

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 31st July, 1957.

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QUESTIONS.

RAILWAYS.

(a) Rail Closures and Alternative Transport, Papers.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT:

On Tuesday, the 23rd July, the Leader of the Opposition asked that certain information be laid on the Table of the House. I have the relevant papers which I now present for tabling.

(b) Marshalling Yards, Welshpool Proposal.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What stage has been reached with the proposal to provide railway marshalling yards at Welshpool?

(2) In supplying this information will he deal, in particular, with the stage reached in making provision for major roads to serve the proposed marshalling yards?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) A site has been located and a layout plan for the yard prepared. This is now under consideration by departmental officers.

(2) In relation, particularly, to the stage reached in making provision for major roads to serve the proposed marshalling yards, surveys and resumptions have been in hand for some time and are continuing with a view to developing the Fremantle-Midland Junction major regional highway, as outlined approximately in the Stephenson regional plan, and also the important regional road similarly outlined along High-rd. and through Riverton. Considerable survey planning and resumption has also been carried out on the Beechboro-Gosnells highway as shown on the Stephenson plan and situated to the north of the proposed marshalling yards.

(c) Formation of Economy Committee.

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

(1) Has an economy committee been formed at Narrogin to investigate ways and means of reducing railway losses?

(2) If so, will he supply information as to the number of men on such committee, and from what railway centres were they taken?

(3) What rate of expenses are the individual members of the committee receiving, apart from wages?

(4) Is accommodation provided by way of railway coach, with necessary conveniences, free of charge?

(5) For how many weeks has the economy committee been operating?

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

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) No.

(2) to (5) Answered by No. (1). However, in accordance with Parliament's requirements, the question of economy is constantly under notice and senior officers from head office at Perth are at present investigating Traffic Branch operations throughout the whole system with a view to reduced expenditure.

(d) *Kalgoorlie Station, Staff Survey.*

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

Has a survey been conducted recently at the Kalgoorlie railway station and its various sections by departmental officers, with a view to reducing staff employed?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

An examination of staffing requirements is being conducted throughout the entire railway system.

(e) *Infectious Diseases Cases, Provision of Sleeping Berths.*

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

What policy is adopted by the Railways Commission regarding the provision of sleeping berths for individuals suffering from infectious diseases, who are required to travel to Perth for treatment?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

When requested by an appropriate authority, patients suffering from an infectious or contagious disease are permitted to travel in sleeping cars but are segregated from other passengers. They must provide their own rugs, etc. The compartment used is fumigated at the destination, for which a further fee of £1 is levied.

(f) *Meekatharra-Wiluna Service.*

Mr. O'BRIEN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is it a fact that the Meekatharra to Wiluna train service will cease on the 5th August?

(2) Has the Railways Commission definitely decided to continue the service by running a stock special ex-Wiluna on Sunday, the 4th August?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) It was originally intended to terminate train services from the 1st August, 1957, but anticipated live stock movements on the 1st and 4th August necessitated the closure date being deferred until the 5th August. Later advice is that these two stock movements are not now required.

EDUCATION.

(a) *Metropolitan High Schools, Domestic Appliances.*

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

(1) How many—

- (a) electric stoves;
- (b) electric irons;
- (c) washing machines;
- (d) refrigerators;
- (e) other electrical appliances;

have (i) been, and (ii) are proposed this financial year to be installed in regard to the teaching of home science in each of the following new metropolitan high schools:—

- (a) Mt. Lawley;
- (b) John Curtin;
- (c) Midland Junction?

(2) How many of each of such appliances are installed or proposed this financial year to be installed in each of the high schools outside the metropolitan area?

(3) What has been the cost of such appliances already installed—

- (a) in the metropolitan schools;
- (b) in schools outside the metropolitan area;

and what will be the respective estimated cost of those proposed, in each case, to be installed during the present financial year?

The MINISTER replied:

	Supplied.	Proposed.
Mt. Lawley—		
(a) Electric stoves	3	4
(b) Electric irons	49	—
(c) Washing machines	—	—
(d) Refrigerators	—	—
(e) Coppers (electric)	1	1
Sewing machines (electric)	6	—
John Curtin—		
(a) Electric stoves	4	6
(b) Electric irons	2	24
(c) Washing machines	—	—
(d) Refrigerators	—	—
(e) Coppers (electric)	1	2
Sewing machines (electric)	3	4
Midland Junction—		
(a) Electric stoves	13	6
(b) Electric irons	24	26
(c) Washing machines	—	—
(d) Refrigerators	—	—
(e) Coppers (electric)	2	2
Sewing machines (electric)	3	4

(2) No electrical units are listed for installation in country high schools this financial year.

(3) (a) and (b) This information is not available, as it would be necessary to cost all appliances supplied over a number of years. The estimate which applies to the three metropolitan high schools under construction is £1,887. It is not expected that the home science centres at high schools under construction in the country will be completed this financial year.

(b) School Children's Insurance Scheme, Claims, etc.

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Education:

(1) How many children have been insured for each year since the inception of the school children's insurance scheme?

(2) How many claims have been received and paid for each year since the inception of this scheme?

(3) How do these claim figures compare on a per one hundred basis for each year?

(4) What increases in premium have been made since the scheme's inception, and when were these increases made and for what reason?

(5) What profit has been made by the State Insurance Office for each year of the scheme's operation?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 1954-55, 62,000; 1955-56, 69,500; 1956-57, 76,000.

(2) Claims received—1954-55, 941; 1955-56, 1,678; 1956-57, 1,566 (incomplete).

It is estimated that claims for accidents in 1956-57 will approximate 2,000.

(3) 1954-55, 1.517; 1955-56, 2.414; 1956-57, 2.631 on estimated position.

(4) The 1st July, 1954—Premium 3s. 6d., 10s. 6d. (maximum); 1st July, 1955, no change; the 1st July, 1957, 5s. 15s. (maximum).

(5) 1954-55—Surplus £3,667.

1955-56—Deficit £590.

1956-57—Incomplete—an anticipated result similar to 1955-56.

MILK.

(a) Number of Board Inspectors, etc.

Mr. I. W. MANNING asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) What number of milk inspectors are employed by the Milk Board of Western Australia?

(2) How many of these inspectors hold diplomas?

(3) Is the study of the solids-not-fat problem included in the diploma course at Muresk Agricultural College?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Seven.

(2) Two hold diplomas from the Muresk Agricultural College. Two others are studying the course of dairy technology conducted by the Perth Technical College.

(3) Students in the diploma course study the composition of milk and the factors which are responsible for variations in quality.

(b) Implementation of Research.

Mr. I. W. MANNING asked the Minister for Agriculture:

In view of the serious nature of the problem where 218 out of 537 wholemilk producers have during the past six months supplied milk below the required solids-not-fat standard, why has not the research recommended by the Superintendent of Dairying, contained in the March, 1949, issue of the "Journal of Agriculture of Western Australia," been carried out?

