it has been recommended by experts who should know what is the most desirable way of eradicating the rail bottleneck that at present exists in the metropolitan area. However, it is a great deal of money that is proposed to be spent on this project and if we are going to spend huge sums of money in order to provide this facility, surely it indicates that we intend in some way to rehabilitate the rest of our railway system in order to make it something worth while.

It is rather strange that earlier in the year we should close a number of railway lines and, later in the same year, seek authority to spend millions of pounds in providing better facilities for the railways. If these better facilities are to be provided in the metropolitan area, surely we must provide better facilities at the other end of the system! It is no use providing the proposed facilities here unless we can cater for the goods and traffic at the other end of the system.

Obviously we must now have less railway business owing to the closure of the lines that I have mentioned, and the question is how we are to replace it. It is difficult to know just what the Government has in mind when we hear so many expressions of lack of faith in the railways. On all occasions I have expressed my faith in the railway system, provided provision is made for a rapid and efficient service.

The Minister for Transport: You would need to be in the office of the Minister for Transport for only a short while in order to realise the number and variety of people who want to use the roads. Having seen that, you would lose some of your faith in the railways.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: Those people want to use the roads because the railway system is so slow and imperfect.

The Minister for Transport: No, it is the double and treble handling.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: That is part of the system. Also, it is too slow, and there is considerable damage to goods owing to the double handling. All these things add up to a lack of faith in the railways; and if the railway system could obliterate those deficiencies, it would cater for the needs of the country districts.

If we provide better services for handling goods in the metropolitan area—and I heartily agree with it—perhaps it means that there will be better facilities and a faster service in the country. It is hard to know which should come first. For instance, on the Great Southern line transport is fairly slow because of the single track having to cater for the volume of business offering. Perhaps in the near future some duplication of track in certain areas may be desirable, because it is obvious that we have to bring more traffic into the metropolitan area to justify the spending of £3,500,000.

How are we going to do it? That is the question I ask. I heartily support the idea of providing better handling facilities outside the present city area, but if we are to commit ourselves to such a tremendous expenditure, we have to commit ourselves to extending and improving the service in the country; and that will mean more money and a greater capital expenditure. What will happen when we have spent all this money? Are we going to throw up our hands in despair and say, "We have no more capital to spend and we must close more of our railways." Surely that is not the answer!

If we pass this Bill, we commit ourselves to the expenditure of a large sum of money, and later on the expenditure of further sums, otherwise the whole thing will be futile. That is the point I am trying to emphasise at this stage, and I conclude by saying that I support the Bill.

MR. PERKINS (Roe) [5.32]: There is one aspect about which the Minister might give us some more information. I have not gathered from his speech whether sufficient consideration has been given by railway officials to the convenience of the new marshalling yards for a great deal of the railway traffic. An interjection which the Minister made a moment ago was most revealing because it indicates that more and more people are trying to cart goods by road in order to avoid double handling. That is only natural, and I think it is a pressure which the Transport Board and the Railway Department are likely to find increasing in the future. It is a natural development and one that would be stupid for the Government or Parliament to ignore.

The Railway Department will never be in a good position to handle a great deal of this traffic. Even Government departments themselves find it necessary at times to use road transport. I have noticed that there is a big, new diesel truck, apparently belonging to the Wundowie charcoal-iron industry, carting between Wundowie and Perth—I take it that it is carting pig iron principally.

Hon. D. Brand: They would have a permit, I suppose.

Mr. PERKINS: No doubt, but, on the other hand, it brings out the point I am making in that there is an industry, located right on the railway line, and yet it has found it economical to employ road transport.

Hon. D. Brand: Do you think that the commissioner was complaining about that very thing when he referred to the matter before the Grants Commission the other day?

The Minister for Transport: No, he was referring to the road vehicles in use between Perth and Bruce Rock.

Mr. PERKINS: I think the Leader of the Opposition had better press that question with the Minister for Transport, and let the Minister be more specific when he replies. What I am pointing out, and this is borne out by experience in other parts of the world, is that the real future of the Railway Department lies in heavy haulage. We have been told on numerous occasions in this House that with the heavy cartage, particularly of grain, coal, timber and other bulky traffic, where there is a minimum of handling on the part of railway officials and where full train loads can be obtained, the Railway Department can compete successfully with road transport. And I believe that that is so. But when it comes to many other classes of goods—and I think we could all quote examples—it would be difficult for the Railway Department to compete with road transport. I have had personal examples of where we have attempted to give traffic to the Railway Department, and even though that traffic was carried on fast goods trains, it took a long time to get to its destination.

I am not blaming the Railway Department in any way. I find that the departmental officials are most co-operative in attempting to get the traffic through. But it is impossible for them to do so. I had an example not long ago where one of my constituents in the Corrigin area wanted to get stud stock from the South-West through Narrogin across to his property. It was not quite a full special trainload, and although the railway officials did their best to arrange suitable transport for this stock, in the end the client decided that rather than risk the longer hours that would be involved if the stock were carted by rail, he would use road transport, even though it cost him considerably more. That is something which the Railway Department is up against in the handling of specialised traffic.

But I reiterate that it seems as though the department is in an excellent position to compete successfully with road transport for the bulky type of traffic which can be obtained in full trainloads, and which can be carted at departmental convenience. I am wondering how well these new marshalling yards will fit in with a great deal of this traffic. Most of the grain traffic in the Fremantle zone comes in from the eastern side, either on the Midland line, or on the Eastern Goldfields line; and to a layman looking at the map it appears as though those trains will be brought in through Midland Junction and taken down to the marshalling yards a number of miles away from the main railway.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Where will it go then?

Mr. PERKINS: I presume it will then go back on to the main line and through the city down to Fremantle. That is what appears to be the position for a number of years. If the Government has some plans eventually to shift the grain traffic to Cockburn Sound it should tell us about them. But so far as I am aware, all the planning at present is being based on the existing shipping facilities at Fremantle on the north side of the harbour. If that is so, it appears that the marshalling yards at Welshpool will not be as convenient for handling that class of traffic in particular as the existing yards.

However, I realise that the position cannot be left as it is, and the congestion in the metropolitan area at present will have to be dealt with in the near future. The Minister, when replying to the debate, might give us more detail on the point I am raising. I know it concerns many members of this House. In fact, there are many persons concerned in various kinds of primary production in particular, and the more publicity the Minister can give to the Government's plan for development in the immediate future, the easier it will be to co-ordinate the plans of everyone concerned.

HON. D. BRAND (Greenough) [5.41]: As one of the previous speakers has said, if we are to proceed with the Stephenson plan—and we have accepted it in principle—we should authorise the implementation of the necessary railway system and the construction of other highways and byways in order that we may deal with the fundamentals of the plan.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Why wasn't the 1950 Act carried out?

Hon. D. BRAND: If the member for Fremantle does not know, I will refer to that matter a little later.

The SPEAKER: Provided it comes within the provisions of this Bill.

Hon. D. BRAND: In fact, I think it does have some relation to it. It has reference to the chord line which dealt with the

same problem, namely, the selection of an alternative marshalling yards site. It will be recalled that a decision had been made on a site for the marshalling yards at Bassendean and for a chord line to connect those yards with Welshpool. The Bill was brought to this House on the recommendation of the then railways commission. A great deal of work was done in regard to it because it had the approval of Parliament.

In the meantime, however, there occurred the opening-up of Cockburn Sound, the establishment of the Kwinana oil refinery, the B.H.P. steel rolling mills and the Cockburn cement works. At that stage we then received from the town planning consultant, Professor Stephenson, a regional plan which had been prepared by him in co-operation with Mr. Hepburn, the Town Planning Commissioner for this State. In that plan the present site of the marshalling yards was recommended.

However, I cannot let this opportunity pass without making reference to the fact that our Government appointed Mr. Dumas and Mr. David Brisbane—the latter being an ex-general manager of the Midland Railway Company—to report upon the problem of the chord line as a result of the difficulties and changes that had arisen because of the establishment of the Kwinana oil refinery and the opening-up of Cockburn Sound as a port.

It necessarily followed that if that area was to become an outsea port—as the member for Fremantle has often envisaged—it was reasonable to assume that there would be a railway system running from that point to Midland Junction via Cannington. The recommendation of Messrs. Dumas and Brisbane was that the Bassendean marshalling yards were reasonably sited and one could accept from their finding that they thought that the chord line could be shortened a great deal by the actual changing of the site of the marshalling yards at Bassendean and at the same time providing marshalling yard facilities at Midland Junction.

Having drawn the attention of the House to the fact that that recommendation exists, I should also remind the House that when the advisory committee appointed by the Government to advise on the acceptance or otherwise of the Stephenson plan, made a decision to accept Welshpool as the site for the marshalling yards, it did so on the recommendation of the representative of the railway department, Mr. Clarke. But we are aware—and I am sure the railways commissioner was aware—that the chief railways commissioner, Mr. Hall, who was at the time absent in England, was not altogether happy about the change of site from Bassendean. In fact, he was very much in favour of adhering to the Bassendean site for the marshalling yards.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You rushed us quickly enough to get it through.

Hon. D. BRAND: No; we did not.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You suspended Standing Orders.

Hon. D. BRAND: We had that legislation before this House for many hours and in fact it was discussed time and time again. Final action on it was not taken by the Government because we acted as we saw fit. That is borne out by the fact that even at a later stage we asked for a report from two outside experts.

There is a change to take place in the control of the railways. The three men, unanimously or otherwise, who were responsible for advising the committee that this was the proper site for the marshalling yards, are to relinquish the control of the railways and a single commissioner is to be appointed in their stead. It would therefore seem to me that this legislation is being pushed through at a time when the incoming commissioner, the new controller of the railways, should have an opportunity to look at the whole question seeing that there was some doubt and lack of unanimity on the part of the Railways Commission when the recommendation was made.

I realise that we must make decisions and must adhere to them with respect to getting on with the regional plan. At the same time, however, surely it is fair, on such a major decision as the siting of the main marshalling yards in the metropolitan area, that we should bide our time a little longer before finally resolving this matter. As a layman, I know nothing about it. I am prepared to accept the recommendation made by the advisory committee on town planning. I am prepared to accept the recommendation made by Mr. Clarke on behalf of the Railways Commission that this be the site. But knowing as I do that there were some reservations expressed by executive officers of the Railway Department, I think it is reasonable and logical to ask, at this time of transition in the control of the railway department, that every opportunity be given to the incoming railways commissioner to have a look at the overall plan.

In their report which was presented to the Government in October, 1953, I think Messrs. Dumas and Brisbane referred to the numerous consultations with Professor Stephenson, the town planning consultant, and said that the recommendations made would accord with the general main highway system, tentatively outlined by him. I raise this point because I believe that we have waited quite a number of years with respect to this very important problem in the hope that, with good organisation of our railway system in the metropolitan area, this important unit of our railway system would be sited in the right place in relation to the development and expansion of the city towards the south of the river as the regional plan envisaged.

Having all this in mind, I think the marshalling yards should be correctly sited. I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without reminding the House that in their report these two gentlemen drew attention to the fact that, as a result of our peculiar coupling system, the marshalling yards as envisaged were not absolutely necessary, particularly if we adopted the universal system of coupling which has been adopted in South Australia. I know that is the subject of another discussion but nevertheless is closely allied at this time to the great changes envisaged in our railway system relative to the problem we are discussing at the moment.

I would conclude by reading the recommendation contained in this report to which I have just referred, to the effect that the marshalling yards be constructed at Bassendean. The recommendations are as follows:—

1. That a marshalling yard be constructed at Bassendean, at a site south-west of the existing Bassendean railway station. We consider this to be the first essential but, if finance be difficult, the period of construction might be extended over five years. Expenditure should be limited to the existing needs at the time of construction. Construction of new loco. sheds should be deferred.

2. That the marshalling yards be re-designed to interfere as little as possible with the future expansion of the superphosphate works, Hadfields' works and other established industries.

3. That the Welshpool-Bassendean chord line be not constructed.

4. That the South-West system be connected to the Bassendean marshalling yards by a single track line from Rivervale along the southern bank of the Swan River to connect with the existing railway formation east of the Perth racecourse, as shown on the accompanying plan.

They go on to recommend that Burswood Island might be used as a depot.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Is that the 1950 report?

Hon. D. BRAND: It is the report made in 1953, so it is not such an old report. I do not oppose the Bill; I appreciate the Government's difficulty in this matter. It is necessary to have legislation to permit the construction of that line if the Government is to proceed with the plan. But as a last word, I would suggest to the Premier and his Ministers that, because of its importance, and because of the fact that the appointment of a commissioner is so near at hand, he should be given the opportunity to discuss with them the rights and wrongs of the decision which we are about to make.

MR. OWEN (Darling Range) [5.55]: There are one or two observations I would like to make on this Bill, and the subject matter contained therein. Firstly, this measure envisages the building of the railway from Midland Junction to Welshpool, and the marshalling yards near that centre cut through a small corner of my electorate. Since my electorate has had three railways closed in the last seven or eight years, it makes me wonder what the future holds because, as members know, we have had quite a lot in the way of railway closures; yet now it is intended to build a new railway. It seems to me, therefore, that we must be sure as to the future of our railway system in Western Australia.

A few weeks ago the Minister told us of the benefits of road transport, how it could handle large quantities of goods at possibly cheaper rates than they can be handled by rail. It seems to me to be rather a paradox that we should now be asked to agree to a Bill to build a new railway. All in all, however, we must not lose sight of the fact that railways can handle certain classes of goods over long distances at comparatively cheap rates. Because of the layout of the general railway system in our State, I feel that the link between Midland Junction and Welshpool is going to be of great value; it would be so even if it were only to short-circuit that part of the system from Welshpool to East Perth and back to Midland Junction. This short cut, as it were, could be of great value in the economic transport of goods from one line to the other.

But as the Minister has said, the marshalling yards, which will be the centre for the whole of the metropolitan area, will have to be placed somewhere, and it appears that Welshpool is as good a place as any, particularly as that area is possibly the least developed of any in the region that has been considered for this purpose. Most of the land that is to be used is private property, but it has not been developed to any extent, and it certainly favours the purpose to which it is to be put. The member for Blackwood paid quite a lot of attention to the fact that drainage would be necessary.

I should jump with both hands open at this opportunity as the part of the area I represent is lowlying and it may speed up the construction of the drainage system which will drain the area between Cannington, the aerodrome and Helena River near West Midland. It is an area that needs attention and I feel we should go ahead and put in the marshalling yard and the railway, because, as I have said, it might also speed up the provision of a drainage system. That is one of the reasons why I feel I should support this measure. I mentioned that practically all the land is privately owned and therefore there will be necessity for considerable resumptions. Indeed, many of the

people who own the land in that area have been under a blanket of uncertainty, because under the regional plan the land there has been set aside as an industrial area and for railway purposes. Many of the people there are in a dilemma—they do not know whether to go slow with their development; and they cannot sell out with any idea of getting a good price because of the uncertainty of the purpose for which that land will be used.

This Bill will bring the matter of resumptions to a head. The Government should go ahead with resuming the land for the specific purposes enumerated. I have received several inquiries from land-owners likely to be affected in the Darling Range electorate. I know that one or two of them have been refused applications for building permits on their land, but no resumption notices have been served.

Having decided where the railway line will go, I hope there will be no more hesitation on the part of the Government to resume the land so that the owners affected will know whether they can remain or whether they have to get out. If the resumptions are proceeded with, I trust there will be no delay in finalising matters and in paying compensation to which the people concerned are entitled.

In conjunction with the building of the railway marshalling yards, mention was made of the establishment of the new metropolitan markets at Welshpool. The member for Blackwood mentioned the need for extra marketing space because of the congestion which now occurs in the West Perth markets. I would urge a note of caution in this respect because, from the fruit-growers' point of view, there will very likely be a steep increase in the charges to be imposed by the selling agents for the reason that the rentals for the new buildings must of necessity be higher than the rentals being paid at West Perth. It seems inevitable that when the new markets are built, there will be an increase in the charges, and the fruitgrowers will have to pay those extra charges.

Another point which should be considered before the final decision is made to build the new markets at Welshpool is that the proposed locality is away from the centre of the marketing districts in and around the metropolitan area. I am doubtful whether any advantage will accrue to the vegetable growers if we have the new markets located at Welshpool. It would be advisable for the Government to go deeply into this question before making a final decision on the site of the new markets.

I support the Bill. Having decided to establish the new marshalling yards at that centre, I hope that the Government will not keep the owners of the land affected in suspense. Where land is proposed to be resumed, action should be taken and compensation paid so that the matter can be quickly finalised.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [6.4]: Whether or not I shall speak very long on this Bill will depend largely on the reply that I get from the Minister for Transport.

The **SPEAKER**: This is not question time.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I shall put my query in the form of a speech, and if the Minister so desires, he can answer by interjection. I wish to say through you, Sir, that unless I can be assured definitely that the portion of Professor Stephenson's plan relating to cargoes being loaded into trucks at Fremantle and rushed to Welshpool—there sorted and stored, and delivered from Welshpool—will not be implemented, I shall not resume my seat without putting forward some views I have on the matter.