The MINISTER replied:

No recommendation for additional research was made by the Superintendent of Dairying, who pointed out that the investigation was confined to 10 cows in a herd with a history of low solids-not-fat, which could not be regarded as typical of dairy herds generally.

Based on the results of advice given by the Department of Agriculture, subsequently confirmed by investigations overseas, it is believed that the department, when requested to do so, can give advice to individual dairy farmers which will enable them to manage their herds so as to produce milk of satisfactory composition.

General advice is given by the department at field days, over the radio, in Press articles and in the Journal of Agriculture.

ROADS

(a) Provision for Access North of City, etc.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Will he state what progress, if any, has been made with the provision of the access road north of the city to cater for traffic flow to and from the Narrows bridge?

(2) In this connection will he inform me—

(a) What surveys have been made or are in process?

(b) What resumptions and/or acquisitions of private property have been or are being made?

(c) What plan has been decided on for the crossing of the railway line and Wellington-st. by the proposed access road?

(3) What decision, if any, has been reached regarding the retention, or otherwise, of the Old Barracks, and the widening of George-st.?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Much survey planning and general investigations of the route have been carried out.

- (2) (a) The work that has already been done is too voluminous and too incomplete to set down in a positive fashion.
- (b) Surveys to determine the location of this road north of Perth have been of a protracted character owing to the building expansion which is taking place in the area. Between Lake Monger and the junction of this Yanchep-Perth-Kwinana highway with Wanneroo-rd. resumptions are in process except for a small portion between Hutton and Beryl-sts.
- (c) No decision has been made regarding the levels and line of crossings of the railway line and Wellington-st. until coding of the "origin and destination survey" cards has been completed and some of the major traffic movements have been assessed.

(3) No decision has been made regarding the retention or otherwise of the Old Barracks.

The position regarding the widening of George-st. is being watched.

(b) Widening of George-st.

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

Could he explain what he means—he is always wondering what I mean—when he says he is keeping a close watch on the widening of George-st.?

The MINISTER replied:

I am surprised at the Leader of the Opposition feigning such obtuseness. The words mean precisely what they convey.

Hon. D. Brand: Out through your window!

Mr. Court: Who is watching it while you are here?

The SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER: While one can enjoy a little laugh on this question, it is not really a matter for levity.

Hon. D. Brand: I know.

The MINISTER: It is a very important and difficult matter, and the necessity or otherwise for action to be taken in connection with the widening will depend on circumstances as they develop from time to time. The position is being watched in view of the information which is being obtained almost daily in connection with these proposals—information regarding values of property, the likelihood of early requirements for widening, and so on. All that information is being collated and is being kept in sight and under consideration.

Where properties are available for sale, action is being taken to enter into negotiations to acquire such properties. The Leader of the Opposition can appreciate that it would be unwise to announce precisely the route to be followed, until steps have been taken to ensure that values will not be affected. A lot will depend, in connection with this matter, upon the information which is finally before us as a result of the recent origin and destination survey which was carried out with this purpose in view, in order to furnish the department with the necessary information with regard to traffic flow.

CHILD DELINQUENCY.

Appointment of Welfare Officer, Albany.

Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Police:

(1) Due to increase in juvenile crime in the Albany police subdistrict, will he have appointed a welfare officer for the purpose of cleaning up child delinquency in that centre?

(2) Will he establish a child welfare cottage for the purpose of receiving child delinquents so as to avoid contact with adult offenders?

The Minister for Police: This question should have been addressed to the Minister for Child Welfare.

The MINISTER FOR CHILD WELFARE replied:

(1) The increased figure for juvenile crime in Albany district was due to a very small group of boys committing several offences. It does not reflect a widespread increase in juvenile misbehaviour.

(2) The rare occasions on which children are held in custody awaiting trial does not warrant the provision of a cottage. Other means of accommodating such children are provided for in the Child Welfare Act.

FISHING INDUSTRY.

(a) Scallop Fishing, Possibilities at Albany.

Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Fisheries:

(1) Has any research been made to ascertain the possibilities of scallop fishing in King George's Sound, Albany?

(2) Will he undertake to have investigations made, as it is apparent from an article in the "Fishermen's Newsletter" that scallops exist in that area?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Preliminary experiments carried out at Albany in 1946 with a scallop dredge and again in 1952 with a beam trawl did not indicate the presence of a commercial scallop fishery.

(2) This matter will receive consideration when the present research programme has been completed.

(b) Fish Auction Mart, Granting of Lease, Fremantle.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Premier:

(1) Has the Government under consideration the granting of a lease for a proposed new fish auction mart at Fremantle?

(2) If so, how long has the matter been under consideration, and what are the reasons for the delay in arriving at a decision?

(3) When will a decision be made?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Some considerable time. The non-availability of a site which the Government could agree to make available.

(3) An investigation is being made at the present time by the Town Planning Commissioner.

W.A. MEAT EXPORT WORKS.

Retail Trading.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Have the W.A. Meat Export Works been dealing in the retail butchering trade with the public or with private institutions?

(2) If so, is an attempt being made to increase this trade in competition with retail butchers?

(3) If not, is any move in this regard, contemplated by this firm?

(4) If the answer to No. (3) is in the affirmative, when is it proposed to commence the scheme?

(5) If the works already take part in the retail trade, on what price structure do they operate, in regard to—

(a) retail over the counter;

(b) supply to private institutions;

(c) supply to the public by delivery, if any?

(6) Is the public invited or encouraged to buy over the counter?

(7) If so, what price concessions are offered?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No, but Government institutions and certain charitable institutions largely financed by the Government are supplied with meat requirements.

(2) to (7) No.

NORTH-WEST.

Civil Service Allowances.

Mr. COURT asked the Treasurer:

(1) What allowances are made by the State Government to State public servants in the North-West and Kimberleys, as compared with similar work in the metropolitan area?

(2) What are the corresponding allowances for such areas by the Commonwealth Government to its employees?

The TREASURER replied:

(1) District allowance ranging from £40 to £120 per annum, according to locality, for a married man and half such rates for a single man.

(2) District allowance ranging from £120 to £275 per annum, according to locality, for a married man and from £70 to £175 per annum for a single man.

LANDS.

Conditional Purchase Leases, Variations of Conditions, etc.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) How many applications have been made for variation of conditional purchase lease conditions and with what result?

(2) What are the main variations sought?

(3) How many approvals have been given for sale of the whole or part of holdings where conditions have not been fully complied with, and in which areas?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Conditions as required by the Land Act in respect of conditional purchase leases are specified at the time of approval and no variation of such conditions is permitted.

(2) Conditional purchase conditions are easy and there is no record of the receipt of any application for variation.

(3) The policy of the department is to refuse approval of the transfer of conditional purchase leases unless the improvement conditions, as laid down in the Land Act, have been complied with.

TRAFFIC.

(a) Taxis for Hire, Central Station Rank.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) What authority is responsible for the granting of permission to taxi-owners to ply for hire from the rank at the Perth central railway station?

(2) Have any changes been made in the conditions under which such approval is granted?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The Railways Commission.

(2) With the concurrence of the taxi operators, the fee charged for the right to use the railway rank has recently been increased from £30 per annum to £52 per annum per taxi.

(b) Number of Taxis Licensed, etc.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) How many taxis are licensed in the metropolitan area?

(2) What number were licensed on the 30th June, 1956?

(3) What number were licensed on the 30th June, 1955?

(4) Does the licensing of so many taxis affect—

(a) the living standard of taxi owner-drivers;

(b) the income of public passenger transport?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 651.

(2) 572.

(3) 568.

(4) (a) Not known, but present operators have applied for additional licences.

(b) This is not known, but metropolitan rail service passengers have increased by one million in the past 12 months, whilst some falling off in road passenger transport is evident. This could be attributed to private cars, to the employment position and to other factors.

(c) Rights-of-way, Relief Under Backing Regulations.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Has he considered any cases for relief under the regulations prohibiting the backing into and out of rights-of-way since he received the deputation from the Perth Chamber of Commerce?

(2) If so, how many, and with what result?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No. The Perth Chamber of Commerce has submitted for review 11 cases which were received by me this morning. In accordance with arrangements made with the chamber, the cases will first be examined by the city engineer and the traffic engineer.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(d) Driving Licences and Vehicles Registrations, Reciprocity with United Kingdom.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Is the 26th July, 1957, announcement correct that Australian driving licences and vehicle registrations will soon be valid in the United Kingdom?

(2) What is the position of United Kingdom motorists coming to Western Australia, both in respect of driving licences and registration of vehicles?

(3) What is the position of a person visiting from other than the United Kingdom?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) There is no official advice that Australian drivers' licences and vehicle registrations will be accepted in the United Kingdom for visitors.

(2) and (3) Overseas motorists coming to Australia as visitors are entitled to drive in this State with their own driving licence or an international driving permit, providing it is in force and that the person is not prohibited from driving motor-vehicles in his own country.

If he brings a vehicle into the country for temporary use only and it is licensed overseas and he obtains a contract of insurance as provided by the Motor Vehicle Third Party Insurance Act, it can be used in Western Australia without the necessity of licensing in this State. These facilities were made available in accordance with amendments to the Traffic Act during the previous session of this Parliament.

WATER SUPPLIES.*Narrogin-Katanning Pipeline.*

Mr. NALDER asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

Will he lay on the Table of the House a map showing the progress to date on the route to be followed by the pipeline from Narrogin to Katanning?

The MINISTER replied:

The progress plan can be seen at the office of the Director for Works.

POLICE.*Appointment of Commissioner.*

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Minister for Police:

What action does he intend to take to make a substantive appointment of Commissioner of Police?

The MINISTER replied:

This matter is currently before Caucus and at the right time—

Members: What has Caucus to do with it?

The MINISTER: I am sorry. I meant to say "Cabinet." When the right time comes, the appointment will be announced.

BILLS (5)—FIRST READING.

1, Rents and Tenancies Emergency Provisions Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Works.

2, Marketing of Potatoes Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Agriculture.

- 3, Bush Fires Act Amendment.
 - 4, Nollamara Land Vesting.
 - 5, King's Park Aquatic Centre.
- Introduced by the Minister for Lands.

BILLS (4)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Agent General Act Amendment.
- 2, Agriculture Protection Board Act Amendment.
- 3, Fremantle Prison Site Act Amendment.
- 4, Dairy Cattle Improvement Act Repeal.

Transmitted to the Council.

BILLS (2)—REPORT.

- 1, Justices Act Amendment.
 - 2, Bees Act Amendment.
- Adopted.

MOTION—REGISTRATION OF CHIROPRACTORS AND OSTEOPATHS.

To Inquire by Royal Commission.

MR. ACKLAND (Moore) [5.21: I move—

That, in the opinion of this House, a Royal Commission should be appointed to inquire into and report upon the desirability or otherwise of legislation for the registration of chiropractors and osteopaths within the State, particularly with regard to—

- (1) The apparent need for qualified chiropractors and osteopaths;
- (2) the desirability of the services of such persons coming under the national health scheme.

Members will recall that during the last session of Parliament I made a request to the Government that it appoint a Royal Commissioner to inquire into these professions and when it became apparent that the Government was not going to do so, I decided it would be necessary for me to move this motion. I think members are also aware that I have been interested in these professions for some months, and I have a personal reason for feeling that I have received considerable benefit through the existence of these practitioners.

During past months I have been able to observe patients in different states of ill-health who have passed through the hands of at least one of these practitioners, and I am convinced that chiropractors are necessary in this State. At the same time, I was not prepared to do as some members wished me to do, and move for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the practices of chiropractors and osteopaths, because I knew I did not

possess sufficient knowledge to act efficiently as chairman of such a committee nor do I know any other member of this Chamber who would be qualified to take that position.

There is so much confused thinking about, and so much opposition to, the practice of chiropractic that it would need a man versed in the taking and sifting of evidence to sort out the hay from the chaff with regard to all the evidence that would come before such a select committee. I have no doubt that the medical profession would take an interest in an inquiry of that nature and I feel that I would not be a suitable person, as chairman of a select committee, to make the necessary inquiries as I could not approach the question with a clear and unbiased mind. I am somewhat biased in regard to these people and I do not think anyone who is already biased can remove the bias completely from his mind and examine the facts impartially.

The Minister for Health: I think you would always be impartial.

MR. ACKLAND: It would be my desire to be so, but I do not think I could achieve it in this instance. I trust members will agree to ask the Government to appoint a Royal Commission such as the motion seeks. I realise that we have no right to pass a resolution which would compel the Government to do so as that would entail the expenditure of public funds, a proceeding which only the Government can institute.

We have a Chiropractic and Osteopaths Association in Western Australia and I have had some correspondence with its secretary. I find that the association is not desirous of having an inquiry made but would rather that a Bill be introduced to register chiropractors in this State. I believe the findings of a Royal Commission would recommend the introduction of such legislation but I know there are at present only three members of the profession practising chiropractic in Western Australia who are sufficiently qualified to be registered under the Australian Chiropractic Association, yet we have this Western Australian organisation in which there are many more than three members.

On the 5th March last, I received from the secretary of the Western Australian organisation a letter in which, in the first instance, he acknowledges my interest and my letter to him and then goes on to give his personal views as follows:—

On a more personal line, however, since you have mentioned that I may not favour an inquiry, may I try to explain the position as I see it?