The Minister for Transport: No decision has been made.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: In that event, I wish to quote from the latest publication of Professor Stephenson's report. On page 136 he says—

The effect which the establishment of the oil refinery at Kwinana and the opening up of Cockburn Sound would have on proposed developments of the Port of Fremantle have been the subject of two recent Reports to the Government. The first, prepared by Messrs. R. J. Dumas and D. W. Brisbane, was submitted in 1953. The second, prepared by a Technical Subcommittee, was submitted in 1954, and resulted in a Government decision that the Inner Harbour should be extended upstream to a point below the North Fremantle road bridge.

If the harbour extends that far, then cargoes will be loaded into road and rail trucks, to be conveyed to Welshpool.

Mr. Jamieson: That is a very good scheme.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I do not stop at that. On page 223 of the same report Professor Stephenson has this to say—

The Government has decided that the ancient railway bridge should be removed to allow for an upstream extension of the Inner Harbour. The plan shows a new railway bridge immediately below the road bridge.

Here again we have two different statements, firstly, that a definite decision has been made by the Government, and, secondly, the contradiction by the Minister for Transport just now.

A different statement is made by the Minister for Railways in regard to the new Fremantle railway bridge. The following is reported in the "Sunday Times" on the 27th October, 1957:—

The new Fremantle railway bridge may be built almost on the same site as the existing bridge but at a different

angle. This is the site favoured by the Minister for Railways, Mr. Strickland.

Strong representations have been made for the new bridge to be shifted upstream to a site adjacent to the traffic bridge.

Harbour authorities favour this move because it would allow more berths to be built upstream in Fremantle Harbour.

However, Mr. Strickland said yesterday that on the questions of economy and urgency the bridge may now be rebuilt opposite De Lisle street.

Again I want to congratulate Mr. Strickland because we have been talking that for the last four or five years. The article continues—

De Lisle street is practically parallel with the existing bridge and almost on the same side.

I agree with him there, but unfortunately our famous engineer said it would be trifling. I disagreed with him when he said there were only a few residences to be resumed. The Minister for Railways is right. To continue with the article—

Land resumptions would be far too costly for the quarter mile shift upstream, the Minister said.

The further site would create more harbour berths, but ultimately the harbour would need still more room.

When I asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways a question the other evening he said—

If my memory serves me right, up to date Cabinet has made no decision with regard to the location of a new railway bridge at Fremantle, if one is to be built.

I asked the Minister for Works a couple of weeks ago the following question:—

Has the Stephenson Plan been adopted, especially that part dealing with the waterside at Fremantle?

The Minister said—

No.

I then asked him—

Is he aware that in his report Professor Stephenson says—

(a) that the Fremantle Harbour Trust is handicapped because of the insufficient transit sheds accommodation at the wharves at the inner harbour. The depth of land behind the wharves is severely limited, and there is little room for buildings to facilitate the classification, storage and handling of goods.

(b) It is difficult, if not impossible, to contemplate the classification of general cargoes and their storage in

classes behind the wharves because of the lack of space for appropriate building and facilities.

The Minister said—

Yes.

Then I asked him—

Is he aware that his scheme is to unload general cargo direct from the boat into road or rail trucks to be conveyed in bulk to Welshpool, and there classified and stored?

The Minister said—

Yes.

The next question I asked was—

If the answer is in the affirmative, can he advise what percentage of waterside workers it is estimated will be thrown on the unemployment pool, and also what the estimated extra charge will be on general cargo which will have to be carted back to warehouses in Fremantle?

The Minister answer—

Answered by No. (1).

Lastly I asked him—

If the plan has not been adopted, will he inquire into these questions before the plan is adopted?

The Minister replied—

Yes.

There we have the Minister telling us one thing and the engineers telling us another. The engineers are contradicting one another. Messrs. Dumas and Brisbane said they were recommending it because Sir Alexander Gibb had recommended it, and he had not recommended it at all. I will quote.

Mr. Hearman: You can take your choice by the look of it.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Messrs. Dumas and Brisbane had this to say—

It would not interfere with the business centre of North Fremantle and would require the resumption of only a few residences.

The Minister for Transport: That is a good story, too!

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: To continue—

A railway bridge over the river may not be necessary in 50 years' time.

When Mr. Tydeman's report was submitted in 1948 there was no suggestion regarding the opening up of Cockburn Sound.

For the above reasons we recommend that a new railway bridge be constructed immediately below the existing highway bridge and approximately as shown on Sir Alexander Gibb and Partners plan; that the bridge be built as far as possible of timber, the piles being protected to have a life of 50 years.

We will turn to what Sir Alexander Gibb had to say and see if he agrees with Messrs. Dumas and Brisbane. Sir Alexander Gibb said—

As the railway bridge is to be regarded as a temporary one, we first considered its construction as a multiple short span structure in timber or a combination of simple steel joists and timber, of somewhat similar construction to the existing bridges. We found, however, that owing to the requirement of providing three rail tracks, combined with the heavy loading which each would have to carry, the number of piles required would be so great as to form a serious obstruction to river flow. This was especially important when taken in conjunction with the adjacent road bridge. We do not, therefore consider—

Listen to this, Mr. Speaker. The other had been recommended because this engineer recommended it. It says—

We do not, therefore, consider that a structure of this type would be satisfactory, apart from which we understand that there might be some difficulty at the present time in obtaining timber piles of the requisite size.

The Minister for Transport: This is a Bill asking for marshalling yards, not a railway bridge.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Yes, they are marshalling yards all right and work sheds, too.

The Minister for Transport: Not a bridge.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Do not be so stupid! We did not come down in the last shower! If the bridge is to be built alongside the traffic bridge, this cargo will be rushed from there to Welshpool, but if it is not built there, we would have the cargo on the wharves and it would not be rushed to Welshpool. Does not the Minister understand that? If he does not, he should have a word with the engineers. I cannot understand why the Minister cannot understand that himself.

Hon. D. Brand: Don't you know this Bill is to shift the yards out of East Perth?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I know it is going to shift the yards out of East Perth and provide for marshalling yards to be built out of East Perth. It is also going to provide for the building of warehouses—goods sheds, as they are called. They will be filled partly with cargo from Fremantle. A committee was set up to go into this particular matter but were the Fremantle lumpers represented on it? No. To hell with the Fremantle lumpers! They had no representatives. They should have had a representative on this committee because they are the people who are going to be most affected. The Minister told us the other night that when this was finished,

there would be hundreds of people employed around the Welshpool area. I agree with that, but there will be more than hundreds out of work at Fremantle because jobs which belong to them will be taken away from them.

Mr. Jamieson: You are only half right.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Better than not right at all. I think I am about nine-tenths right. Perhaps the member for Beeloo can tell me where I am wrong. It might be all right for Beeloo but it will be b— bad for Fremantle. I would be a traitor to the people who sent me here if I did not try to stop the taking away of work from those to whom it rightly belongs.

Mr. Hearman: Fremantle is going downhill!

Hon. D. Brand: Ask the Minister for an assurance. Get a decision from him.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I am not worried about the railways.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Before the tea suspension I was going to mention that the Minister, when introducing the Bill, said it would take four years to build the railway, etc., and he knew not when it would be started. This is the old story of 1950 over again. There is no need to rush the Bill this session. Let us have a good investigation made into the question and put the matter off until next session.

I was going to tell the member for Narrogin that in 1950 we had a Bill in connection with a railway in portion of the metropolitan area—a Bill dealing with the Bassendean-Welshpool chord line—and we were told then that it was a most urgent matter. Standing Orders were suspended and we were informed that if we did not meet the engineers before 10 o'clock the next morning, we would not meet them at all. I remember that not many members came along, although you, Mr. Speaker, and the Minister for Police were there. The engineers told us that the site mentioned in the Bill was the only place. Why the alteration now? I suppose they are the same engineers. They were going to put the port railway right on to the river beach. You will recall that, Mr. Speaker, because I can remember your attitude on that occasion.

Hon. D. Brand: That was the second time, was it not? You are getting your history mixed.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I would like to quote from a report of Mr. Meyer, an engineer who was brought from South Australia to report on various aspects of the waterfront activities. I am going to read this to show members where the sheds can be provided. Do not forget that there will not only be a shortage where the new sheds are to go, but there

is a shortage now where the old ones are. Mr. Meyer, at page 6 of his report, had this to say—

I am loth to contemplate the persistence for all time of the sorry handicap that the existing railway yards in rear of Victoria Quay imposes upon the functioning of wharves on the south side of the existing Inner Harbour. All the area occupied by those yards is properly necessary for port purposes, and having regard to the enduring benefit that would accrue to the port by endowing its south side wharves with proper depth of wharf premises, I have no compunction whatever in recommending that the railway yards be moved elsewhere and that the land vacated, right back to Beach Street, be made over to the Harbour Trust for port purposes. Failing any other, my suggestion is that if reclamation south of the Fishermen's Jetty be decided upon and commenced more or less forthwith, the railway yards might be moved to the south side ocean frontage as soon as there is sufficient reclamation completed to accommodate them. If the removal of the railway yards could be contemplated within a reasonable period of years, there could be a much more advantageous arrangement of wharf supporting elements at South Quay than is possible with the crippling restrictions of inadequate depth of wharf premises.

There is also a shortage there. I warn the House that if the cargo is carried through to Welshpool not only the new sheds but the old ones will be affected. We have been told that the railways are in a terrible way for space, but Mr. Meyer sets out the manner in which to get over the trouble. We will find that they will say, "We have got away with this. What is to stop us taking it from the South Quay sheds, also?"

The time has come when we should watch this matter very closely. When the previous Bill was before the House I wanted to know why the sudden change. I remember that on the second reading of the Bill this was said—

I feel it is being unduly rushed. It would have been better had the Government held the Bill over till next session instead of bringing it down at this stage of the session.

The same hon. member said—

I was very annoyed last night when the Minister mentioned that a committee had been considering the matter. It seems to me, however, that the working class people have not been considered.

That is what I am saying today. Do you know who said that, Mr. Speaker? It was the present Minister for Police. I agree with every word he said and a lot

of it might stand today. I want to know where the Minister for Police is now. Is he going to get on his feet to help us in this fight? I would like to hear him on the question of this railway.

The member for Middle Swan said in 1950 that he joined with the member for Guildford-Midland in entering an emphatic protest against the Government's action in submitting a Bill of such importance in the dying hours of the session. I ask you why do you not get off your perch, Mr. Speaker, and come down here and help me to put into operation what you wanted done in 1950? I know if you had the chance to do it, you would be here, but your position prevents you from speaking on the second reading. However, Sir, you may be able to give us the benefit of your experience when the Bill is in Committee, because you know every inch of this country.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: We ought to get the Minister for Police to help you.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: In 1951 it was still considered that it was likely that it would be done, so the member for Middle Swan moved for a select committee to inquire into the proposed line and yards. There was nothing in that Bill about cargoes being rushed through to Welshpool from Fremantle. Every member on this side of the House, except one, voted for the select committee. And do you know who that one was, Mr. Speaker? It was the Minister for Housing. He would not vote for the select committee. His attitude was: Take the line anywhere so long as it is taken out of East Perth.

It is time to wake up and give us a fair deal. When we get into Committee I will try to have some of the provisions in the Bill removed. I do not mind what is done with the railways, but I do mind about sheds going up to receive cargo from the Fremantle ships. This will put my people out of work. A great many of my electors live on the wharf, and if this is carried, they will starve on the wharf. I hope that something will be done to see that this provision is cut out.

MR. JAMIESON (Beeloo) [7.38]: I should not allow this opportunity to pass without having something to say in respect to the people who will be upset by the resumptions and other matters associated with the new marshalling yard project. In the past I have had considerable experience of various Government resumptions and while, in the final issue, the people concerned have generally been quite satisfied with the conditions of payment made by the Government, in the earlier stages they were most concerned, owing to the fear they had of Government action respecting their properties.

People get a strange complex once they know a move is afoot for the Government to implement some project in the area in which they live. They all become worried

as to exactly how it will affect them individually, and there is generally in their minds considerable fear of imaginary injuries. They believe all sorts of things will happen although in most instances they are in this respect far off the mark.

However, I would like an assurance from the Minister that once the Bill is passed, as I think it will be, the departments responsible will immediately consult with everyone concerned, and particularly those resident in the area, in order to inform them of the exact position. Once the people know to whom they can go for information and what can be done on their behalf, they lose their fear of a project such as this, but while they are suspicious and do not know what is going to happen, their minds are full of doubts and they do not know where they are going.

The member for Guildford-Midland, the member for Darling Range and I have a number of these people within our electorates and they have been asking for more information about their positions individually. It is only natural that none of us can tell those people where they stand as individuals, although we might know the general outline of the proposed resumptions. Obviously, we cannot go into every detail, as the departmental officers could, and therefore I hope that as soon as this measure is passed, the Government will get its departmental officers into the field to advise these people of the details of the projects, as no doubt they will then be quite happy.

From discussions with the officers associated with this venture I understand that they have already conducted a search and have a complete list of the titleholders and of all the owners of land along the route of the proposed Midland Junction-Welshpool line and the marshalling yards, so it should not be difficult for them to relieve the minds of those concerned before Christmas, thus allowing them to spend the festive season free from worry. Such matters might not seem to be very important from the ministerial point of view, but they mean a lot to the persons affected.

Up to date there has not been much concern expressed with regard to the marshalling yards, although I have had a few inquiries from the Welshpool area. The inquiries I have received have mainly come from the broad acre areas where there is some pasture land which the people who own it now desire to develop. It is strange, but in practically all cases when resumptions are afoot, it is discovered that the owners of the land intend to develop it. Of course, it is always their prerogative to say that, although there might be little chance of their developing the land from an economic or any other point of view.

The member for Blackwood did not paint a very rosy picture of the site chosen for the marshalling yards. He may have been over it, but I have walked over this land

for years and I think the site ideal for a project of this nature. The hon. member said that the proposed site of the marshalling yards was very wet and swampy, and if members examine the aerial photographs that were taken during the 1955 floods they will see that while there is some swampy country in the area of the proposed new marshalling yards, there are also some sand dunes, which will make it much easier to implement the whole project than might have appeared to be the case in the light of the remarks of the hon. member.

The whole of this area is undulating, with sand dunes and swampy country intermingling. An effective drainage system is necessary if this area is to be properly developed. The present Leader of the Opposition some years ago gave an assurance to the people of that area that he would endeavour to commence a drainage project there and it is a pity it was not started at that time because, if the work had been done then, the country would have been much drier now than it is. However, we must realise that Ministers of whatever political colour must rely on the loan money available to them and must work out for themselves what priority should exist as between the various works confronting their departments.

With little development taking place in this particular area there was small justification for proceeding with the drainage scheme in those days and so the available money was spent on other projects that required more immediate attention. With the construction of the new marshalling yards, the people of that district will no doubt receive benefit from a comprehensive drainage scheme, which I believe will prove a blessing to that area and which will raise the values of the properties in that district.

I come now to the fears expressed by the member for Fremantle and, while I agree with his present picture of Fremantle, as it now stands with its transit sheds and shipping, I suggest to him that if the new transit sheds are built at Welshpool, they will take some of the work force away from Fremantle, but it must be realised that the marshalling yards project is not a short-term one and, in fact, if the transit sheds are built there within the next ten or twenty years, we will be fortunate. The Minister has told us that the marshalling yards, without any subsidiary work, will take from four to five years from the time of commencement to completion, and there has as yet been no target date set for starting.

In view of the amount of development that has taken place at Fremantle in the last 20 years, one can see that by the time the transit sheds are required at Welshpool, the uniform gauge railway from Fremantle to the Eastern States will probably have been constructed. If the Commonwealth Government maintains its proposed

schedule, the standard gauge by then will have been brought through to our main port and consideration will then have to be given to the more effective handling of all forms of cargo.

Fremantle will then probably be the biggest port in Australia as regards shipping from Europe, owing to the freight rates and other factors that will prevail when the standard gauge railway is an established fact, although those same factors, under present conditions, restrict the amount of tonnage imported through Fremantle. It is therefore reasonable to assume that once the standard gauge railway from Fremantle to the Eastern States is in operation, Fremantle will have to be developed to perhaps ten times its present size. It is hard to imagine a Fremantle just that big. Indeed, the development will have to proceed towards Cockburn Sound. In my mind, there will be no other alternative, from an economical point of view. Engineers have put up all sorts of proposals, but they have not envisaged expansion at the rate that I feel it must grow as soon as the uniform gauge railway is built.

That being the case, we must start making plans now, as the Stephenson plan has set out to do, for posterity to handle the goods that come to and go from this State. Therefore the suggestion that the goods be taken from the place where they arrive to a central depot, is quite a good one. There are now a lot of bulk handling facilities and sheds at Fremantle, and as the port grows there will be an increasing demand for facilities at that port. So somebody will have to move; and it is far easier to move the forces which are bringing the goods into the country than it is to shift those sending them out.