(1) Chiropractic and osteopathy have been an established principle of treatment in the alleviation of pain and the maladjustment of the spine and joints by hand manipulation

throughout the world and in this country for over 60 years. Therefore, in my opinion, in the face of its success a royal commission would be quite unnecessary.

(2) I have had a matter of 12 years practical experience in the political life of Western Australia and from that knowledge and my long association with the B.M.A. know that so many red herrings would be drawn across the path of progress that the ultimate aim of the commission would be lost in the network of controversy.

(3) During my seven years in association with chiropractics I have been amazed and somewhat disgusted at the lack of unanimity among the members of this and other closely allied professions, that I vowed that one day I would see at least in Western Australia a much closer co-operation. That day is now very close and with the formation of our association I see a glimmer of hope that in the near future chiropractors in the whole of Australia will speak as one.

That was a personal view. On the 4th April I received a further letter from the secretary, part of which reads—

However, in view of your remarks re your discussions with members of Cabinet that there may be no move by the Government with reference to an inquiry, preferably a royal commission into the subject, the members of my association feel that perhaps the wisest move at present would be to make some effort towards registration by legislation of chiropractors and osteopaths and then later when the time is more opportune to endeavour to have some inquiry instituted as to the value of the aforesaid professions.

I have every sympathy with the practice of chiropractic, but I believe there are some unqualified persons practising in this State today and some who are giving the profession anything but a good name. As I have already said, there are only three men who possess the qualifications which are laid down by the Chiropractic Association of Australia practising in this State but there are also some without qualifications who are doing a wonderful job. We have all heard a lot about one man who practised at Kalgoorlie and who later moved to Fremantle. Many of us have had instances of the work done by that man and I understand there are others who are doing quite a good job also. At the same time I was not prepared to introduce a Bill to register these people until an inquiry had been made.

We all know that as an organisation the B.M.A. does not feel favourably disposed towards those who practice chiropractic, yet there are instances where doctors have not only sent patients to chiropractors but

have also personally received benefit from treatment by them. I do not in any way wish to criticise the medical profession as to do so would be most foolish. We all on occasions run to get assistance and relief from the medical profession, but in many instances doctors have adopted an antagonistic attitude towards chiropractors and I want that antagonism to be removed, if possible, by the findings of a Royal Commission.

I believe that if all the evidence was placed before someone who was completely unbiased and who had the necessary qualifications I have mentioned with regard to the sifting of evidence, it would be most probable that a lot of the confused thinking and fear by the general public towards the profession of chiropractic could be dispelled, and once that was done, it would be time enough to register those practitioners who were considered sufficiently qualified. It is interesting to note that according to the letterheads of the Chiropractors and Osteopaths Association of Western Australia, the president alone has qualification which would entitle him to become a member of the Chiropractors Association of Australia. We find that the secretary of that organisation nominates himself as a registered nurse before he declares himself to be a chiropractor or a doctor of chiropractic.

Then again, I feel that this is a matter which needs careful investigation and I believe that by means of an inquiry we will be able to create a state of confidence in the minds of the people. I am very much indebted to a committee of the Western Australian National Council of Women which has made a report to its own organisation on chiropractic. Although I have no intention of reading the whole of the report, I should like to read one or two extracts for the benefit of members. This report was prepared by Miss Jessie Robertson and Mrs. E. Thompson. In the report we find a copy of a letter which was written by the Minister for Health in the Federal Parliament and portion of it reads as follows:—

I have given consideration to the request for the introduction of legislation to provide for the payment of hospital benefits to persons who are treated by registered chiropractors. The position is that chiropractic is not a recognised form of medical treatment and consequently it cannot be included as such for the purpose of hospital benefits.

Mr. Andrew: What about taxation? Can people claim for it?

Mr. ACKLAND: There is no provision about relief from taxation. Members will notice that in the motion the second part deals with social services. During my association with chiropractors over the last few months, I have seen people who

have gone to them for treatment and who, after a period, have had to give it up for financial reasons. They have undergone treatment for some period, and have been thoroughly satisfied with it and have felt that their health was considerably improved as a result of the treatment; but because they were unable to receive any benefits under social services, they had to discontinue the treatment—

Mr. Hall: Is there an actual charge made for the treatment?

Mr. ACKLAND:—even though they might have been paying into a hospital benefit fund and, naturally, have been paying taxation towards social services.

Mr. Toms: Are these chiropractors allowed to make a charge if they are not registered?

Mr. ACKLAND: They are making a charge today. I know that the chiropractor, to whom I have paid money, is a registered doctor of chiropractic; but he is not licensed in Western Australia. He is no more registered than the worst of the quacks in this State—and there are some of those people.

Hon. A. F. Watts: None of them is registered here.

Mr. ACKLAND: No. The report goes on—

At the meeting of the council held on August 27th, Mrs. E. Thompson presented to council a brief report on certain matters concerning the chiropractic profession in which was set out the membership of the Australian Chiropractors Association . . . This report showed that only two members of the Australian Chiropractors Association are in Western Australia.

Later on in the report the committee goes on to state there is a third person who possesses all the qualifications necessary to be registered by the Australian association, but he has not joined it. Further down, in Section 9 of the report, we read—

It is noted here that at that time the British Medical Association who warned "that many practising chiropractors are dangerously ignorant of the basic make-up of the human frame," stated through a spokesman to the paper concerned that the association "favours the suggestion for an inquiry, but stresses that the undertaking would be a lengthy one." The spokesman said that the association "would welcome a thorough investigation by a competent authority into chiropractic treatment" but he pointed out that it would be necessary to examine for assessment a number of patients BEFORE treatment by chiropractors as well as for a long period AFTER treatment. He said that "a proper investigation could make a definite contribution to the public welfare."

I do not want to be sailing under false colours in this regard. I have a great deal of time for the medical profession but I should like an inquiry into chiropractors and their treatment, to be made outside the control of the British Medical Association. I believe that the practice of chiropractic should run parallel to, but not subservient to, the practice of medicine. I believe that there is a place for both of them. We all know that legislation has been passed in this Chamber regarding the registration of physiotherapists; but I understand that those people cannot practise unless under the direction and instruction of a medical man. I do not think that that should apply where chiropractors are concerned.

Hon. A. F. Watts: If that were so, they would not practise at all in most places.

Mr. ACKLAND: That is so. Further on in this report a medical spokesman had this to say—

Prominent Perth doctors and physiotherapists, talking privately, still express opinions which are strongly anti-chiropractic. They say that the assumption by chiropractors that all human ailment—including dandruff and ingrowing toenails—stem from maladjustment of the spine is not only foolish but sometimes erroneous. These doctors insist that some of the "cures," none of them verified by a qualified doctor as genuine, are "flukes."

Hon. A. F. Watts: There are one or two medical practitioners, whom we all know, who encourage the use of them.

Mr. ACKLAND: That is quite true.

Mr. Hall: What would be the number of visits per day to a chiropractor?

Mr. ACKLAND: I have not the slightest idea. In my opinion, and judging by my own experience, there would be no more than to a medical practitioner. These people are serving a very useful purpose but for anybody, and for me in particular, to move for the registration of these people without an inquiry would, I believe, be a very unwise step.

The Minister for Health: Has a chiropractor been hindered in his profession?

Mr. ACKLAND: I do not know that he has; but I do know that members of the medical profession, and more particularly nurses, for some reason or another will try—and instances have come to my notice—to frighten intending patients away from chiropractors. During the last few months I have met several people who, from appearances, and from a layman's point of view, would stand a chance of receiving great benefit by going to these people. In several instances I have recommended that they do so; but in some cases these people have gone to a medical man

first or to a friend who is a qualified nurse and they have been frightened by what they have been told regarding what might happen to them if they did so.

Furthermore, I know that chiropractors have attended patients who have been classified as incurable by medical practitioners; but they have received a great benefit from their visits to these chiropractors. I am one of these people and that is why I am so keen that they should be given an opportunity, through a Royal Commission, to prove that they are of service to the community; to prove that they are doing a worth-while job. I would like to see them allowed to work without any restrictions but in close harmony—in double harness, if that is a better way of putting it—with members of the medical profession but not controlled by them.

There are very few places in the world where chiropractors can receive training. I have here a statement which has been prepared by this women's committee, which I mentioned previously, and it states that the Chiropractors Association of Victoria has only 16 members; they are qualified men who are practising in that State and they have graduated from schools or colleges in the United States of America or Canada. The policy of that association is to recommend that those who wish to study for the profession go to the Palmer School of Chiropractic. In Great Britain there are 37 full members of the British Chiropractors Association and these members must present proof of qualification as a doctor of chiropractic at a recognised school. They have no standing whatever with the British Medical Association either in Victoria or in Great Britain.

In New Zealand we find that there are 53 qualified men practising and they have been compelled to complete four years' successful study at an approved college. Such colleges exist only in the United States of America and Canada. The only college in the British Empire is in Canada. In Switzerland and Germany chiropractic treatment is highly thought of and chiropractors are doing a great job. I understand that in Germany they work in the closest harmony with members of the medical profession with beneficial results to both, and more particularly to the patients. I have no wish to labour this motion.

The Minister for Health: Martinovich in Kalgoolie has done wonderful work; but he has no qualifications by examination.

Mr. ACKLAND: I realise that I have already mentioned there are only three qualified men in Western Australia. Many, or possibly all, of us know of other men who have every justification for being registered. But before registration is permitted in a wholesale

fashion, I think there needs to be some proof of proficiency in the art they wish to practice.

Mr. Bovell: Are there any women engaged in the profession?

Mr. ACKLAND: I believe there is a woman osteopath in Albany. I understand that she has not the necessary qualifications, from a point of view of being registered, but she is doing quite a good job. That, however, is only hearsay; I have no proof one way or the other.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Would you favour the registration of practitioners who have been engaged in their work for three years or upwards?

Mr. ACKLAND: I would favour the registration of those who had given proof that they were performing a benefit to the people by the treatment they gave. I am not certain whether I would be justified in saying that the limit should be three years. In some cases, 12 months might be sufficient whereas in others—and I now refer to the impostors—10 years would not be enough. It is because I cannot answer those questions, and because I was not qualified to ask this House to appoint a select committee, that I have approached Parliament with the object of seeking the appointment of a Royal Commissioner to inquire into this matter.

On motion by the Minister for Health, debate adjourned.

MOTION—STATE TRADING CONCERNS.

Request to Government to Sell.

MR. W. A. MANNING (Narrogin)
[5.35]: I move—

That this House, in view of the necessity for additional funds for expansion of both primary and secondary industries and essential requirements, requests the Government to sell the following trading concerns—

- (a) State Hotels.
- (b) State Saw Mills.
- (c) State Brick Works.
- (d) State Implement Works.

and place the funds so receivable partly to the capital of the Rural & Industries Bank and the balance to providing essential requirements.

In moving this motion, I would like to state that when dealing with State trading concerns there are several ways of looking at the matter. I suggest that we look at the problem from the angle of our present and particular needs in this State, and that we set aside all other ideas and prejudices. We should consider it with a view to the future and the needs of the moment.

When looking at the position we must ask ourselves: What is the function of government? I believe that State trading concerns should serve some purpose of government, otherwise they cannot be justified. I suggest that the responsibility of government is to govern, and, in order to find out what this means, I have looked up the meaning and find that government is the action of ruling and directing the affairs of State. It has also been said that this business of government should promote the happiness of society—strangely enough—by punishing and rewarding.

In all references that I have come across, however, I find none dealing with the running of hotels, the making of bricks, the sawing of timber or engineering. I can find no reference anywhere to those items under the heading of government. Accordingly, we must conclude that it is not a function of government.

The Minister for Lands: What you want is a new dictionary.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: I would suggest that if a trading concern could be justified it should at least provide a reasonable return and perhaps fulfil some function of State, which might be necessary. But what do we find? We find that last year the State hotels suffered a loss of £3,458. There was not even a profit on the running of hotels.

Mr. Roberts: I wonder what free enterprise would have done?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. W. A. MANNING: When originally established, those hotels were meant to provide accommodation in outlying areas which was not readily available at the time. But that purpose no longer exists, and we cannot by any means justify the State running its own hotels at the present time. Now, let us examine the State Saw Mills. Last year the State mills sustained a loss of £13,549. The prices of the timber sold by the State mills were the same as those quoted by the Sawmillers' Association.

Accordingly, we cannot justify the State Saw Mills on the ground that they were providing the community with an essential commodity at a low price, because the same sort of timber could be bought elsewhere at the same price. I would assume that the private concerns running saw mills and selling timber at the same price do not run at a loss; it is quite obvious they could not do so. Accordingly we find that by selling timber at the same price as that quoted by the State mills, these private concerns are making a profit, while the State mills are making a loss.

Nor can we justify the existence of the State Saw Mills by saying that they are opening up new markets interstate or overseas, because they are not. This instrumentality has already closed its mills because of a lack of orders. If it were

finding new markets for timber, we might excuse the losses it has suffered and say there is some reason for them. But it is not possible to excuse them on that basis at all and, consequently, there appears to be no justification whatever for the continuation of the State mills.

If we examine the position of the State Brick Works we find that the loss suffered by that instrumentality was the enormous sum of £48,584 for one year. These brick-works are not able to compete with private enterprise, because while the State Brick Works were putting off their staff, the private concerns were able to maintain theirs and, at the same time, presumably make a profit. If the private concerns were able to make a profit and continue in business, what excuse is there for the State Brick Works? What is wrong with that Government enterprise? I must stress that the loss it sustained in one year amounted to £48,000 odd. I would like members to keep these figures in mind because they will be useful when we reach our final conclusions.