The natural tendency, therefore, is to get as close to the port as possible, but when the goods are consigned to the port of Fremantle and they arrive at Welshpool, it may not sound too good for Fremantle. But it will be doing the State a service. Also, as regards the work force, as the harbour increases in size so the demand for labour will follow suit. I cannot imagine, unless there is a severe depression, that shipping using the port of Fremantle will lessen to any great extent, and thus leave the people working on the wharves starving and hungry. I hope that none of us lives to see the day when people living there cannot enjoy their normal livelihood, as they have done in the past. I would say that there will be ample scope for people who work in the stevedoring industry to increase vastly in numbers over the coming years.

It is to be hoped that the Government will be able to expedite some of the work on the proposed marshalling yards in order to allow for the better handling of traffic in the very near future. From year to year, Governments do not know how much money they will have available because of the very urgent works that have to be carried out.

Mr. Lawrence: Does the hon. member realise that the number of workers there is decreasing?

Mr. JAMIESON: They may be decreasing, but not very greatly. I would not have as much knowledge on that point as the member for South Fremantle; but I know that the position at Western Australian ports has been very buoyant over the last year as compared to other ports in Australia, in spite of the lack of a uniform gauge railway. The Port of Bunbury, as the member for that district will probably bear me out, has had a very busy year; and the same applies to Albany. There may have been a slight drop in the tonnage handled at Fremantle because of the cargo being handled at Bunbury and Albany. I would not be able to say without examining the figures of our exports and imports. But I would say, purely from the point of view of logic, that there is little chance in the immediate future, and probably in many years to come, of the picture at Fremantle blackening to any great extent.

While the plans envisaged by this Bill tie up with railway development and the handling of cargo, because it is proposed that transit sheds will be built at Welshpool, the immediate intention is for a development of the marshalling yards, about which we have heard so much from various members. I feel that these would be a great asset. They would certainly be an asset to the Government because by their erection they would obviate the present bottleneck that we have in the city.

I cannot agree altogether with the member for Narrogin when he says that more goods will have to come down to Perth if these extra facilities are provided. It would be desirable if more goods were brought to Perth; but I do not agree that that is the only justification for the erection of these yards. At present valuable land is tied up in the city, land which could very well be used by trade and commerce—I am referring to the marshalling yards at East Perth and West Perth. It is high time that the Government realised on this land so that a better use could be made of it and also in order to do away with a bottleneck.

The general attitude towards the railways seems to be better now than it has been for some years. People seem to have gained a greater interest in their particular system. They did not realise, until drastic steps were taken to close certain lines, that the railways were falling by the wayside. Now they have realised that their jobs are probably in jeopardy and the towns with which they have been associated could be affected, they are taking a much greater interest in their jobs. Because of that greater interest, no doubt they will make suggestions, and envisage improvements in the handling of goods

which may enable the railways to expedite the transport of goods from one place to another.

Unfortunately, with road transport as it is today, the railways are finding the situation difficult. I do not think there is one member in this House, who, if he were developing this State from scratch at the present time, would envisage the building of a railway system at all—or not to any considerable degree—because of the great cost of laying the track. However, once the track is laid, it becomes a national asset and as such should be retained. These improvements, such as an effective marshalling yards, which the Minister pictured so graphically for us when he explained the Bill, are all to the good and will help in maintaining good relations. I think the people working on them will appreciate them far more than the cluttered up type of marshalling yards that they have been accustomed to over the years.

The move is a very good one and the pity of it is that we have not readily available the necessary finance to go ahead and do all that we want to do at the same time. However, I ask the Minister to give us some assurance, when he replies to the debate, that as soon as the legislation becomes law, officers from the land resumption section of the Public Works Department will personally visit all the occupier/owners of the land affected in order to advise them fully of their position. I support the Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE (Hon. J. J. Brady—Guildford-Midland) [7.59]: As I am the member in whose district the Midland Junction end of this line is to be situated, I feel I should mention the fact that there is a good deal of mixed feeling in the Guildford-Midland electorate in connection with the proposed line. Last Friday night the Midland Junction Council, and a number of citizens, had a special meeting to consider it, and as a consequence they waited on the Minister for Railways as late as 12 o'clock today to try to have some changes made in the route of the line. It is the view of the council, and the committee of citizens which has been considering the matter for some time, that there are two alternative routes which this line could take, and both of them would obviate the necessity of having to pull down nine or ten houses.

Because there could be £20,000 or £30,000 involved in compensation, the feeling is that if the Railway Department would adopt one of the alternative routes, that money could be used on earthworks and there would be no need to demolish any houses whatsoever. I think I should mention to the House and have it recorded in Hansard so that when the railway officers are reading the Parliamentary Debates they will get

some idea of the feeling of the local governing body in this area and also of the residents in this district who will lose their homes as a consequence of this new line being laid down.

This matter has been received with mixed feelings because there are the keen businessmen who feel that by the line going into Midland Junction they will probably enjoy the benefits that East Perth will lose. To that extent they have no objection to raise against the proposal. It would consolidate the township of Midland Junction from a business point of view and from the point of view of the railway men, their positions would be assured. Nevertheless, there are some among them who view this proposal with mixed feelings because they will have their homes demolished; particularly those who are still in the process of building their houses.

Following on the remarks made by the member for Beeloo, I also hope that if the Bill goes through, the Public Works Department will immediately notify the people affected in regard to their position and let them know how soon they will be compensated for the resumption of their properties. There is nothing worse than for people to be living in a house, year in and year out, without being told when they will have to get out in order that a railway line may be put down. Therefore, I hope the department will advise the people who will be concerned in this instance and that the Government will, at the earliest opportunity, compensate them for the properties that it will take over.

There are two alternatives. One is to put the new line down about a quarter of a mile east of the existing line. If this were done, in the main only the activities of the Railway Department would be inconvenienced. The general public would not be inconvenienced in any way and if anyone is to be inconvenienced it should be the railway authorities rather than the 10 or 15 people who will have their homes bulldozed down. Even if it costs an extra £10,000 or £15,000 to achieve that, I feel that such an amount spread over the lifetime of the State is a very small sum to outlay in order that a closely settled and reasonably progressive part of West Midland may be left untouched.

I recollect that four or five years ago the Public Works Department had no trouble, in the space of about four or five weeks, shifting 20,000 cubic yards of earth in order that the work of erecting a high school could proceed. In my opinion, if it is able to do that for the erection of a high school, it could replace 20,000 cubic yards of earth in order to put the line down on an alternative route and thus obviate the necessity of bulldozing down 10 or 15 houses, the owners of which will have to be paid reasonable amounts of compensation.

When discussing this matter with representatives of the Railway Department last Friday afternoon, I was informed that the second alternative route, which lies west of the proposed route, would pass through an area where no houses would have to be demolished. That route would only be about 20 chains distant from the proposed line. Further, with the line coming towards Perth, it could go in from a southerly direction which would mean that no houses would have to be demolished.

Admittedly, earthworks would have to be built up and it is possible that a river would have to be crossed but only at intervals of probably a chain or two. However, as the proposed route will necessitate the erection of bridges to cross the main roads or Amhurst-rd. at West Midland, that would be no disadvantage compared with what is proposed at present. If bridges have to be built west of the proposed site in order that the river may be spanned, it would only be in line with what is to take place with the proposed route.

The Railway Department feels that it must follow the present proposed route because it can get a 20 chain curve at that particular point which is necessary in order that the speed of the train may be maintained. However, railway men have told me that it is not necessary to have a 20-chain curve in order to achieve this object. A 16-chain curve which could be put in west of the proposed route would suffice because when the train is approaching the junction, it has to slacken speed in any case.

When I was secretary of the union of workers employed on the Midland railway line, I can remember one of the employees being severely penalised because he travelled over a particular curve in excess of eight miles an hour and I think the regulations which applied to the Midland Railway Co. at that time would also apply to the Government railways even now. Another remarkable feature concerning the site where the proposed 20-chain curve is to be provided is that there are to be no less than three curves in a distance of one mile. In other words, there are three curves proposed instead of there being only one which could be put in slightly west of the present line.

Therefore, I understand from the Minister for Railways that although this proposed route is set out in the schedule of the Bill which was introduced by the Minister for Transport, it does not necessarily follow that that route has to be strictly adhered to in every detail. There could be variations made, and I hope even at this late stage the Minister for Railways and the engineering branch of the railways will see the wisdom of taking the route further west than that proposed with a view to obviating the demolition of 10 or 15 houses.

Why I considered I should touch on this particular line, probably more than the fact that the proposed railway would go through that area, is that I understand the West Midland railway station will become an island platform. In order that members may visualise what an island platform is like, I can cite the East Perth station as an example. If that is what is proposed, it will follow that the station will have to be taken a few dozen yards from the existing site. I know that, from a railway point of view, a serious problem is developing in this area due to the fact that between 1,400 and 1,600 children will be attending the West Midland High School in that district next year. To reach the school all those children will have to cross the highway at some period.

This presents an extremely great danger because of the large volume of vehicular traffic that passes along the highway at this point. If the Railway Department is looking at this island platform at West Midland in its proper perspective, I hope it will see its way clear to extend the bridge across the main highway in order that the high school children will have safe ingress and egress to the West Midland railway station.

This might cost £3,000 or £4,000 above the estimated cost of erecting an island platform at West Midland, but such an amount is infinitesimal if it is the means of saving the life of even one child within the next three or four years. It is possible that it would save the lives of a score of children who might otherwise be killed if this bridge were not put over this particular crossing. Accordingly, I emphasise the fact that if the railways are going to do this job and if the authorities are to have regard for the railway patrons, rather than for the people who bring their stock from the South-West and those who carry coal from Collie, they must also have regard for the people who will use this railway station, and particularly for the 1,600-odd children who will attend the high school going twice a day to and from that station.

Apart from that, swimming facilities in this area are to be developed on a large scale almost immediately. One of the most up-to-date swimming reserves in the whole of the metropolitan area will be established within a quarter of a mile of this station almost overnight, because not fewer than 15 parents and citizens' associations have clubbed together to spend approximately £3,000 for the purpose of siting a swimming pool at West Midland on the river, with a view to catering for the children from all the schools around the Midland Junction area.

On the opposite side of the line a new suburb called Hazelmere is also developing very rapidly. Five years ago this district was unheard of, but today it has become a closely settled suburban area and its inhabitants look to West Midland as being

the suburban station they will use to go to Perth. As well as a new suburb developing there, and apart from these people looking forward to using the railways, there is also the road leading over to Hazelmere which goes under the railway. The subway at West Midland will only take safely one 8ft. vehicle at a time.

I suggest to the engineers of the Railway Department that when they are redesigning this subway, as they will have to do, with a view to its taking three roads of traffic instead of two, as at present, they bring the subway into line with Chatham-st. which is less than 15 yards out of alignment with the subway at the moment. That will enable the traffic to go off the main highway under the West Midland subway and through to Hazelmere, with a short cut to Perth. They will be able to do this without having to cross any level crossings, which is necessary at the moment at Guildford.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Did you put this proposition to Cabinet at its last meeting?

THE MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE: I hinted at it, and suggested that it be done, but, of course, Cabinet is very busy and it is not possible nor practicable to take up an hour on one subject. Western Australia is a big State which requires development.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Why take up our time now?

THE MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE: The reason why I am putting this proposition forward is that I hope a copy of the Hansard containing this speech of mine will find its way into the hands of the engineers—I will see that it does—so that they will not be able to say that they did not know that the problems existed.

One of the difficulties in connection with Public Works Department engineers and railway engineers, etc., is that there is no co-ordination. If work had been co-ordinated, then the 20,000 yards of earth shifted from the high school could have been put on the proposed railway route with a view to building up the earthworks for the new line. It is not only a matter of putting in a new railway route but also of having a look at the problems of development in this area at the same time. At one stage one of the Town Planning Commissioners visualised a main highway from the West Midland subway going out at the back of Caversham and up to the Great Northern Highway. That was the route they had in mind.

There is not a great deal more I want to say but I would like to touch on the matter of reclamation and the building up of ground to overcome the drainage problem. In passing I would like to say that the American people have designed a dredge which has a minimum draw in regard to its working on the river or in the creeks. It is known as the Ellicott Canal dredge and it can be pulled behind a truck

and dropped into the creek or river at any particular point. The best way to drain any area is to run the water into the river, if possible.

Mr. Roberts: What is the draft of the dredge?

THE MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE: I understand it can be made to any size. It is possible to install a 6-inch cutting tube or a 9-inch cutting tube, or a cutting tube of 10, 12 or 15 inches. This can be operated by one man and it can be worked around the clock if desired. There are a number of places along our rivers where these dredges could be located. They would prove a great asset in reclaiming thousands of acres between Fremantle and the upper reaches of the river, and it would be of great economic advantage both to the Government and the private individual. Apart from this, it would save the river from flooding, and at the same time it would help to drain the areas which are causing inconvenience at the moment. I do hope that the railway authorities will have regard to alternative routes, and if there is a choice between bulldozing ten houses, and putting in £30,000 worth of earthworks, I hope they will be in favour of the earthworks.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. H. E. Graham—East Perth—in reply) [8.17]: Firstly, Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether to treat you as a friend or foe; in other words, I do not know whether you propose to accept the invitation of the member for Fremantle to come down on the floor of the House and join him in battle on this issue—

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: It would not be creating a precedent.

THE SPEAKER: I suggest the Minister see me in my room later.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: And I don't take sugar, either! Surely it is obvious to everybody that it is an impossible state of affairs that there should be goods yards, marshalling yards and a locomotive depot situated virtually in the very heart of the capital of Western Australia. For that reason, it is necessary that attention be given to those facilities pertaining to our railway system being located elsewhere. That is the prime reason why, apparently much to the concern of the member for Fremantle, I did what I could several years ago, when sitting in Opposition, to support the Government in its move—not necessarily to shift certain undesirable things from my district of East Perth, but to have them sited elsewhere, with a view to giving the Railway Department an opportunity of going about its work in a more businesslike manner.

As to where it should be located, I venture to suggest that neither the member for Fremantle nor the member for East Perth is in a position to determine that for himself; we must be guided by expert

advice. I know there are differences of opinion among the experts, but then it is a question, when all the evidence is before us, of having a discerning mind to determine the issue on its merits, free from any prejudice. Overriding all that, Professor Stephenson was charged with a responsibility, and the greater metropolitan area was planned and zoned. In accordance with that, certain basic alterations were necessary to the metropolitan railway system, or, shall we say, the city terminal of the country railway system. After consultation with the various authorities, he determined that it should be located in the Welshpool area. That recommendation, as I said when introducing this measure, was examined by representatives of all political parties and they were unanimous in their endorsement of this proposition.

For the time being, so far as this measure is concerned, I am not the least bit interested as to where the railway bridge, if a new one is decided on, is to be sited. I cannot see that a few hundred yards up or down river, as far away as Fremantle, has any direct bearing on this proposition. If there is a shortage of space down there, there will always be a shortage of space, and that space shortage will become aggravated with the growth of the State and with the greater volume of goods to be handled.

The Bill contains a practical proposition and the Government desires to move in connection with it. As previously indicated, the Premier has said that consideration will be given to this matter when drawing up the allocation of loan moneys for the next financial year. Whether it will be possible to make an allocation, only he and circumstances at the time will be able to resolve.

I should emphasise this aspect, particularly for those members who are concerned about some action being taken at the earliest possible moment in relation to land-owners who might be affected by resumptions. A glance at the aerial photographs will show that no great damage will result, but no substantial improvements will be effected on more than a handful of properties. It is fortunate perhaps that the land is so generally unsuitable for development up to the present time without a drainage system, that it has not been used.

I have before me an Act of Parliament. A Bill was introduced by a non-Labour Government in 1923 authorising the construction of a railway line. The approximate route of that line is shown. So it can be said that a sword of some kind has been dangling over the heads of the people affected for the last 34 years. Theoretically, that sword is perhaps still menacing. I refer to the Brookton-Dale railway line. This is the Act of Parliament which authorises the construction of that line and which sets out the approximate route.

going right into Armadale and right into the township of Brookton. That was the proposition, but there is yet no such railway line.

Mr. Jamieson: Two wrongs do not make a right.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What has that Act to do with the Bill before us?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: It has a connection because I am unaware of any great inconvenience caused, or loss sustained by people in the area likely to be affected if ever that railway line is built.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You yourself supported the building of the railway line from Bassendean in 1950.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: So what? The Leader of the Opposition pointed out that since that time—and there is no need for me to go into the reason why some action has not been taken since the passage of that legislation—the greater metropolitan area has been examined in detail, and there is an urgent need to form at least the basis for the development of the greater metropolitan area. Following the endorsement of that proposal by the all-party committee, there is an indication that the Government is desirous of acting in conformity with the general outline of that plan.

I should emphasise that the route to be followed by the railway line is very approximate. If the Government is able to make financial provision for the work to be undertaken, no doubt at a very early date the Railway Department will undertake a detailed survey, so that the exact location of the line and of the marshalling yards will be known. I should imagine, however, that the boundaries of the marshalling yards and every railway appurtenance would be more accurately known at this stage than the route to be followed.