In the case of the State Implement Works, it is true that they showed a profit; but what concern would not show a profit when doing work for a Government department on what appears to be a basis which enables the works to charge a price which cover costs? If one cannot run a concern and make a profit on what is more or less a cost-plus basis, one never will.

The Minister for Works: You have a lot to learn.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: In any case, this achievement by the State Implement Works is not particularly wonderful, because the same work can be done outside; quotes can be obtained, and tenders called and so on. I would also point out that there is no reason whatever why State trading concerns should have special privileges. If they are to compete on a fair basis with other concerns, why should they have these privileges because they are Government concerns?

In answer to a question I submitted recently regarding the payments made by these State trading concerns, I found that there was very little paid out to meet the costs which would normally have to be paid by somebody else—and they are paid by others. The State Saw Mills did pay something to the Manjimup Road Board, but it paid a very small amount of £9 15s. to the Collie Road Board for the last year, and £171 16s. 3d. to the City of Perth. The amount paid to the Manjimup Road Board was £671 12s. 9d.

But there were no other payments made by the State Saw Mills and accordingly they got away without paying any rates at all to local government bodies in the remainder of the State. The State Hotels paid nothing whatever, nor did the State

Brick Works or the State Implement Works. As a Government, how do we expect the local governing bodies to carry on, without funds, the good word they are doing so ably. Yet we find the Government establishing industries in these districts without being prepared to pay the amount of the rates due. I fail to see how we can justify this.

If we have trading concerns established in a community, we should be prepared to pay something on a fair basis in lieu of rates. I also tried to find out what would be payable by these concerns in the way of land tax, that is, if they paid land tax. Obviously they do not pay it, and they pay nothing in lieu of that tax. The department concerned does not even know the value of the land on which these concerns are built to enable it to assess the land tax, as would be the case with a private concern. The whole thing is left in the air. Presumably, from the amounts of land tax paid by the private concerns, these amounts would be substantial if they were paid by our State trading concerns. Yet they pay nothing.

If these concerns were sold and handed over to private enterprise, the local governing bodies would start receiving revenue; the State would also start obtaining revenue by way of State land tax and, instead of these losses which are sustained every year, we would have the rates to which I have referred and also the land tax. That would be a fairly good start.

But that is not the whole of it, because I question whether we can afford to continue these trading concerns. I have already suggested that members should set aside any prejudices or other ideas they might have, and look at this matter from the point of view of our need at the moment. We have spoken of the losses. Now let us look at the amount of capital invested in these concerns. We find that the amount invested to keep these concerns going is no less than £2,875,164. Presumably there would be very little value for the land in these figures, so what those concerns would bring if they were sold, I do not know. However, it would be greater than that, as we have an investment of about £3,000,000 in these four concerns. We are crying out for funds for this and that—while there is £3,000,000 tied up in those concerns and earning nothing. Three of them are making a loss and one is making a profit out of its own activities. They are not paying their due contributions in rates and taxes. Therefore, we are getting nothing for this £3,000,000.

We have practically had to stop migration in this State because we cannot find the capital funds for assisting these people as they arrive. We have to provide funds for houses and schools, and greater funds for hospitals, water supplies, etc. We know the amount for these services must add up, so we have to deprive ourselves

of the immigrants. We cannot find this money, yet we have £3,000,000 tucked away in four concerns, which are quite useless.

The Minister for Native Welfare: Your Government was in office for six years. Why didn't it do something?

Mr. W. A. MANNING: If somebody else did wrong, there is no reason for it to be continued. I have already stated where we stand in regard to this matter at the present time. I am only concerned with the present; I am not concerned with what has been done in the past.

The Minister for Lands: This speech will come home to you one of these days.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: Do not blame me.

The Minister for Lands: You could blame your cobblers.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: At the present time, in addition to the needs of schools and hospitals, and all the amenities desired by the community—they are not only desired, but essential—we cannot, as I have pointed out, provide the capital funds, the necessity for which goes with an immigration policy. Also, we have no civilian scheme for land development. The war service land settlement scheme is almost finished and there is no scheme for new settlers on the land, unless they have a lot of money themselves.

Recent policy is to sell land to those who can prove they have sufficient cash to carry out a scheme of development. That is all right as far as it goes, but are we justified in excluding citizens who have been brought up on the land, simply because they have not sufficient capital? What we require for the development of this State is a scheme such as that under the Industries Assistance Board. Perhaps we do not want the same scheme, but certainly a similar scheme.

It is time we got down to tintacks by means such as those I have suggested in the motion which is before the House, namely, these trading concerns should be sold and the funds obtained from the sale should be used in two parts; part to go to the Rural & Industries Bank and the balance to provide essential requirements. If portion went to the Rural & Industries Bank, those funds could be used for agricultural and industrial development in this State of ours. Secondly, they could be used for the provision of schools, hospitals, etc.

I suggest that if this £3,000,000 were invested in the direction I have indicated, we would get a far greater return than is the case at the present time. I cannot see any justification for continuing the present investment in concerns that are not providing a return in any direction for the expansion of industry in this State. The money tied up in these concerns should be invested in the future of this

great State, and we should get rid of these encumbrances that are losing year after year and providing no compensation.

The Minister for Native Welfare: Would you sell the railways too?

Mr. W. A. MANNING: I have not included the railways but the Minister could submit a motion on those lines.

On motion by the Minister for Works, debate adjourned.

BILL—INTERPRETATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Council and read a first time.

BILL—BANK HOLIDAYS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

MR. JOHNSON (Leederville) [5.48] in moving the second reading said: In introducing or re-introducing this Bill to amend the Bank Holidays Act, I am raising what is becoming quite a hardy annual. This is the fourth occasion on which I have introduced a measure that has been identical in wording, except for the dates, into this Chamber and I trust it will be the third occasion on which it will be introduced in another place and, that on this occasion, it will be a case of "third time lucky."

The Bill is a very simple one and is, to my mind, completely non-contentious. Although that has been my attitude, last time, in particular, it raised a great deal of contention. Most members will recall that last year on opening day I gave notice of motion for the appointment of a select committee to go into the matter of a five-day week in the banking industry, and all matters relating thereto, because in the previous year one of the reasons given for a rejection of this Bill in another place had been that it needed an inquiry.

After the inquiry was completed last year, a measure was introduced into this House and taken into the Legislative Council in the dying hours of the Parliament. However, it got scant consideration and a very rude reception by the only member on the other side of the House who spoke. I trust that by introducing it early in the session and by doing all I can to ensure that this Bill is treated on its merits, I will be able to persuade persons who have opposed it, to look at the Bill as a non-contentious measure of an industrial nature.