However, I think I can safely say this: Once the green light has been switched on, in other words, once this becomes a practical proposition—not an authority from Parliament, but a public work to be undertaken by the Government—then there will be no delay whatsoever in defining the exact areas, in taking appropriate steps to inform the landholders, in paying them compensation and the rest. Although it could happen that they would be permitted, where the land is being used, to continue the use of their land for five or 10 years, whatever be the period, until it was actually required.

After all, in round figures this is a project to cost in the vicinity of £5,000,000. Of necessity a comparatively small proportion of this amount can be found in any one year. It will not be a question of how fast this undertaking can be carried out; it will be a question of what proportion of loan funds can be made available for the project.

Mention has been made by a number of speakers on the subject of drainage of the area generally. I should make it perfectly clear that this is a proposition for the establishment of certain facilities to enable more efficient operation of the railway system. It is not a drainage system or a drainage scheme. As I pointed out when introducing the Bill, there will have to be almost a comprehensive drainage scheme because this area of some 600 acres is nearly all low-lying, and indeed to some extent it can be referred to as a drainage sump.

The Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department will be in close consultation with the Railway Department when this scheme gets down to greater detail. The former department will be responsible for the designing and construction of the system, and for the cost pertaining thereto of the major drainage lines taking the water from that area to a river, or wherever else it is ultimately to flow.

However extensive may be the drainage operations in the interest of the Railway Department, it will mean the drainage of many millions of gallons of water from that area. That must have a beneficial effect upon the land surrounding the marshalling yards. Therefore there will be no detrimental, but on the contrary a very definite beneficial, effect upon the owners of surrounding property.

So far as the standard gauge railway line is concerned, judging by the experience of Western Australia at the hands of the Federal Government, it will be many years before that line will come to this State.

Mr. Court: It is more likely that the line will come before you are ready for it.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Somehow it has been possible for the Commonwealth Government to carry out all sorts of undertakings in other parts of Australia, but at every step that Government seems to have very solemn and cogent reasons why an undertaking should not be carried out in Western Australia.

Mr. Court: Have you made a request for the standard gauge line in Western Australia?

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: No. If it were pertinent to this Bill, I could run off a long list of requests which have been made to the Commonwealth Government, but in respect of which where answers have been received, the answers have been lemons in every case.

Mr. Court: This is in regard to the standard gauge railway.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I know, and I have followed some of the discussions in the Eastern States prior to this present move being made, and it seems to be based on the volume of goods transported. In respect of that, there is

a very slender trickle indeed so far as the western State is concerned. I would emphasise that this is a matter of an area for marshalling yards, goods yards and so on and so on. It is a most extensive area of some 600 acres. If it were a matter of another couple of lines coming into it, I would say in the detailed planning of what is to be constructed, that provision will be made by the railway authorities. So far as the railway route is concerned, it is two chains wide, which would naturally allow for quite a number of railway lines in each direction. Naturally enough, it takes more than two sets of railway lines.

For my part, I cannot see the point in connection with the suggestion of deferment of consideration of this Bill until a single railway commissioner is appointed. If we go in for that sort of thing, we may wait indefinitely because of certain personal factors. Why did the Leader of the Opposition agree to this in principle some two years ago if he has any doubts about it now?

Hon. D. Brand: For the simple reason that history has revealed that there was not a unanimous feeling about this in the commission itself.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: That may be so; but what has transpired in the last two years to make the Leader of the Opposition definite to the extent that he agreed with everybody else then, whereas today he thinks it requires a second look?

Mr. Bovell: You have closed a quarter of the railway system since two years ago.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: What has that to do with the goods yards and a loco depot of the railway system?

Hon. D. Brand: The fact that the advisory committee was given the railway case by one man and I have learned—and the Minister for Works knows—that the commission was not unanimous in respect of the change of site. In fact, the other two commissioners—and particularly the chief commissioner—were desirous of sticking to the old plan of the Bassendean marshalling yards.

The Minister for Lands: A nice speech!

Hon. D. Brand: You bow down and go to England! I am not citing myself as an authority; I am suggesting that as we are making a legal decision, the new commissioner might well be given the opportunity of saying, "I am quite satisfied with the set-up."

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Did you say that the commission was not unanimous?

Hon. D. Brand: Yes.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: It is not a question of what might suit the new appointee as a sole commissioner of railways; it will be the position for 100 years or more.

Hon. D. Brand: If the Minister for Transport looks at the files and discusses the matter with the chief mechanical engineer and Mr. Hall, on a confidential basis, he will find that what I am saying is correct.

The Premier: The new commissioner would look at these proposals.

Hon. D. Brand: That is no good if we bind him by an Act of Parliament.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: It should be restressed that if this becomes law, it is an Act authorising the Government to do it; it is not mandatory on the Government to proceed, in the same way as the measure I quoted earlier. If the new commissioner, whoever he might be, were able to submit such overwhelming reasons why the Government should change its mind, the Government would change its mind.

Hon. D. Brand: The schedule contains the actual siting of the yard and defines the actual area.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Yes, just as there was defined the route of the railway line agreed to in 1923. This measure does not enforce anything; it authorises the Government to do it. If there are any circumstances at all where we gave away the railways and became 100 per cent. sputnik minded, the Government would not proceed.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: How far does it go? Ninety-nine per cent.?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: As the Government sees it at the moment, it is an intention to proceed as soon as funds are available for the work. I think that apart from the by-play we have had, all members are seized with the necessity of removing many of these appendages to our railway operations from the heart of the city and appreciate that the matter has been investigated by committees and authorities and conforms with the town planning conception in the broadest sense. It is a Bill to authorise the Government to do certain things; that and nothing more. I hope and trust Parliament agrees to it, so that if funds are available the Government can get cracking on the measure—that is, give effect to it. In regard to persons whose properties might be affected, I think I can say without any equivocation that the Government will do its utmost to finalise these matters and compensate the people concerned at the earliest possible moment.

Hon. D. Brand: Before you sit down, could you tell me if the Government has made any progress regarding the development of a port at Cockburn Sound, which will have such a bearing on this decision and the wisdom of the siting of the yards.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: The Government has had certain reports which have indicated that there is—I am speaking from memory—no warrant for

moving from Fremantle down to Cockburn Sound; or perhaps to put it a better way, that before proceeding to Cockburn Sound there could still be some greater use made of Fremantle by the construction of several more berths. No doubt the Government, very shortly, will have to give final consideration to long-term plans in connection with harbour development, either at Fremantle or elsewhere.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Heal in the Chair; the Minister for Transport in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Authority to construct:

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I listened intently to the Minister in reply and he has not satisfied me that there is any necessity for this Bill to be pushed through. The Minister said the line would take four years to build and he did not know when a start would be made. He also spoke about another railway which was authorised some years ago and which is not built. We also passed a measure in 1950 and the railway line is not built. I do not think there will be any harm to take out certain words so that the goods sheds will not go there for a time. I move an amendment—

That after the word "railway" in line 2, page 2, all the words down to the word "yards" in line 5, be struck out.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: The purpose of the Bill is not to permit the construction of a railway line for Cook's tourists. The three spur lines are to connect our railway system to something to be built there. If we are not going to build the something there, what is the use of authorising the construction of the lines? The amendment means that the lines could be proceeded with but that no loco depot, marshalling yards, goods sheds, or anything else could be constructed.

Mr. Court: The member for Fremantle made his intention perfectly clear to the Minister.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: There is no doubt about that. The member for Fremantle has a terrible fear that transit sheds—I think that is what they are called—will be constructed at Welshpool, and that certain work will be done there instead of adjacent to or on the wharves at Fremantle. That is a separate fight. The purpose of the measure is to establish certain facilities necessary to the railways. If we agree to the amendment, the whole thing becomes absurd. I ask the Committee to vote against the amendment.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I have no more fear in regard to the people in Fremantle than the Minister would have if someone told him that the workers in the workshops at East Perth were going to be dumped.

The Minister for Transport: That is the position. The East Perth loco workers will go out to Welshpool.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Yes, but they will not be out of work. This is nothing more foolish than the proposal by Professor Stephenson. Many people have said it is just damn silly. Fancy taking stuff and putting it in a shed at Welshpool when a lot of it has to go back to Fremantle by road! There is no chance of this line being started before next session. The amendment will cause no damage.

Mr. COURT: The argument seems to centre around whether the Government has a project to establish at Welshpool major facilities which would take the place of some of the customs facilities at Fremantle. Into this comes the argument of the economics of transportation. Can the Minister say whether the Government has a policy on the matter? I understand that the Fremantle Harbour Trust authorities have a project in mind whereby major installations would exist at Welshpool and there would be bulk transport from the ship's side to Welshpool where the stuff would be broken up and a redistribution would take place.

In view of the fact that the Minister has emphasised that the marshalling yards, goods shed facilities, etc., are the important parts of the project and that the line is only coincidental thereto, as the means of getting to and from the marshalling yards, can he inform the Committee whether the Government has made a policy decision on this matter, or whether one is under consideration?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: The Government has not yet made a decision for or against that proposition.

Mr. COURT: Are the facilities at Fremantle sufficient to handle it?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: They are handling it at the moment.

Mr. COURT: They are expanding. What will be the position at Fremantle with a 50 or 100 per cent. increase in volume?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: If Parliament agrees to the proposition in the Bill, the Government of necessity will be called upon to make a decision so that those who are planning the buildings on the site will know what they have to plan. Therefore this could precipitate a decision by the Government but whether for Welshpool and against Fremantle, or not, I do not know.

Mr. COURT: The Government must know whether the Fremantle facilities are at their capacity. If they are at their capacity, is there any prospect of extension in the vicinity of Fremantle?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I have not the information or the personal knowledge to answer that. It is generally recognised that the facilities are rather cramped at Fremantle, and there could be some slight increase in the volume of the goods handled. The Government will shortly have to resolve the question where the additional facilities will be provided. In any event, if the Government decided to proceed immediately to Welshpool, it would still be some years before the facilities became available there. Therefore, however crowded Fremantle might be, it will have to continue that way for a number of years.

Mr. BOVELL: The proposal endangers the continuity of employment of those engaged on the wharf at Fremantle.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Exactly.

The Premier: Of course it doesn't.

Mr. BOVELL: That is how the member for Fremantle has explained the position. I want to be clear in my mind that these people will know what their future is going to be. I have some knowledge of intermittent employment at the wharf—admittedly at an outpost—and I believe that these people who are on a temporary basis should understand what their future is going to be. The Minister should have armed himself with the information in order that the people concerned would know whether this proposal would affect their employment.

Mr. JAMIESON: I think the Committee is arguing all round the proposition. The main point is that the Government should be given authority to develop the marshalling yards. There are a number of waterside workers who live in my electorate and, as experienced cargo handlers, no doubt they would obtain employment at Welshpool instead of at Fremantle, but all that will not take place for another 20 years.

Mr. Bovell: Then they will have this measure hanging over their heads for 20 years.

Mr. JAMIESON: The Minister said the sword of Damocles had been suspended over someone's head for 20 years. The men will still be needed to load and unload ships at Fremantle, and the number required for sorting in the sheds will be comparatively small. I feel that those living nearer Welshpool when that time comes, will be only too happy to obtain work there.

Mr. HEARMAN: This argument cannot be satisfactorily concluded until a decision has been reached on the building and routing of the standard gauge railway, because any resting of customs' sheds and

so on at Fremantle would involve the planning for the standard gauge railway. At all events, I think we will need the new marshalling yards purely for our own State purposes. The member for Fremantle should try to persuade the Government to make a decision about the standard gauge line and its route because until that is decided, it is hard to say what the future planning of Fremantle harbour will have to be.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. LAWRENCE: The member for Fremantle is perturbed by the thought that cargo normally handled through the sheds on the waterfront at Fremantle may in future be taken direct from the ship's hooks by rail to Welshpool for sorting. In this regard, I would point out that when a vessel from the Eastern States is unloaded many marks are often brought out on the one tray, with the result that a great deal of cargo may be taken to Welshpool and sorted and then have to be returned to Fremantle. Owing to the high cost of transport and handling, the cost to the public would be increased. I think the matter should be inquired into further.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	29
Noes	7
Majority for	22

Ayes

Mr. Andrew	Mr. W. Manning
Mr. Brady	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Brand	Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Court	Mr. Molr
Mr. Crommelin	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Gaffy	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Graham	Mr. Owen
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Potter
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Roberts
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Wild
Mr. Lapham	Mr. Norton
Mr. I. Manning	(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Bovell	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Evans	Mr. Watts
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Lawrence	(Teller.)

Clause thus passed.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—EDUCATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 5th November.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [9.2]: First of all, I would like to thank the Premier for allowing this Order of the Day to be debated at this stage; and I would also like to say that I propose to support the second reading of the Bill, although I do so, in some respects, with a considerable amount of reservation, because I do not think that the circumstances which exist in regard to education in Western Australia at present justify any great degree of optimism—not even the modified proposals in this Bill—for raising the school-leaving age in the reasonably foreseeable future.

I recollect being a member for this House in 1943 when the Bill which was then presented, and which was afterwards an Act to come into force when proclaimed, was discussed by the then Minister for Education, and references were made to the desirability of raising the school-leaving age to 15 years. He indicated at the time that it was not intended immediately to bring such a proposition into operation. No doubt had circumstances remained over a considerable number of years, in regard to the increasing school population, at or about the figures that they were in 1943, it would have been practicable within three or four years of the cessation of hostilities to bring the proposition into operation, even as the 1943 Act proposed, by raising the school-leaving age by a full year at once.

At that time, if my recollection serves me aright, it was a rarity for the population of our schools to increase by more than about 500 pupils per annum. In fact, there had been one or two years at or about that time where there had been no actual increase in school population at all. In consequence it will quite readily be seen that, even if one took as a guiding figure maximum classes of 40 children, an additional number of classrooms not exceeding 12 or 13 would have been sufficient to cope with the increase, provided the school-leaving age remained at 14 years; and a very reasonable additional number would have been sufficient to cope with the increase in population at schools had the school-leaving age been raised to 15 years.

I say that because 12 or 13 classrooms was not then, and certainly is not now, the maximum number that could be erected in any one year. I think that even at the conclusion of the last great war, at least 30 per annum could be erected with the resources then available; and in consequence, had conditions remained at or about the figure that they then were, I have no doubt that the school-leaving age would have been raised to 15 years, seven, nine or 10 years ago, and no particular

problem would be facing the Education Department in regard to that aspect today.

Broadly speaking, I think nobody believes that it is undesirable that the school-leaving age should be raised. In fact, it appears to me that, as time goes on, it is becoming increasingly necessary, provided that it can be done in such a way that the State, and the children attending schools, receive the full benefit from the increased opportunity for education.

On the one hand, we obviously have the considerable pressure which requires us to train more and more people in science and technology. In order to do that, it is quite clear that there must be substantial encouragement for our younger people to continue in their education for longer periods than they do now. It is not, of course, absolutely a requisite that the greater proportion of them should progress through to university standard; but it is essential in these times that a greater proportion should do so than are able to do so at present.

When one looks at the technical side, the skilled tradesman and the like, and the greater degree of knowledge which, in many of these trades, is required in order to reach the highest standard of skill, it is perfectly clear to me—and I think to everyone—that very serious consideration has to be given to this problem. However, to bring this matter to fruition at the present juncture in the circumstances that exist in the education field in this State—and when I say “this State” I am not singling it out; I am merely using it because it is this State we are concerned with—we must realise that the proposition, even with the modified proposal in this Bill, is going to be fraught with very great difficulties for the Education Department; and, in my opinion, with very great risks that there will not be a higher standard of education achieved by many of the children who will be affected by this measure when it comes into operation, because we shall not have been able to cope with the requirements of classrooms, teachers and equipment that would appear to be so essential before this proposition can be carried into full and successful effect.

I do not say that from guesswork. On the 17th July last I asked the Minister a series of questions concerning various aspects of the education position in Western Australia, and I received from him a very full reply. One of those questions was in respect of single classes, as opposed to group classes, of over 50 children. I asked how many there were at schools in Western Australia at that time, the last check having been made approximately two months before. The Minister's answer was 374.

It is generally recognised that neither the teacher nor the child can receive the utmost benefit from education if instruction is given in a class of more than 40

children; in fact, many of those that have studied this matter very closely and given it intense consideration believe that a lesser number than 40 is the requisite figure.

But I do not propose to seek the ideal in discussing this particular aspect. As I said, I will take the figure of 40 as being a reasonable one. Therefore, there are, in single classes, 374 that have over 50 children; and that, of course, is a number that is unsatisfactory and should at the earliest possible moment be reduced.

I do not underestimate the difficulties of the Education Department; and, in fact, I am fully acquainted with at least some of them. But the question arises whether it is wise in any way at all to increase the number of classes that are in the position to which I have just referred and which, I think, must be a necessary corollary even to the modified proposal that has been put forward by the Minister for Education to raise the school-leaving age in two stages—six months at a time—because the question continues; and as a result it was ascertained that there were 271 group classes of over 40 children.