I hope to get away from the fear of this Bill that some members have—I do not know what it is about; it may be of me personally. For some reason or other, fear seems to be their attitude, because the Bill comes from this side of the House, or possibly, from me. They seem to think there are some deep, dark, hidden urges behind it. However, that is not so.

Mr. Nalder: You do not need to worry about that.

Mr. JOHNSON: I have reread the whole of the debate which took place last year, and I have reread the whole of the debate which took place the previous year and, in the speeches in opposition to it, whilst I must admit there was obviously some misunderstanding of the facts underlying parts of the argument, there also appeared to be a searching for a hidden motive. There is no hidden motive. The whole desire underlying this Bill is to improve the working conditions of people with whom I worked for 30 years prior to becoming a member of Parliament.

Mr. Roberts: Isn't it usual if you want to improve conditions, to go to the Arbitration Court?

Mr. JOHNSON: It shows once again how inane an interjection can be.

Mr. Roberts: That is a poor word.

Mr. JOHNSON: I used it about the hon. member previously.

Mr. Roberts: You use it on every one of us.

Mr. JOHNSON: The word "inane" has been used as far as I am concerned for the member for Bunbury only.

Mr. Roberts: What does it mean?

Mr. JOHNSON: If I were to read its meaning from the dictionary, it would be too unparliamentary for the member for Bunbury. The reason for submitting this amending Bill is that the Arbitration Court has said it must be done by Parliament.

Mr. Roberts: Which Parliament?

Mr. JOHNSON: The Parliament of the State which is concerned with the Arbitration Court to which the appeal has been made, because it has already been dealt with by the Arbitration Court of Western Australia. It has also been dealt with in the Federal Arbitration Court and there have been negotiations relative to approaches to the court in all States of Australia.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: They close in Tasmania.

Mr. JOHNSON: Yes, by legislation and not because of the Arbitration Court. There are very sound legal reasons why the Arbitration Court cannot give a five-day week to bank officers. It should not be necessary for me to go over the whole position in detail and I do not intend to, but will just sketch the situation on this occasion and refer anybody who has any doubts on the matter to the evidence taken by the select committee of last year.

The banking business, like many others, is controlled by a number of Acts and one of the principal statutes is the Bills of Exchange Act, which sets out that certain things have to be done on any day that

is a business day. It further provides that certain days are not business days, and they are Christmas Day, Good Friday, Anzac Day, every Sunday and bank holidays. If a transaction is not completed in due form by a bank on a day that is a business day, then the bank could lay itself open to some very real penalties; and it is as a direct result of the Bills of Exchange Act that the banks have to be open for the transaction of business and the completion of transactions for at least some part of every day that is not a bank holiday or one of the specified days.

To clarify that point, after the introduction of one of the earlier Bills of this kind, the Bank Officers' Association approached the State Arbitration Court and the judgment relative thereto, which can be read in the journals of the Court, is to the effect that as long as any Act makes it essential for a bank to remain open on a Saturday, it is contrary to the policy of the court to award a method of working which would involve the employer in permanent and compulsory overtime; and that is the situation in this State. A similar statement can be found in the case presented before the Federal Arbitration Court. I do not imagine that anyone could produce an argument to the contrary. This is not to say, however, that the Arbitration Court could not order a five-day week. It could; but it could not order it in such a way that it would have the result of giving a five-day week.

The suggestion has been put forward on other occasions that the problem could be overcome by staggering the attendances of bank officers at the banks on Saturdays in such a manner that each officer would have a regular Saturday off. If people will examine the evidence before the select committee they will discover fairly conclusive testimony, not only by the bank officers but by the employing interests, to the effect that it is extremely difficult to organise such staggering; and if it were organised, it would give approximately only one Saturday off in every four or five to each officer. In other words, the effect of the reform would be too small to be worth the degree of difficulty associated with it.

This I know from practical experience because when the 40-hour week judgment was given, I was in charge of a section at the head office of the bank where I was employed, and we all made a real effort to see whether we could get some of the benefits which all bank officers then anticipated, but unfortunately did not get, from the application of a universal five-day week to all industry. We made many experiments of different kinds to see whether we could gain the benefit of the Saturday morning off for the staff, and we found there were some very real problems connected with it.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: What will happen to the Commonwealth Bank employees if your Bill becomes law?

Mr. JOHNSON: The Commonwealth Bank will have to obey the law the same as anyone else. The effect would be that the Commonwealth Bank would do the same as the private banks. Whilst I would not regard that as essential in the Act itself, there is a form of undertaking by an exchange of letters or a verbal undertaking—I am not quite sure which—between the Commonwealth Bank officers and the Commonwealth Bank Board, and it is substantiated by the fact that on the day the banks closed on Saturdays in Tasmania, the Commonwealth Bank closed too. The Commonwealth Bank attitude is further open to logic in that its officers are as urgent in their demand for this particular requirement as any other group of officers; and it is obvious that the Commonwealth Bank would find itself with some degree of staff difficulty if it did not manage its business to coincide with its competitors.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: But it could not be forced to obey your Bill, apparently.

Mr. JOHNSON: The making of a day a bank holiday does not force a bank to close. The legal situation is that a bank can—and banks sometimes do to some extent—operate on days that are bank holidays. Members may be aware that on the occasion of the arrival of overseas airliners or overseas ships, banks go to some trouble to provide banking facilities on the ships or airliners.

Mr. Bovell: Yes, but not at their normal place of business. They always close on a holiday.

Mr. JOHNSON: Yes. I am not saying they open for business, but they do transact banking business on days that are bank holidays. But the point at issue is that under the Bills of Exchange Act they are not required to complete all sorts of various formalities, and they are not under a legal handicap. They are not required to stay open. The fact that a day is a bank holiday is not an absolute prohibition against the staff attending the place and doing some sections of banking business.

Mr. Bovell: But the doors never open, and never have opened.

Mr. JOHNSON: Whilst, as the member for Vasse points out, it is not the practice for banks to open their doors and invite banking business, I do not think there is any legal bar to their so doing.

The Minister for Works: They have been known to close their doors when they should have been open.

Mr. JOHNSON: Not since 1890; and I might mention that the bank for which I worked did not close its doors in that year.

Mr. Court: The State Savings Bank went jolly close to it on one occasion.

Mr. JOHNSON: It was then known as the Bank of Australasia and it is now the A.N.Z. Bank, and it was the only one not concerned—

Mr. Bovell: It is not the only bank that did not close its doors in 1890.

Mr. JOHNSON: The Union Bank was the other half of the amalgamation.

Mr. Bovell: The Bank of New South Wales and the Western Australian Bank, which was operating then, did not close their doors.