In many cases it is well known that it is a more difficult proposition to teach a group class comprising that number of children than it is to teach even a single class; and when one pursues the matter to the next answer, one finds that there were 33 group classes of over 50 children. So that was the position at approximately the end of May last; and so far as I can ascertain, in the intervening six months—although of course I did not expect it because the time is only six months—it would appear there has been no appreciable change, and there certainly has been no betterment if one is to take notice—as one must—of the evidence reported as having been given by the Director of Education to the Commonwealth Grants Commission during its visit to this State. I will make some reference to the report of that evidence in a moment.

Before I touch on that, however, there are other aspects which show the extreme difficulty facing the Education Department in carrying out even its modified proposal; because, on the date in question—the 17th July last—I was advised that there were 26 outside halls and other buildings used as classrooms accommodating 900 children or thereabouts; that there were 34 classrooms, staff rooms and other rooms in Government schools not intended for use as classrooms accommodating 1,000 children, although it was believed that 16 of those would be discontinued when work in hand was completed. Therefore it might be fair—and I wish to be fair—if I quoted the number as being 18 instead of 34.

The Minister then told me that new classrooms to accommodate present school numbers—with no class having over 40 children and with no raising of the school-leaving age—would number 243, and that a further 110 classrooms would be required.

if the school-leaving aged were raised, allowing only for normal increases in school population as are now recognised. So we would have a position where there would be 353 new classrooms required if no class was to be greater than 40 children, and the school-leaving age was to be raised to 15 and there was no increase in the normal school population of recent years.

Obviously, the erection of 353 classrooms in any period, even if two years, would be extremely difficult, if not well-nigh impossible. I should say that, even with the utmost enthusiasm on the part of the department and its Minister, not less than three years would be required to accomplish that; and of course one would have to take into consideration the increasing numbers that would probably be entailed during that period of three years—so that 353 classrooms would not be the maximum number required but probably would become the minimum.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Did the Minister say when he was going to implement the first stage of the raising of the school-leaving age?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Not exactly. But I cannot appreciate a state of affairs that would mean an amendment of legislation that already exists unless it is proposed to make a start within the following six months. I can assume from the Minister's speech that the second six months might be delayed considerably, and I would not blame him for that. However, I could hardly assume that legislation to amend the existing law, which already provides for the school-leaving age to be raised to 15 by proclamation, would be brought down unless it were intended that within a comparatively short time some activity would be in train to increase the age by the first six months.

The increase in the school numbers at the beginning of this year was 4,950, according to information given to me by the hon. gentleman. I was allowing that next year and the year after the number would not increase by more than 4,000. On the other hand, in the report of the Director of Education he is of the opinion that it will increase by 4,500; and that, therefore, worsens, to some degree, the picture I have already drawn in regard to the problems to which I have referred.

We now turn to the question of teaching staff, in regard to which, on the same date, I also asked the hon. gentleman some questions. He advised me that to bring classes to 40 children, 263 new teachers would be required. Last year, however, 360 teachers were qualified from teachers' colleges; but they only succeeded in increasing the number available by 175—and that is of course normal experience, because there are always a number of resignations, retirements and, unfortunately, a few teachers who die

in harness. So one can always expect that there is a wastage of something over 50 per cent—or at least not less than 50 per cent.—of the number of teachers that are made available by teachers' colleges from year to year.

So, as I see the position, quite apart from the teaching problem—which I will leave for the moment—to replace the hat-rooms and the sheds, etc., that are being used as classrooms, and to reduce the classes to 40 without reducing the school-leaving age, 243 classrooms would be required; if the school-leaving age were raised over a period of two years, 110 more; and if the additional number is taken as 4,000 in each year, and not the director's figure of 4,500, an additional 200 would be required, making a total of 553 teachers.

So I think it is a bold man indeed who could safely say that the implementation of this proposal can be carried out at any specific moment; and for that reason I appreciate why the Minister for Education did not give us a specific moment; because, as I say, he would be a brave man who would have tackled the proposition last week.

But the director went a little further even than the information I was obtaining from the Minister some weeks ago. He confirmed what I have already said in part, by saying—if it was reported correctly—that 175 new teachers per annum would be required to cover the increased numbers without reducing the classes or raising the school age. If the school-leaving age were increased, 325 more would be required in four years. If primary and secondary school classes were reduced to what the director's report has called "a desirable limit"—and there I do not know what figure he uses—390 new teachers would be required at once. I would point out that none of the information reported told us how many would be required if classes were reduced to the desirable limit, and kept at that desirable limit, notwithstanding the increased school population.

So on the one hand we have the problem of school buildings, a very terrific one which—on a moderate computation and dealing with the ordinary classrooms only—would involve an expenditure of certainly not less than £2,250,000; and then we have the need in the next four years on the figures given by the Director of Education—but not taking into consideration what extra would be required to keep the classes down to a desirable level notwithstanding the increased population, of 1,025, plus 390, which is 1,415 teachers who will be required. This will be in the next four years.

At no stage yet have we been able to achieve an average of 364 new teachers per annum. It will mean doubling up on the figures of last year, or a little better than that. While I can appreciate that

partly as a result of the bursary system introduced in the days when I was in the office of education, and partly because of other encouragement at and since that time there has been a greatly increased number of applicants for the teaching profession, as I say, at no stage have we reached a state of affairs when we could be reasonably certain of getting anywhere near 364 new teachers per annum, after making allowances for the inevitable deaths, retirements and resignations that take place from time to time.

It must also be remembered that of the teaching staff that we have at present—approximately 800—are those that are known as teachers on supply; they are not on the permanent staff. Many of them are retired teachers who have returned to assist the department and the children of the State in a way which everybody very greatly appreciates, and in a manner which has done a tremendous amount of good for education in Western Australia in recent years.

But notwithstanding the magnificent job they have done, and notwithstanding the willingness with which they have done it, it is not a completely satisfactory position when approximately one-fifth—a little more than one-fifth—of the total teaching staff in Western Australia should have to be drawn from people who have been brought back to the department in those circumstances. Accordingly that only shows the need for some greater contribution of new teachers; because I should suggest that in respect to some of these teachers on supply—and some of them have been there a considerable number of years—there will be a greater proportion of those retiring in a year or two than in the past, and this will not minimise but rather accentuate the problems to which I have referred.

When the Minister spoke on this subject a few nights ago, he did not see fit to touch upon any of these problems in detail; therefore it is impossible for me—and I suggest for any other member of this House—other than by a process of estimation to find out the intentions of the Minister. Whatever they are, they will be fraught with difficulties.

If they contemplate activity in the immediate future in raising the school-leaving age, even in the modified way proposed in this measure, so far as I can see this must happen: Either the present unsatisfactory position in regard to classrooms and the size of classes must continue, and probably be accentuated or worsened; or, alternatively, there will be a very considerable delay before this proposition can be put into operation; because it does not seem to me on the figures to be practicable to reduce the size of classes, to remedy the classroom position, and to increase the school-leaving age all in the

one immediate future period. That simply cannot be done. So the responsibility in this matter is with the Minister.

I agree that it is desirable for the school-leaving age to be raised to the extent proposed in the Bill, provided that the overall structure and condition of education in Western Australia is not to be made worse thereby. It is for the Minister, having all the information and the whole of the departmental knowledge, experience and facts behind him, to make the decision. I hope he will be able to make it successfully; but I would be sorry to think that a hasty decision on this matter should result in a worsening, rather than an improvement of the existing situation.

Dr. Robertson, as reported in this evidence, went on to say that measures which would improve the level of education in Western Australia were a decrease in the size of classes, an increase in the school-leaving age, and an increase in the amount and variety of equipment for specialised studies. He placed the decrease in the sizes of classes first. I am not in the position to say whether it was his intention to regard the decrease in size as the most important point, or whether he did that because one point had to be mentioned first; but I have a strong suspicion that it was his intention that the decrease in size of classes should be given some priority.

He then went on to say that if the leaving age were raised from 14 to 15 years, as already mentioned, secondary schools would need an additional 325 teachers by 1962, apart from the ordinary annual number of 60 due to resignation and retirement. That is in the secondary school service only. In my general coverage of the figures I included that figure of 60 because I took the figures over all; therefore I do not want to give the impression that that figure should be added to the one I mentioned.

Dr. Robertson said further that by 1960 school enrolment would have doubled the 1943 figure of 65,527; there were 105,583 children at school this year; last year 12½ per cent. of Western Australian school children were migrants; and if migration was stepped up, this would upset present enrolment estimates. That of course is a matter to which I have not given any attention at all. So far as I can immediately ascertain, there is no intention to step up migration numbers; in consequence that might not affect us. If it does, the situation to which I have already referred could be that much worse.

He then added that the retention rate of students aged 15 years and over in Australia was low, because many people still felt that higher education was undesirable. I have already made reference to that comment in what might be classed as the national interest, because I have spoken

of the need for a greater number of scientists, technologists and the like. It behoves us to encourage in every possible way the opportunities and the desires of people to obtain entry into skilled trades and professions, because we as a race must move with other races, and we must keep our end up.

As I have already indicated, I shall have to leave this matter to the Minister because the responsibility appears to be entirely his. It is no use blinking the facts; they are before us, and they indicate that it will be an extremely difficult matter to resolve. It is quite clear to me that if the school-leaving age is raised quickly, the standard of education cannot be raised; nor can the lot of the teaching profession be improved in regard to sizes.

If on balance the Minister comes to the conclusion that it is better to raise the school-leaving age rather than to tackle the problem to the degree that it can be tackled, no doubt he will give us his reasons. Nevertheless, I shall give him my support, because our interest in education, as he knows very well, is not a political issue, but is for the benefit of the people and the children of this State. I leave that aspect on that note, and I would pass on to some short references to one or two other matters in the Bill.

The other amendments are not of a breath-taking variety. Whether the name of welfare officer will achieve any better results than the name used previously, I do not know.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: It is like using the term of inspector or superintendent of education.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: That is so. It seems to me not to matter in the slightest. If the change will please anybody, it is highly desirable. I cannot say that I am impressed by one particular proposal in this Bill; that is, the one dealing with truancy and with charges laid before the Children's Court. I certainly subscribe to the idea that the Children's Court might release the child on probation; I certainly subscribe to the idea that the Children's Court might not record a conviction, and take security from the parent for the more regular attendance of the child at school; but I think it would be most unwise to give the court the power to commit the child to an institution for a period not exceeding one month.

Unless we have an institution which is specially designed for this type of child, I would suggest that that proposition is a most retrograde and undesirable one. Such institutions as we have capable of receiving children committed by the Children's Court, within the limits which are of necessity at the moment imposed on them, do a very excellent job; but all classes of young people committed from the Children's Court have, of necessity, to

be committed to some of these places—some of them, I think, on such charges as breaking and entering and other minor or sometimes most major criminal offences.

After all, the truant at present is a child under 14 years. If this Bill comes into operation he will be, at most, a child under 15 years; and if this power is given to a magistrate, it might be exercised in respect of a child's truancy to place him in one of these institutions, when he would immediately come into contact with young people who had committed offences far more serious than that which he had committed himself; and that in my view might easily lead him into worse circumstances; because the offence of truancy—playing the wag, as the Minister called it—is one which, I fancy, even the best of us were guilty of from time to time.

The Minister for Education: What did you want to bring that up for?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I am going to suggest to the Minister very strongly that he delete that provision from the Bill. So far as the rest of the clauses are concerned, if there is anything I want to say about them I will do so in Committee; but generally speaking they are unobjectionable.

I do not know whether the Minister would consider it worth while providing in the Bill that this school-leaving age could be raised in three stages. The situation would be that there would at least be some reduction of the annual increment and a longer period allowed to the department. However, as I have said, the responsibility is the Minister's. So far as I am concerned, I repeat, I am anxious to see the school-leaving age raised, provided it does not further deteriorate the opportunities available for education in Western Australia which, at the present time, are not in a very good position. I support the second reading.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe) [9.45]: This is a very important Bill, and I listened with a great deal of interest to the speech made by the Leader of the Country Party. He went to some pains to give facts and figures about educational problems surrounding the present position with regard to the size of school classes, and the problems that will apply concerning the raising of the school-leaving age. I trust that members gave due regard to the facts that he was able to give, because on the whole, they present rather an alarming picture.

Hon. D. Brand: They certainly do!

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: This Bill has two objects, as I see it. One is to increase the school-leaving age: when, we do not know. The second objective is to tighten the laws relating to truancy. It seems rather significant that these two objectives should be in the same Bill.

With compulsory schooling until the age of 14 years we are already told that welfare officers—or truant officers as they are now—have some difficulty with truants; and the problem with the raising of the school-leaving age to 15 years, of truancy, I should imagine, will be accentuated, particularly if, as I fear, there will be comparatively little done to reduce the size of classes and of schools, and, secondly, to provide interesting, profitable, and appropriate courses for the new intake and indeed for all the children.

The point I would like to make at this particular time is as to when this proposition is going to be implemented. The Minister, in introducing this Bill, paid scant regard to this important section of the Bill relating to the raising of the school-leaving age; and I feel that, in that respect, he is to be very much criticised. This is a problem which should receive the most searching consideration, because there are so many problems that face us with the raising of the school-leaving age, and even with schooling at the present time.

Yet the Minister, in one brief paragraph, simply dismissed this proposition to raise the school-leaving age. He said that the anxiety of the Government is very great, and that it desires to increase the compulsory school-leaving age to 15; and he further said, "I give the House an assurance that when conditions are appropriate, a move will be made to increase the school-leaving age to 14½ years and, it is hoped, in the following year, to 15 years."

The Minister for Education: That is clear enough.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: It is clear until it reaches the point as to when the Government is going to do it. How do we know what the Government's standards are in regard to the appropriate time? Are the standards as they are now or are the standards going to be as the director intimated in a Press notice today—that the standards at present are not desirable. But more of that anon.

It is my wish, at this stage, to say to the Minister that I hope that in the reply to this debate he will devote a considerable portion of time to explaining the background of this measure and how the way will be prepared to implement it.

With regard to the tightening of the truancy provisions, I find little fault except with the harsh provision to which the Leader of the Country Party referred; and when he moves his amendment, at the appropriate time, he will have my whole-hearted support. I can lead myself to believe at this stage that the Minister will not offer any opposition to it.

The Minister for Education: To what?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: To that part of the Bill which relates to committing a child to an institution if the charge is proved when the child is not necessarily an habitual truant. Taking all things into consideration, I think the truancy provisions are warranted; and on those clauses the Minister's explanations were, I feel, satisfactory and sufficient.

The part of the Bill relating to the school-leaving age is the important part, and the one that poses many problems. This is a long-sought educational reform, which requires careful and intelligent handling; and it is on this matter that I would have liked the Minister to give some indication of the preparations that were to be made and of the prerequisites that were to be attended to in order to ensure its success. Indeed, the substance of the director's remarks to the Grants Commission, as reported in today's Press, would, if put in a different form, have been excellent for the Minister's second reading speech. I, for one, would have much appreciated having that information.

I feel that if we do not positively ensure that there are certain prerequisites to the raising of the school-leaving age, then we will cheat the child; we will cheat the teacher; and we will cheat the country. I would like members to consider each of these points. In cheating the child we prevent him from properly fitting himself to take his place in the world; we frustrate and cheat the teacher because he is unable properly to teach under the conditions that apply; and we cheat the country because it does not have the full benefit of an educated community. I suggest that the prerequisites to which I have referred are—

1. Ensuring that adequate accommodation be provided in the academic, technical, commercial and other educational spheres.

2. A venturesome curriculum providing expanded and new courses to cater for all and particularly for the wider variety of educational requirements and demands in the new intake.

3. That there must be action to reduce the size of the classes to ensure the greatest resultant educational value and so obviate mounting disciplinary troubles.

4. To reduce the size of schools.

The Minister for Education: Which schools?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The John Curtin High School.

The Minister for Education: That has been reduced.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: It has not yet been reduced. The Kent Street High School is another.

The Minister for Education: You know what has happened in Hollywood, Applecross and Medina.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Yes. But I told the Minister prior to the formation of the John Curtin High School as an entity, that it would be most unwise to amalgamate Princess May Girls' School with Fremantle Boys' School as John Curtin High School before the time was ripe and ready. My warning then has been well and faithfully proved to have been justified. I could talk to the Minister about some of the problems there with 2,500 pupils. The head master is absolutely unable properly to control the school.

I could mention the disciplinary troubles that exist there and in other high schools that are over-large. Many of the troubles at the John Curtin High School could have been avoided if notice had been taken of my warning and if Princess May Girls' School had remained as a separate entity until the Hollywood and Applecross high schools were built. It was a very premature move.

The Minister for Education: No. I think things worked out all right.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: They will work out in the fullness of time, but much damage will be done in the interim. I go on to say that the next prerequisite is—

5. To provide greatly increased and improved equipment.

I ask members to recall that at present our educational system is sadly inadequate in its efforts to cater properly and effectively for many children, particularly when their primary schooling has ended. I refer to the first two years of their attendance at secondary or high schools. Even in the primary schools, the large-size classes unfortunately prevent effective individual tuition. Every member will appreciate that the real secret of sound education lies in the ability of the teacher to be able to give individual tuition.

The Minister for Education: To an extent, but not all the time. The child has to learn to think for itself.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I quite agree, and I appreciate that point. Individual tuition is that form of teacher-help which assists light and understanding to flow into a child's mind. Some children find it well-nigh impossible to follow all sections of the mass teaching which is and must be carried out. That is the point the Minister was referring to a moment ago. There must perforce be mass teaching to a class; but where problems arise which sections of the class cannot understand, one finds that children lag behind and they lose interest because they cannot follow the points the teacher is making.

If the teacher is able to do so, he endeavours at a later stage, by individual tuition, to point out to the children the point that is holding them up and preventing them from gaining a fuller understanding and arriving at the position where where they can go on another step. Unfortunately, large-size classes prevent that to a great extent. Some teachers of the genius variety can still do it in extra-large classes; but, as members will readily understand, those individuals are few and far between.

The Minister for Education: Not in this State.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I would say this State has a larger proportion, possibly, than the other States; but beyond that I will not go. Individual tuition is that form of teacher-help which allows the brighter and more intelligent child to see and strive for the wider and broader horizons. So one sees the value of individual tuition. It assists those below average in the class to move forward and retain an interest in education, and it assists the brighter ones to progress towards new objectives. So I can say—and I am in good company in saying it—that at the present time, with the compulsory leaving age of 14 years, the children do not really get a fair deal. That is so because of (a) large classes; (b) lack of individual tuition; (c) uninspired and uninteresting school courses; and (d) a lack of technical and commercial equipment and accommodation.

I believe that if we do not remedy these faults, but merely add a few classrooms and raise the school-leaving age, we will create such problems as might well startle and alarm the people of this State. We should bear in mind that those children who now remain at school after the age of 14 years do so, in the main, with the short-term objectives of passing the Junior Certificate or Leaving Certificate examinations, having in mind, of course, while pursuing those short-term objectives, the longer-term objectives of entering some occupation or profession.

The type of children with those objectives is distinct from the ones that leave school at the age of 14 years. The ones that go on to Junior and Leaving standard have many problems somewhat similar to the problems which face all school children and which will face the new intake with an increased leaving age; but the difficulties associated with forcing other youngsters to remain a further six months or so at school, when they might well be fed-up to the back teeth with school—as many of them are—and when they are just waiting to rid themselves of what from their point of view is the uselessness of school, will be very great and will create much greater educational, social and moral problems.

If we force these children to remain at school without properly catering for them, things could easily happen that might well startle the people of this State. The extreme that could occur was vividly placed before us in an American motion picture recently, under the title of "The Blackboard Jungle", which highlighted the severe disciplinary troubles that exist in high schools in the U.S.A. That is the extreme that could happen; and the least that would happen—I say this in all sincerity—would be a very probable increase in juvenile delinquency. Let us be wise before the event, and let the Government prepare the way for this important reform. Why is it the desire of everyone to raise the school-leaving age? I think it is because of a wish to try to ensure a higher overall standard of education, which will in turn bring benefits and enjoyment to the individual, with resultant benefit to the State as a whole. The two factors are so closely linked that I believe they are very important indeed.

The Minister for Education: Very nicely put!

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: If we do this without preparing the way, as I have said, will we achieve our objective of increasing the standard of education? The Leader of the Country Party said we most certainly would not increase the standard by doing that; and at this stage I will make reference to the State School Teachers' Union's view on this matter. It is the desire of the union, basically of course, that as soon as possible the school-leaving age should be raised; but a motion passed at a teachers' conference in August, 1956, stated—

The conference warns the Government that any step to implement the proposal to raise the school-leaving age, unless accompanied by improved provision for non-academic students will create grave educational and disciplinary problems.

The Minister for Education: I think a motion was carried at the last conference.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Yes; I have notice of that also. While on this point, I wish to refer also to the union's point of view expressed through an editorial written on some questions asked by the Leader of the Country Party. These questions were gone into in detail by the Leader of the Country Party, and his effort was to show statistically that it was impossible to raise the standard of education—

Mr. Roberts drew attention to the state of the House.

The SPEAKER: I have counted the House and there is a quorum present.

The Minister for Transport: It is time there was higher education for the hon. member, as he cannot count.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I was referring to the fact that the questions of the Leader of the Country Party indicated that it was impossible to raise the standard of education in this State if the school-leaving age were raised without certain prerequisites being attended to; and at the end of the editorial in "The W.A. Teachers' Journal," of November, 1957, we read—

The figures quoted here give an alarming picture of the position of our educational system and if one were to reassess the figures on the basis of maximum class numbers of 35 they would be more alarming still. For a good many years now neither the children nor the teachers of Western Australia have been fairly treated. The essential requirements for the proper education of Australian children have not been met.

I wish now to refer to a paragraph which appeared in today's issue of "The West Australian." In it there is the statement that Western Australia would need 175 new teachers per year up to 1962. That is what Dr. Robertson, the Director of Education, told the Commonwealth Grants Commission in Perth.

The Minister for Education: Did you say 175 new teachers?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Yes.

The Minister for Education: I might be wrong in this; but I think that on the 13th December, I will be issuing to successful trainee teachers more than 400 certificates for the year.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: But the Minister himself has pointed out that the wastage is very severe, and the net gain will not be enough to cater effectively and adequately for the children of this State. If the Minister listened to the Leader of the Country Party—as I am sure he did—he will recall that the hon. member pointed out how difficult it would be to supply sufficient teachers to cater for the children of the State if the school-leaving age were increased. In this Press report we find the following:—

Next year there would be a shortage of about 80 classrooms, despite the already big size of classes.

I would like members to appreciate the point I am making regarding cheating the child, the teacher, and the country. How much worse would the position be if the school-leaving age were raised too soon? Another point made in this Press statement is as follows:—

If primary and secondary classes were reduced to desirable limits, the Education Department would need an extra 390 teachers immediately.

That is a report from the Director of Education. He says that we would need an extra 390 teachers immediately, if primary and secondary classes were reduced to desirable limits, apart altogether from raising the school-leaving age.

The Minister for Education: Did he state that to the Grants Commission?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Yes. What did the Minister mean by that?

The Minister for Education: I wondered the source of your information.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Why did the Minister want to make that point particularly?

The Minister for Education: I was not sure whether you were quoting from the annual report.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: No. I mentioned that he had made that statement in evidence to the Commonwealth Grants Commission. I wondered whether the Minister had some reason behind the interjection.

The Minister for Education: No.

Mr. Court: I think the Minister had a twinkle in his eye.

The Minister for Transport: I think you can rest assured that the Director of Education would be making a very good case out for financial assistance.

The Minister for Education: And he did.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The Minister for Transport jumps in where angels fear to tread.

The Minister for Transport: No.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: That is what the Minister for Transport usually does; and I will say to him, before he carries on in that vein, that he ought to be careful, because the Director of Education would not thank him if he felt that a Minister of the Crown were indicating—even merely indicating—that what he was saying to the Grants Commission was insincere.

The Minister for Transport: No; but obviously you put up the best case possible when you are seeking additional assistance. That goes without saying, surely!

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I do not think the Minister should pursue this particular point any further because, as I say, that inference could well be drawn from what he has said already.

The Minister for Transport: I thought the member for Cottesloe would have been satisfied with that without making any comment on it.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: As I said previously, the Director of Education said that if primary and secondary classes were reduced to desirable limits, the Education Department would need an extra 390 teachers immediately. Even if we cut that number down—because the Minister for Transport seems to think that it is an extraordinary statement to make, or it is overdrawn—by 90 teachers, it is still a substantial number of additional teachers to require and means greatly increased accommodation to cater for the requirements.

Just imagine the problems that would complicate the whole set-up if the school-leaving age were raised too soon—not necessarily too soon, but before certain adequate precautions were taken. The last part of the statement that I want to quote reads as follows:—

Measures which would improve the level of education in W.A. were:

A decrease in the size of classes.

An increase in the school-leaving age.

An increase in the amount and the variety of equipment for specialised studies and manual training.

There are three measures to raise the level of education in Western Australia; and members will notice that the first one is a decrease in the size of classes. It stands to reason that that should be so; and I think that because the Director of Education—a man whom we regard very highly in this State, and who is regarded very highly throughout the length and breadth of Australia—makes such a statement, we should regard it in its true proportions.

When this step is taken let us make sure that this extra year which we are going to force youngsters to stay at school is one that will be well and profitably, as well as enjoyably, spent.

The Minister for Education: Nobody is arguing about that.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Let not this extra year be a further burden on the child who feels, even now, glad to get out of school at the age of 14 years.

The Minister for Education: A lot of them don't.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: We must ensure that our standards are not lowered; and we must ensure that we have a curriculum which caters effectively and adequately for the new intake, and which caters better for those who stay at school until the age of 14 years at present. I would imagine, too, that it would be preferable, to cushion the effect of this, and to assist in the implementation of it, it might be better if the Government's proposition were to raise the school-leaving age by three steps. But I am not going to debate the niceties of that at this time.

The Minister for Education: The amendment that is before the House would permit of that being done.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I follow the Minister's point. All in all, let me say that I support the Bill in the fervent hope that those prerequisites of which I spoke will be given due attention, and that the Minister will not be stampeded into accentuating the problems that beset the education of children in Western Australia today.

MR. I. W. MANNING (Harvey) [10.23]: I desire to make some comments on this measure; and it is not my idea to oppose the Bill, because I think that the principle of raising the school-leaving age has a good deal of merit. But we should take this opportunity of pointing out to the Minister the position, as we see it, which exists throughout the whole of the education system today. Also we should point out to the Minister any defects of which we are aware.

I think we all agree that it is desirable that we should seek to achieve higher education, and a better education, for our children. It is my firm belief that we need first of all to look closely at the present classroom position. I can cite an illustration by telling the House what happened to a friend of mine. This young lady that I know left the teachers' training college and was sent to a large country school where she was put in charge of a class of 58 infants. That is not an isolated instance. I am sure that at many country centres there are other teachers who are in a similar position; and the same, no doubt, applies in the metropolitan area.

These young student teachers who have just left the teachers' training college are put in charge not only of large classes, of what are termed single classes, but also large classes comprising two grades such as 2A and 3A, or 4A and 5A. That is a most difficult task for a student teacher to perform. As a result, the infants in their charge are not getting the grounding in their education that is so necessary in the classes that follow. If a child in an infant class does not get that grounding, it has extreme difficulty with its school work throughout its school life. Such a child falls behind the rest of the children in the class, and it has great difficulty in catching up with them.

There is no doubt that infant classes today are far too large in numbers. It is the infant classes which should be reduced in numbers first of all. A maximum of 30 children should be the target, in my opinion, so that those children, if necessary, can have some individual attention to ensure that they grasp the knowledge the teacher is trying to impart. Once a child gets a good start in its school life, the following years are made much easier.

The question of dual classes is one which I think the department and the Minister should study very closely before considering the raising of the school-leaving age. I have noticed that teachers, particularly young teachers, have great difficulty in handling a dual class. The teacher faces a very grim task if he has in the one room two classes each comprising 25 children. Not only the teachers experience difficulty, but also the children in those classes cannot obtain the full education that they

should. They miss out on various subjects because the teacher is not in a position to give them his full attention or give them some individual instruction.

The Leader of the Country Party quoted many figures, some of which were repeated by the member for Cottesloe. Those figures were presented to the Grants Commission by the Director of Education. The information revealed by the figures indicates that the situation existing in the educational sphere of this State today concerning classroom accommodation and the number of teachers, is far from satisfactory.

The Minister for Education: That is hardly a fair statement.

MR. I. W. MANNING: That the situation is far from satisfactory? I think the Minister must agree with me.

The Minister for Education: The fact is, that apart from New South Wales, the position in this State is better than in any of the other States.

MR. I. W. MANNING: I do not deny that that may be; but we still have a long way to go towards ensuring that our children have a better education before we consider raising the school-leaving age. It is necessary for the classes to be reduced in numbers so that the teacher in charge is able to give the children some individual instruction.

I know only too well—as most members know—from the experience I have had with my own children who are attending school, the subjects they excel in and those in which their knowledge is weak. It is generally concerning those subjects on which the child's knowledge is weak that the teacher has been unable to give some necessary individual instruction.

Therefore I consider that, firstly, we should provide for better supervision of the children so that their educational standard may be raised. If that is the Government's object, the way to achieve it is to increase the classroom accommodation. If the raising of the school-leaving age is designed to keep the children at school until they are 14½ this would go some way towards ensuring that they stay at school a little longer and that their education is carried a little further.

However, if this is done, it is extremely necessary that they be taught subjects which are of interest to them. In talking to many children, I have learned that they seem to enhance their education a great deal more after they leave school, because it is only then that they make a decision as to which avocation in life they intend to follow.

Many children, at the age of 14, feel that what they learn at school is not of very great value to them because they do not know what they are going to be

later in life. Therefore, the greatest factor in the education of children is to ensure that they get a good grounding in the subjects that are taught to them whilst at school. Later, when they decide what trade or profession they will follow, it is necessary to make available to them technical and other educational facilities which will prove of benefit to them in later life.

I repeat that I am not opposed to the school-leaving age. I have pointed out that it could be advantageous to keep the child at school for a further six months. However, I think it is necessary to impress upon the Minister that there are more ways to further the education of children than by raising the school-leaving age. In endeavouring to do that, I have put forward several suggestions; and I hope the Minister will take some cognisance of them, because they are aspects in which I firmly believe. First of all, I consider that the class numbers should be reduced and the class that should be given prior consideration is the infants' class. Secondly, of course, greater accommodation should be provided, and more teachers should be made available.

MR. NALDER (Katanning) [10.29]: I believe that it is important to the young people of our State for the school-leaving age to be raised. However, the information that has been given to us by the Minister has been extremely scanty. When the Minister introduced the Bill he spoke for only about two minutes on the reasons why the Bill has been introduced and, in particular, on those reasons that justify the raising of the school-leaving age.

Before the Minister thinks of raising the school-leaving age, he should turn his attention to some of the problems that exist in the country schools today, particularly with regard to accommodation. If the Minister persists with his intention to embark on this proposition almost immediately, I feel he will have one of the biggest and most serious problems on his hands, and he will be responsible for it. At present there are many schools in the country districts that are overcrowded, and the children in the country have had a raw deal over the past few years.

The Minister for Education: How long?

MR. NALDER: I think the Minister knows; but I will remind him if he likes.

The Minister for Education: For how long have they had a raw deal?

MR. NALDER: From the point of view of accommodation, they have had a raw deal in the last three years. When the Minister visited the country areas he promised the people in Katanning that they would have another two classrooms provided.

The Minister for Education: He promised nothing definitely.

MR. NALDER: Am I to understand that the Minister promised it indefinitely? He promised that the classrooms would be built as early as possible. At this stage there is an urgent necessity for three additional rooms at the Katanning Junior High School. At the moment one class is situated in the parish hall, which is a mile away from the school; another class is situated in another room; and there is a floating class which has to be catered for. Next year the position will be much worse.

If we contemplate raising the school-leaving age before we provide the children in the country with the accommodation they require for essential education, then I feel the problem will get worse and worse quicker than it will be relieved. The position is urgent, and I feel sure the Minister would be well advised not to persist with such legislation before he has grappled with the more urgent problem of accommodation.

The Minister for Education: Did you read the Bill?

MR. NALDER: Yes. I have read the Bill.

The Minister for Transport: I bet you haven't!

The Minister for Education: I mean concerning the provision about the school-leaving age, and what it means.

MR. NALDER: Yes, I have read it; and if I have not quite grasped its meaning perhaps the Minister could give his interpretation of it. I understand the Minister proposes to increase the school-leaving age by six months.

The Minister for Education: That is not in the Bill.

MR. NALDER: That is how I read the measure; but if it is not so, let the Minister inform the House when he replies.

MR. LAWRENCE: Perhaps it would be just as well to send the Minister back to school.

MR. NALDER: That might not be a bad idea. Not only is the matter of accommodation an urgent problem, but it is also necessary to reduce the size of classes. It is not possible for a teacher to adequately teach his or her scholars in a class that is overcrowded. The conditions must be ideal for teachers to be able to handle their scholars satisfactorily, because the problems that exist in our day are bad enough without having the attendant hazards of overcrowding and insufficient accommodation.

It is not only unfair to the teacher, but it is also unfair to the headmaster who tries to keep an eye over the entire school. We all know that headmasters take some pride

in their work, and they generally like their scholars to get on, and their classes to have a reasonable percentage of passes at the end of the year. The present position is unfair to the entire staff, including the headmaster.

Country children already have innumerable problems with which to contend, without having a lack of accommodation added to them. Among these problems is that of transport. The children in the city are far more fortunate by comparison. Many of the children in the country districts have to catch school buses early in the morning, after having walked three or four miles in all types of weather to do so; and that problem, of course, also confronts them on their way home.

Mr. Lawrence: There are quite a number in the metropolitan area who are so situated.

Mr. NALDER: I do not think it is necessary for the children in the metropolitan area to walk three or four miles in order to catch their buses, as is the case with country children; and this, of course, has now been made a lot worse with the curtailment of the school bus services. I hope that matter will come before this House before Parliament rises, because evidence has been adduced to show that this problem does exist.

Mr. Bovell: Some of the children leave at 5.30 a.m. and get back at 6.30 p.m.

Mr. NALDER: I am glad that the member for Vasse has had some experience of this, because it will show clearly that these cases to which I refer are not isolated. I have referred to these matters because I think the children in the country have many problems.

The Minister for Transport: I think the hon. member is one of them!

Mr. NALDER: Another matter on which I would like to touch is that of higher education in the country districts. I am sure that the question of the school-leaving age will iron itself out if the standard of education, and the teaching facilities made available in the country districts, are improved; because many children will automatically stay longer at school if they are given the opportunity to take subjects which they are not taking at the moment.

In many of the country areas the education system is restricted, particularly where there are no high schools. In these cases the parents of the children have to make other arrangements for them to secure higher education. It is necessary for them to go to the cities or the towns where there are high schools; and this, of course, means an added financial burden which many of them are not in a position to meet. So until the standard of education is improved in the country districts, we will still have the

problem of the school-leaving age with us. If the department increases the facilities for education in the country districts the children will automatically stay longer at school. If a survey is made of the area where there are district high schools that point can be proved.

I make these comments because, in my view, the biggest problem in the country in regard to education is the shortage of class accommodation. The responsibility rests with the Minister when increasing the school-leaving age to ensure that the lack of accommodation is first overcome.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION
(Hon. W. Hegney—Mt. Hawthorn—in reply) [10.40]: I would reply briefly to those who have contributed to this debate. Firstly, I want to clear up a matter raised by the member for Katanning regarding an alleged promise that I made. Since I have been Minister for Education I have been very careful to qualify replies to questions in this House when I was not sure. Unless I was absolutely certain that some request could be met, I have refrained from giving any promise.

Generally I preface my replies by saying "provided funds are available" or "it is hoped." I am always a little indefinite when I am not sure. The hon. member said that I visited Katanning and made a definite promise that two classrooms would be built; I made no such promise. He further said that the Minister hoped that would be done. I do not mind criticism, but I do object to a member saying I made a promise which I did not fulfil.

The member for Katanning also referred to school accommodation at that centre. I have done everything I could to ensure that accommodation would be available for the junior high school in Katanning as soon as possible. If he were to speak the truth, as I know he is accustomed to do, he would admit that I made no definite promise.

In regard to other points that were raised, I would assure the member for Katanning that the Bill makes no reference to 14 years 6 months as being the school-leaving age. Apart from comparatively minor provisions relating to truancy, compelling parents to ensure the attendance of their children at school, etc., the main provision in the Bill relates to the raising of the school-leaving age.

In that regard I would point out that there is already an Act on the statute book providing for the school-leaving age to be 15 years. That will not be implemented unless the Act is proclaimed. On the other hand, the Bill provides that the Governor may issue a proclamation prescribing the leaving age at any period between 14 and 15 years. That is the whole purport of the Bill.

In answer to other members who have also referred to the school-leaving age and who hoped that the Government would not implement this legislation unless this or that was done first, I would point out that an Act was passed in 1943 to increase the school-leaving age to 15 years, but that has not yet been proclaimed, because successive Governments have found it inadvisable or impracticable to implement that amendment to the Education Act.

Hon. D. Brand: The same argument can be used in regard to long-service leave.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: We are not dealing with that subject but with education, which is very important. The Act I referred to has not been implemented because it was not practicable to do so. Surely that should be sufficient indication that this Government will not rush in and prescribe a school-leaving age of 15 years or 14 years 9 months. The Government will pay regard to all the circumstances.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Doesn't the action of introducing this Bill indicate a fairly early attempt by the Government to implement it?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The hon. member indicated that he realised how necessary it was to raise the school-leaving age. In that respect I was anxious not to mislead the House by saying that this Bill, if passed, would be implemented next February or next July; in fact, I did not give any date. The fact is that a constant survey will be made and the position will be examined. If the Bill is passed and the time is considered propitious, the Government will raise the school-leaving age to some period after 14 years. We did have in mind to increase the school-leaving age to 15 years in two periods. That is preferable to increasing it by three periods. At this stage the Government has not committed itself to increasing the school-leaving age by next February or July; but if circumstances are favourable that will be done.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: In 1959?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: As soon as possible. At this stage it would not be fair to ask me to be more specific.

Mr. Court: Have you arrived at any yardstick to be used as the determining factor?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I know the hon. member has in mind the size of classrooms. I shall deal with that aspect in a general way, because it has reference to teachers, classrooms and the size of classes. Reference was made to the number of classes being held in halls and hat-rooms. At present 26 hat-rooms and 18 halls are in use, but a few years

ago 135 halls and hat-rooms were being used. The number has been reduced progressively.

In 1948 the number of children attending State schools was 54,000 or 56,000 in round figures, but today the number is 106,000. As the member for Cottesloe is aware, it is estimated that there will be a yearly increase of 4,500 children. In a few years the number will be 125,000.

One might ask, if that was the case, how would it be possible to raise the school-leaving age? Consistent with that, the Government has endeavoured to the best of its ability to build more classrooms. In the financial year ended the 30th June, 1956, a record number of 234 classrooms were built, and there are 12 high schools being built. The raising of the school-leaving age will have the greatest impact on secondary education.

A number of children are now continuing schooling after they have reached 14 years of age. It is pleasing to note that that the parents are becoming seized with the idea that children should be given every chance to receive higher education. I believe that as time goes on parents will be prepared to make almost any sacrifice to see that their children get a good secondary education to meet the needs of a complex future. The number of children in State schools today is 106,000. There are 3,800 teachers; and 1,000 trainees in the Teachers' Training College, of whom it is estimated 400 will go out in December and receive their certificates.

The member for Stirling mentioned the bursary system which was introduced when he was Minister for Education some years ago; and as Minister for Education, I have stepped the number up to 350 a year, and we may find that this is not sufficient. We are fully seized with the complexities of the situation and the problems which are arising.

Reference was made to the number of supply teachers. It is necessary to tap that source of supply, as they are very competent people. If members look at the picture, they will find that it is naturally so, that a fair proportion of the young girls who go into the Teachers' Training College, fulfil their contracts in the schools and, like a lot of nurses, get married.

However, after a few years they find their way back into the schools. By this time they are very matured, very capable, and very welcome in the department. The member for Stirling has said that a number of them are getting old, but it must be realised that there are young ones coming on. This is one of the problems we have; and it is a very difficult problem. It is wrapped up in the need—a fast-growing need—for scientists, technologists and engineers—professions to which reference has been made tonight.

Last year—I speak again in round figures—of those who passed the leaving examination in private and State schools, about 48 per cent. went into the Teachers' Training College. I think that the year before the figure was 53 per cent. The University is beginning to complain of the fact that the Education Department is getting the cream of those completing the Leaving certificate. But we cannot have it both ways, as the member for Cottesloe, who is an educationist and teacher, will realise.

Mr. Court: I think I used that phrase the other night without much success.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not know to what the hon. member is referring.

Mr. Court: Not much!

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: No, I do not, but what I am referring to at the moment is the necessity for the Government or the Education Department to obtain the best material possible to enter the Teachers' Training College so that the students will be capable of teaching children in the future from whom will come the scientists, engineers and technologists of the future.

In regard to the leaving age, it has been said that there are nearly 4,000 teachers, and it has been indicated by some educationists that the desirable limit for teachers is 40 students so far as primary education is concerned, and 30 in regard to secondary education.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I think the director would like 35 for primary.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I have discussed this matter in a number of places, and 40 and 30 were the figures used. Naturally, 35 in a primary school would be more desirable than 40. As a matter of fact, in some of the States in America the average in a high school is 20 to 25. I will say this, and I think members will agree with me: We will wait a fairly long time in Western Australia if we are going to wait until we get all classes in all schools at a maximum of 35 and 30 respectively for primary and secondary schools.

Since I have been Minister for Education I have visited 128 schools and I have found that whilst at the beginning of a year there may be 50 in a class, at the end of the year, or half way through the year, that number may be reduced to 38—less than 40. I have been to schools where there were only eight children and one teacher.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: How many classes?

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I suggest that if the member for Cottesloe were teaching eight children, which is below the recognised number—the number

could be raised to 12—he would have no great difficulty with his capacity in capably handling the situation; and the same can be said for our teachers in general in Western Australia.

We must concentrate on the high schools because they are catering for secondary education. I do not want to enumerate the number of high schools that have been built in the last year or two, or are being built, but as a result of the Hollywood High School being built and the intake next February, the pressure will be relieved in Fremantle. As a result of the Applecross High School being built, the Kent Street and John Curtin High Schools will be relieved of a big number. Medina will have certain classrooms and the result will be that John Curtin High School will be further relieved.

The member for Cottesloe made appropriate remarks in regard to equipment. I agree with him to the fullest extent that it would be injudicious for the department to step up the school-leaving age unless there were sufficient equipment and qualified teachers to teach such subjects as manual training, metal work, home science and other essential subjects for secondary education. However, I suggest he look at places like the Armadale High School and others. He will find that the equipment facilities are not so bad. They are fairly modern.

I want to assure him that I quite agree it would be useless to keep children at school to the age of 15 years if they were born engineers and an endeavour was made to concentrate on French and German. Attention is given to the qualifications and aptitude of students; and over the last 50 years there has been a change in the approach of teachers towards education. We now have a large section of the community in the form of parents and citizens' associations which have been harnessed to the schools, and there is a great amount of co-operation between the parents and citizens' associations and the teachers, to the benefit of the children.

The teaching methods have altered entirely, so that whereas, at one time, if a child was not able to keep pace with the others he was called a dunce and put in a corner of the room, now there is a sensible and humane approach to each child in accordance with its abilities and possible attainments. In all the circumstances, I do not think there will be any opposition to the proposal.

I, as a layman, have endeavoured to make a survey of the situation. I have been advised in connection with the matter by the Director of Education and in turn I have submitted the question to the Government; and as a result of careful consideration, it was decided to bring down this amendment.

I am not going to give any undertaking that the proposal will be partly implemented next February or July; but if circumstances are favourable the machinery and authority will be available for the Government to proceed with this most desirable reform.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Moir in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 12—agreed to.

Clause 13—Section 17A added:

Mr. NALDER: I move an amendment—

That all the words in lines 9 to 12, page 7, be struck out.

I understand the Minister is agreeable to this.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I have no objection to the amendment.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Under the provisions in the Bill a child might be committed to an institution for being a truant, although not an habitual truant. I support the amendment and I am glad the Minister had indicated his approval of it.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 14 to 23, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment and the report adopted.

**BILL—NORTHERN DEVELOPMENTS
PTY. LIMITED AGREEMENT.**

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren) [11.8] in moving the second reading said: By this Bill Parliament is asked to ratify an agreement that has been drawn up between the State Government and Northern Developments Pty. Ltd. Included in the Bill is a schedule in which members will see a complete detailed statement of the actual agreement, so they will be fully informed as to the wording of it and all that it implies.

In the first schedule to the Bill there is a copy of the plan of the actual area at Liveringa. The second schedule is the form of licence that will be issued in respect to the agreement, and the third schedule is a plan of the total area of the Fitzroy Basin showing the various points to which the agreement refers.

The agreement has recently been drawn up by the State Government in conjunction with the various Government departments that are interested in establishing certain facilities there, and also with

Northern Developments Pty. Ltd. By arrangement with the Kimberley Pastoral Co., Mr. Kim Durack, who is now manager for Northern Developments Pty. Ltd., has been conducting experiments in rice-growing at Liveringa, some 75 miles east of Derby, for a number of years. I think the member for Kimberley, who has shown an intense interest in this development—particularly in the later stages before the agreement was signed—might be in a better position than I am to give members the background and history of the early work of this company in developing a rice-growing industry in this area.

My information is that the company has been in operation for a number of years and has already expended something like £75,000 in experimenting. During those years it has received the closest co-operation from the Department of Agriculture, which has been responsible for a number of experiments also at its own research station, with some hundreds of varieties of rice, in order to eventually determine the best types to be grown successfully in this part of the North.

The company, as the result of the knowledge which it has gained by experiments, together with the advice it has received over the years from the Department of Agriculture, has been working mainly with what is known as medium and long-grained rice, which was imported from America, and also a short-grained species known as Kalora.

To give members an idea of the outstanding results already achieved in the Liveringa area, I would inform them that on a 60-acre plot last year the latter variety of rice yielded an average of not less than 2 tons 3 cwt. per acre. That is an astonishing figure, because although Australia is really a new country, so far as the rice-growing industry is concerned, it ranks today the highest of any rice-growing country in the world so far as yield is concerned, with an average exceeding two tons per acre.

Hon. D. Brand: Is that Australia, or Western Australia?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Australia as a whole—and Western Australia shows a slight improvement as compared with any other part of the Commonwealth. Spain and Italy are also considered to be in the 2-ton class; and, according to the published figures, America's average is little more than one ton per acre. The production of Japan and Formosa is in line with the American production; but in other rice-growing countries of the world, the yield is approximately only one half ton per acre.

From the outstanding work done by Mr. Kim Durack and the others concerned, it appears that there is every prospect today

of establishing a very rich industry in this part of the North. An important factor favouring the project in the Liveringa area, which is not found in any other part of the Commonwealth, is that it takes far less time for the rice to mature at Liveringa than elsewhere in Australia.

In New South Wales, about 200 days are required for the rice to mature; but in this area it is established that rice can be successfully grown in between 100 and 130 days. I am informed that under moist conditions the young shoots appear above the ground in about seven days, and the fields are periodically watered by irrigation and are drained until the young plants have sufficient strength to stand up to flood conditions. The crop is then permanently flooded to a depth of from two to eight inches, and that is maintained over the area for 90 days. The paddy fields are then drained and the crop is allowed to ripen.

The production cost—an important factor in establishing any new industry—is recognised to be from £25 to £30 per acre, while the value of the rice produced is £40 per ton. Members will see that here is an opportunity to establish a very prosperous industry which will be the means of bringing numbers of extra people into this sparsely settled area of our State, while at the same time giving this pioneer company an opportunity of making a substantial profit.

Mr. Nalder: Are fertilisers necessary?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have no information about that, but the member for Kimberley may be far better informed than I am in that regard.

Mr. Nalder: What arrangements have to be made about export markets?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I will deal with that in a moment. The crop grown last year serviced the Derby and Broome areas. The fishing fleets based on those ports consumed a considerable proportion of the crop. Future markets for surplus rice grown in this area are available in Asian countries and, it is thought, in South Africa; and when the project is fully developed after about a 20-year period, and the whole area is brought under production—or that part of it which can be used in the rotation necessary for rice-growing—any surplus at that stage will find a ready market in the United Kingdom, where today Australian rice is at a premium. That aspect has been fully examined and there is no doubt about the prospect of this undertaking being greatly successful.

The provision of adequate water supplies is essential in rice-growing under irrigation; and to enable the company to carry out its experiments, a planned diversion scheme by the State, including excavations

and control works, has already been undertaken and provided at what is known as Snake Creek—I believe the correct name is Uralla Creek—where it leaves the Fitzroy River some 30 miles upstream from the dam site. A dam has been constructed across the billabong at the site, doubling its capacity.

When I was there this year I was informed that at certain times this work done by the State Government has caused the water to rise by 5 ft., which is satisfactory for irrigation of the area already under production, and even a greater area than that, although of course it is insufficient to undertake the watering of such a large area as is envisaged in the agreement. The company which has sought land there has received every possible assistance.

In the first place, it received a great deal of help from the Kimberley Pastoral Co., which had no obligation at all to make any land available for this or any other purpose, and particularly the rich land in the Fitzroy Basin. However, it did so; and the company has consented, under this agreement, to surrender 20,000 acres for this purpose. But even before they or anyone else knew that there was likely to be an agreement—even in the experimental stages—the Kimberley Pastoral Co. gladly made available sufficient land for Northern Developments Pty. Ltd. to operate; and although the State Government did not know what was going to come out of the proposition in the long run, it has already spent over £54,000 on the provision of suitable water supplies and roads to facilitate this work.

Mr. Bovell: Is this land on the lease of the Kimberley Pastoral Co.?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. The company not only went into the production side; but the moment it realised the possibilities of this industry, it established and installed a mill which can handle one ton of rice per hour. The rice that was produced at Liveringa last year was marketed in Derby and Broome.

After all these years of experimentation the company is now completely satisfied that good rice can be produced on a commercial basis on the flooded plains of the Fitzroy River; and it is prepared to spend £100,000 on the installation of pumping equipment, the preparation of earthworks for rice fields, and the acquisition of sowing and harvesting equipment, provided the State Parliament will agree to make sufficient land available, and also a sufficient supply of water, housing needs for the employees there, and sufficient roads.

As members will see, that is all contained in the agreement, which is part of the Bill. The area which is desired for this project forms part of the Kimberley

Pastoral Co.'s lease, and the lessees have agreed to surrender 20,000 acres of their country to enable the State to make land over to Northern Developments Pty. Ltd. for rice growing. It has been agreed between the Kimberley Pastoral Co. and Northern Developments Pty. Ltd. that, although the 20,000 acres is being surrendered immediately, the whole of this land will not be required for quite a considerable time.

It envisages something like 20 to 21 years; and so there is an arrangement in the agreement that the Kimberley Pastoral Co. shall have the use of all that land which has been surrendered by them but which is not immediately required by the company. There is also a provision that if for any reason there is a breakdown in the scheme—and I cannot see how it could happen, but protection is necessary in an agreement such as this—the 20,000 acres will revert to the company whence it came. So this company has shown that it has a State-wide outlook so far as this project is concerned, and it is only fair to protect it in every possible way in the agreement.

The agreement, which has just been completed between the State and the company, and which is now presented to Parliament for ratification, provides that Crown land will be made available to the company in parcels of 5,000 acres, each under licence in the form of the Second Schedule to the agreement. The first parcel is to be made available within 30 days of the date of ratification by Parliament. The company is anxious to get moving, and there should be no delay once Parliament has made up its mind regarding the proposal. I am also informed that rice cannot be grown on the same land continuously—there must be rotational crops.

As a matter of fact, rice can be grown only one in four in relation to other crops; so consequently these licences are provided which are for a period of five years, and it is anticipated that 1,000 acres of rice will be planted each year. The company is now planting rice up there in April and May, and harvesting in July and August. But when it comes to considering the planting of an ever-increasing area, as further parcels of land are made available to the company, the arrangement for planting will have to be earlier than March and April, and will possibly take place in January and February of each year. But in any case, there will only be the one crop per year.

I am not absolutely certain of the rotational crops which will be used in the rice-growing areas, but I think that sorghum will play a prominent part; and after it has been harvested, the residue and stalks, and the plants themselves will be returned to the soil with the object of restoring the nitrogen deficiency. The annual planting of 1,000 acres is considered

necessary in that isolated area to develop successfully the area for the production of rice.

I have already referred to the fact that the first parcel will be made available within 30 days of the ratification of the agreement. Members will see that under the agreement the company may, within seven years of the date of ratification by Parliament apply for the second parcel, provided that the whole of the cultivable area of the first parcel has been planted to rice, and the Minister is satisfied that rice can be grown successfully and economically.

Mr. Bovell: Are they parcels of 5,000 acres?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They will plant 5,000 acres at the rate of 1,000 acres each year; and during the seven year period they can apply for the second parcel, so that if they have planted at least 4,000 acres during that seven-year period, and done it successfully, the Minister would have no reason for not granting the second parcel.

Similar provisions have been made in respect to the granting of the third parcel after 14 years, and the fourth parcel after 21 years. Upon the issue of the licence the company is required forthwith to proceed with progressive and continuous development of rice, and other agricultural crops necessitated by rotational cultivation of rice.

Fencing may be carried out progressively from year to year to protect the growing crops; but the fencing of the boundary of each parcel must be completed by the company within five years from the date of issue of the licence. The company is to provide the equipment necessary to use within this land the available water supply, and the land comprised in a parcel shall not be used for any purpose other than the cultivation and processing of rice and the other agricultural crops that are found necessary under the rotational system.

The State, for its part, has agreed to provide a townsite on high land in close proximity to the subject land. The State agrees, at its own cost and expense, to construct a weir across the Uralla Creek, or Snake Creek, as it is best known, at points that members will find marked "D" on the plan; and, subject to investigations, tests and surveys by the Director of Works shall, in due course, and in a manner to be mutually agreed upon between the parties, construct a suitable barrage in the bed of the Fitzroy River approximately in a position marked "E" on the plan.

Whilst the Government is not committed to the completion of this work by any fixed date, it will definitely use reasonable endeavours to complete the construction of this work by the end of 1960. Two irrigation channels will be constructed by

the State; one on either side of Uralla Creek leading to the nearest practicable point on the boundary of the first parcel made available on each side of the creek.

The Commissioner of Main Roads is to maintain in a satisfactory condition a suitable road from Derby to the point marked "X" and to construct roads not exceeding one-half mile within the town-site and a road 2½ miles in length from "X" to "P" as shown on the plan. Provision has also been made for the improvement to the approaches to the Uralla Creek bridge and to increase the width of that bridge to 12-ft.

The State, through the State Housing Commission, will erect five houses within the townsite for the company's employees. The first two shall be erected before the 30th June, 1958, and the other three as required. The rentals will be calculated in accordance with the formula laid down in the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement Act, 1945, or subject to any subsidy that may apply in respect of houses north of the 26th parallel of south latitude, to be paid by the company. Tenancy agreements are to be completed.

Mr. Bovell: In the agreement there is no maximum of expenditure which all these things will entail so far as the State is concerned.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: No; they are necessary facilities which must be provided by someone; and, as I said earlier, as the Kimberley Pastoral Co. has assisted in the same way, so the State Government, in order to ensure that there shall be no reason for failure, has agreed to undertake the construction of these houses and other works that I have mentioned and also to provide an adequate supply of water so that the company might draw on these facilities at any time it so desires.

On its part, the company shall construct, maintain and keep in repair all improvements, works and facilities within each parcel to reticulate water and shall pay an annual charge and maintain and keep in repair those portions of the irrigation channels that from time to time become enclosed within the boundaries of the parcel. In order to give effect to this the company agrees, upon completion of the erection of the barrage in the bed of the Fitzroy River, to pay £3,000 per annum for which not more than 30,000 acre feet of water will be supplied. All water delivered to the company in excess of 30,000 acre feet is to be paid for at the rate of 5s. per acre foot. These rates may be reviewed every 10 years.

Within 30 days of the expiry of a licence—that is, five years after issue—the company may, subject to compliance with the terms and conditions of the agreement, apply for a Crown grant. The purchase price for the first and second parcels has

been fixed at £1 per acre, whilst the price for the third parcel is to be determined by the Minister, but shall not exceed £5 per acre, and the fourth parcel, similarly, shall not exceed £10 per acre.

I would like to point out here, too, that if at any time there is disagreement between the company and the Minister on the question of the price of the land, such disagreement will be referred to the appraisal board which is established under the Land Act, or to any other body or groups of persons mutually agreed upon by the parties. Such Crown grants shall be subject to the grantee planting not less than one-fifth of the area with rice each year, subject, in turn, to the sufficiency of the water supply.

The estimated yield during the first five years, at not less than two tons of paddy rice per annum, from 1,000 acres, is at least 2,000 tons. When the second parcel is taken up the production would be doubled. The objective is 4,000 to 5,000 acres per annum after 20 years. It is considered that the annual production during the first five years will be absorbed by the Western Australian market.

For a moment, once again, I would like to refer to the point raised concerning markets. Although the annual production during the first five years will be absorbed by the local market there will be a ready market in near Asian countries for any surplus production of rice under this agreement. As I have pointed out, South Africa is also a potential market; and if sufficient rice is available after the requirements of the markets in near Asian countries have been met, any further surplus can be exported to the United Kingdom where rice of Australian origin enjoys a premium market.

I think those are the main features of the agreement, which I consider affords this Parliament an opportunity to do something worth while for this part of the North. The company itself has been keenly and actively engaged for quite a long period. It is anxious to establish itself here because it knows it can grow rice successfully in the North. We have had wonderful co-operation from the Kimberley Pastoral Co., from all Government departments, and from the Government itself.

So I would say that the future of this industry, particularly in view of the fact that our production figures are so much more favourable than those in almost any other part of the world, is exceptionally bright, not only for the company but also for the people who will obtain employment with it. I most sincerely recommend the Bill and the agreement to the House and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Bovell, debate adjourned.

**BILL—STATE TRANSPORT
CO-ORDINATION ACT
AMENDMENT
(No. 3).**

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 7th November.

MR. HEARMAN (Blackwood) [11.38]: This is the third time this session an attempt has been made to amend this legislation, and I think this measure is by no means as objectionable as the other one that was before us earlier in the year. In fact, I think there is a little more in it. It deals, primarily, with four improvements.

The first two deal with the question of giving to the Commissioner of Main Roads authority to determine where buses will stop in the metropolitan area. That is consistent with general engineering practice these days. If the Bill is passed, the Main Roads Department shall accept a greater degree of responsibility for even traffic flow. The officers of this department make a more scientific study of these matters than, possibly, do the police; and therefore there can be no very great objection to that proposal in the Bill.

I understand the normal practice is for representatives of the bus companies, the Transport Board, the Police Department, and the Main Roads Department to inspect the site more or less as a committee; and it seems to me, that provided that practice is followed, there is not likely to be any serious difference in the results that will be achieved in the future when comparing them with the results that we have had in the past so far as the siting of bus stops is concerned.

The Bill also sets out to increase penalties quite substantially. In effect it sets out really to double penalties, but it has not provided any minimum penalty; fortunately it still leaves that to the discretion of the court. I do not think any of us is keen to increase penalties unnecessarily; but in this particular case I think we must recognise that a state of affairs has arisen whereby certain people—perhaps not a great many, but there are a few—are quite deliberately and flagrantly flouting this law on the basis that perhaps they get caught once in ten trips, or something like that; and although they might have to pay the maximum penalty, the game is worth the candle in the long run. We must ask ourselves, as a Parliament, whether we are prepared to allow legislation that is on the statute book—whether we like it or not does not matter—to be brought into contempt by people who deliberately flout this law.

Another fact that possibly has a bearing on the penalty provision is that these penalties have not been changed for a number of years, and the carrying capacity of

goods vehicles has considerably increased in the meantime. What might have been the most economic proposition 10 or 15 years ago today possibly does not become so because of the extra carrying capacity of vehicles. I refer to the fact that, say, 20 years ago, when 10 tons was regarded as a peak load, £100 was probably regarded as a big penalty; but today, with the bigger loads, it is not quite so large.

There is an intriguing aspect to this penalty provision, because the Bill says a person—

guilty of an offence against this Act, shall be liable for a first offence to a penalty of not more than £40, and for a second offence to a penalty of not more than £100 and for any subsequent offence to a penalty not less than £40 and not more than £200.

In other words, in the case of a third offender apparently there is a minimum penalty of £40. I suppose in general terms that might be regarded as reasonable and perhaps it might be a direction to the court that in the case of a third offender a reasonably severe penalty of a minimum of £40 must be inflicted.

I do not know whether it is necessary to put that proviso in; but I suppose it is conceivable that, as this Act has been in operation since 1933, it might be possible that a person has committed an offence 25 years ago and another 20 years ago; and if he committed another small offence now, he would have no option but to pay a £40 penalty. I would like to hear the Minister explain why he wants that £40 penalty, and why he is not prepared to leave it to the magistrate. I should have thought that the general scale of punishment as laid down would be a fair direction to the magistrate, without attempting to give him any detailed instruction, as it were, from Parliament.

I feel that I would be happier if the penalty of £40 for a third offence were deleted as a minimum. There is another amendment in the Bill which deals with bus shelters; but this, of course, is not in any way controversial. We had quite a discussion on it last year and I do not think there is anything to worry about there.

The next amendment deals with the substitution of the R.A.C. formula for computing engine horsepower, in lieu of the Dendy Marshall formula. This of course brings it into line with the Traffic Act, and with the generally accepted formula for computing horsepower in use throughout Australia and in most foreign countries.

I do not think we need quibble about the fact that we are falling into line with other countries. It will probably save a certain amount of confusion; but I would point out to the Minister that this amendment without any alteration of regulations,

or anything else, will have the effect of putting up licence fees. Existing licence fees will rise. I would like an assurance from the Minister that it is not the intention of the Government or of the Transport Board to regard this alteration as being a sort of indirect means of increasing the licence fees that are chargeable.

It so happens that by the nature of the formula the horse-power figure attributed to any particular engine is higher under the R.A.C. formula. I would point out that in the case of a Ford V8 motor, which is quite a common one, under the Dendy Marshall formula it is rated at about 25 horse-power, but under the R.A.C. formula it is rated at about 30½ to 31. So this would represent an increase of five or six horse-power, which means an increase of five or six power-load weights, and this could easily mean that the people who have to pay licence fees to the Transport Board will, in effect, pay additional licence fees.

I do not think it is the intention of the Government to increase those licence fees, but I would like the point clarified. It does not follow that because there is a change of formula the licence fees have to go up, because it would be possible under the legislation for the Transport Board by regulation to alter the scale so that in effect the same licence fees would have been paid with the use of the R.A.C. formula as are at present being paid under the Dendy Marshall formula. I think that point should be clarified. It is inevitable, of course, that if we use this formula we would get an increased power-load weight of a given vehicle. With those few remarks, and subject to the explanations called for, I support the second reading of the Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT
(Hon. H. E. Graham—East Perth—in reply) [11.48]: I would like to reply to the two points raised by the member for Blackwood. I will deal first with the proposed minimum penalty, and I would inform the hon. member that I am not irrevocably wedded to what is proposed in the Bill. But somewhat unfortunately, it has been found that certain magistrates—and perhaps more particularly certain justices—appear to take a lenient view of subsequent offences, not only in respect of the State Transport Co-ordination Act, but offences against other statutes as well. The idea was to ensure that on the third occasion there would be a reasonably salutary fine rather than perhaps a nominal one of, let us say, £5, which I do not think has any deterrent effect on a person wilfully and blatantly defying the law.

In connection with the change from the Dendy Marshall to the R.A.C. formula for the calculation of horsepower, and translated subsequently into power load

weights, the change is not designed to return additional revenue to the Transport Board. It is designed to bring about a common standard. It will then mean that the term Dendy Marshall will be a thing of the past in the statutes of this State.

I give this undertaking: I shall discuss the point raised with the Transport Board with a view to the adjusting of its fees so as to give approximately the same return in the gross. It will be appreciated by the member for Blackwood that as the R.A.C. formula is generally recognised as being a truer and more accurate measure, in order to bring calculations to that basis it will have the effect of increasing the cost to a greater extent on some vehicles than on others.

In other words, it could happen that one person would be called upon to pay an extra £2 and another an extra £5. But if a formula were adopted to reduce the base charge by, say, 10 per cent., in order to return the same amount to the Transport Board, some persons might be paying more than they are at the moment, and others a little less. Overall, it would work out quite satisfactorily. I give an unequivocal undertaking that I shall see that something along those lines is done. Other than that, I thank the hon. member for his comments on the terms of the Bill generally.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Moir in the Chair; the Minister for Transport in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Section 52 repealed and reacted with amendments;

Mr. HEARMAN: This clause deals with the minimum penalty. I move an amendment—

That the words "not less than forty pounds and" in line 35, page 2, be struck out.

If the amendment is agreed to, the minimum penalty for a third offence will be removed.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 4 and 5, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—BUNBURY HARBOUR BOARD ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 7th November.

MR. ROBERTS (Bunbury) [11.55]: When the Minister for Mines introduced this Bill to the House on behalf of the

Minister for Railways who administers the Bunbury Harbour Board Act, he pointed out that there were only two amendments, the first being the repeal of Section 12 which covers the maximum remuneration received by members, and the second being the granting to the Bunbury Harbour Board the power to make regulations in regard to the fees payable to the chairman and the members.

I take this opportunity of pointing out that the Bunbury Harbour Board has been in existence since 1909. When the Act was proclaimed Section 12, which has not been amended since, read—

The fees payable to the Chairman shall not in any one year exceed One hundred pounds, and those payable to any member other than the Chairman shall not in any one year exceed Fifty pounds.

Conditions have changed considerably since that time. For many years the Bunbury Harbour Board has endeavoured to effect an alteration to the fees payable to the chairman and board members. According to the report of the board of last year, I notice that it met on 51 occasions, and therefore for those 51 meetings the members received the sum of £50 each while the chairman received £100.

During his second reading speech the Minister made a slight error when he indicated that the increased fees requested by the board were from £3 3s. to £4 4s. in respect of the chairman, and from £2 2s. to £3 3s. in respect of the members. That is not correct. In fact, at times the members do not receive on the average £1 per meeting. The board has submitted a regulation in which an endeavour is being made to increase the fee payable to the chairman to £4 4s. per meeting with a maximum of £200 per year, and to the board members to £3 3s. per meeting or a maximum of £150 per year, thus bringing the fees into line with those payable by the Albany Harbour Board.

I trust that the Minister who introduced the Bill and who is not in his seat, will give consideration to granting the increased fees payable to the chairman and the board members retrospectively to the 1st March last, because the regulation has been in the hands of the department for some time. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

House adjourned at 12.3 a.m. (Friday).

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 19th November, 1957.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

1. Betting Control Act Continuance.
2. Government Railways Act Amendment.
3. Chiropodists.

QUESTIONS.

SPEECH THERAPY.

Treatment for Goldfields Children.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM asked the Chief Secretary:

In view of the report of speech therapist Miss Adams, from the Children's Hospital, Perth, on her visit to Kalgoorlie-Boulder last July, that 150 children in that district