Mr. JOHNSON: I apologise for the Western Australian Bank.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: If your Bill becomes law, the position could arise that the Commonwealth Bank could remain open and the others be closed on Saturdays.

The Minister for Native Welfare: They do not remain open in Hobart. They close there.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I am not saying they do not.

Mr. JOHNSON: I would say there is a theoretical argument that that could happen, but it is completely non-practical.

Mr. Court: I think that with the competition for business that is going on in the Eastern States, it is very likely that they would open in defiance of the other banks, and then you would be racing up here to try and get us to amend the law again to protect the employees in the other banks.

Mr. JOHNSON: Do not be so stupid!

Mr. Court: That is not stupid. Follow it to its logical conclusion. If their livelihood is being taken away by unfair competition, they would want to open again.

Mr. JOHNSON: What livelihood would be taken away?

Mr. Court: If the business of the Associated Banks was being drastically reduced by unfair competition from the Commonwealth Bank, of course they would want to open again.

Mr. JOHNSON: The member for Netherlands does not seem to have any idea of what banking business is. It is money-lending; it is not dealing with the public. What controls a bank's profits is not the hours the bank remains open or anything of that nature, but the money it lends.

Mr. Bovell: And the business it gets.

Mr. JOHNSON: Yes.

Mr. Bovell: And if there is unfair competition, the banks will not get that business.

Mr. JOHNSON: I am afraid the idea that competition would take away business from the private banks is silly.

Mr. Court: You are not trying to suggest to us that the employees of the Associated Banks would be happy if the Commonwealth Bank was open on a Saturday morning when the other banks had to shut, because obviously there would be a reduction in the business done by the Associated Banks and a reduction in employment!

Mr. JOHNSON: I would say it would be a very humorous situation. If it were to occur over the years, it could have some effect on the private banks, but just think of the situation on the first occasion it happened! The officers of the private banks would not be at work but those of the Commonwealth Bank would. Then think of it happening on the second Saturday. The officers in the Commonwealth Bank who play various sports such as bowls, fishing, football, cricket, and so on, would be champing at the bit. Would not they be concerned about their employer? Would not they be good public relations people? They would be saying to every customer that came in, "Those so-and-soes upstairs insist on our coming to work when all our mates in the other banks have the morning off."

Mr. Hearman: Surely they would not be so disloyal as that to their employer!

Mr. JOHNSON: Apparently the hon. member has never worked for wages. The situation would not exist. The Commonwealth Bank would burst at the seams if anything like that happened.

Mr. Court: I think you take us as being more naive than we are, if you expect us to accept that proposition.

Mr. JOHNSON: The point behind it is that the Commonwealth Bank has told its officers that it will obey the law. There is no doubt that the Commonwealth Bank officers would be extremely restive if they were asked to do anything such as has been suggested by the member for Netherlands. Furthermore, I think the hon. member has been reading fairy stories of the kind written by the Perth Chamber of Commerce and other people about competition and so on. Competition is not a very real matter in the banking industry.

Mr. Court: I am afraid you are more out of touch with the banking industry than I thought you were.

Mr. JOHNSON: There is no competition in the real sense in the banking industry. There is a lot of surface "kerfuffle," but the reality of competition is not there. No competition takes place at the point of price.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. JOHNSON: I was dealing with the question of competition in the banking industry. The appearance of competition in banking is considerable, but the actual

competition is slight. The points at which competition takes place are not related to banking as an industry, but represent only window-dressing or, to describe them in commercial parlance, what are known as "come-ons." The point at which competition appears to take place—it is even hard to call it real competition because the service is provided by all banks—is similar to the service provided at garages, such as the provision of free air or the wiping of the windshield.

Mr. Court: Don't you think that the degree of service given is a form of competition?

Mr. JOHNSON: Not really.

Mr. Court: Oh! We could not accept that one!

Mr. JOHNSON: The form of service to which the member for Nedlands refers is not, in any real degree, competition. Competition in theory must be competition at the point of price or something affecting price; something which gives the customer better value. As the services available for all banks are so close as to be practically identical, it is almost impossible to differentiate between them. It is completely unreal to say that competition really exists among banks.

Mr. Court: If the member for Cottesloe's query remains unanswered, you do create a degree of unfairness between them.

Mr. JOHNSON: I do not follow the hon. member.

Mr. Court: If all the Commonwealth banks are open on Saturday morning and all the private trading banks are shut, there is immediately a degree of unfair competition.

Mr. JOHNSON: There is a degree of competition, but I do not think it is necessarily unfair because it would not continue. On that issue I would remind the hon. member that in parts of Tasmania, where not only banks but shops are shut on Saturday mornings, there were some trading concerns of a fair magnitude which decided that they would compete against other establishments by opening their premises on Friday nights. They did this, I think, on two occasions, but the practice soon ceased. Not only did they cease to open on Friday night, but also they published apologies in the Press for their action because the pressure against them was such that they found that such a practice did their business harm and certainly not any good. It destroyed the public support which they sought to gain.

The business of banking is that of lending and caring for money. Profit is made from lending money at interest, from transferring money from place to place and, in particular, from transferring money from inside Australia to outside and, to a lesser extent, from transferring money from State to State and from town

to town. The last mentioned would be lesser in return but probably greater in volume. The fee which country members pay when cashing a cheque drawn on a town outside the metropolitan area whilst they are visiting the city or the fee which they pay on cashing a cheque drawn on a different country town to the one in which they reside, is related to the transfer of the amount and is not a fee for cashing a cheque.

In some countries banks do charge a fee for cashing cheques. I think that in the United States of America a charge of three cents is made for each cheque cashed. If one put over the counter of a bank in America a cheque for 20 dollars, I understand that one would get back 20 dollars less three cents. However, that is not the practice followed in the Australian banking system. Therefore, there is no return to banks for the service of cashing cheques. It is merely a service rendered to attract custom. Similarly—although I have pointed out that such charges are made in other countries for the service—no charges are made by Australian banks for the supplying of change.

In other countries where there are banking systems in operation, some banks make a charge for that service. In most of the Australian capital cities where there are firms operating similarly to the armoured escort company in this State, a charge is made by such company for providing change and for the safe transport of funds between customers and banks. That is not a banking service; it is not part of banking. Intrusion of these services between the customer and the bank is of benefit to the customer concerned and is a service for which he is prepared to pay but which he can go without if he so desires.

Mr. Roberts: Such a service is not available in country towns.

Mr. JOHNSON: I did not say it was.

Mr. Roberts: I am merely pointing that out to you.

Mr. JOHNSON: What value is that to me? I already know that.

Mr. Roberts: Go on with your speech; I am merely pointing it out to you.

Mr. JOHNSON: Why did the hon. member bring it up? Does the hon. member have any reason for doing so?

Mr. Roberts: You are making the speech.

Mr. JOHNSON: I thought the hon. member was trying to help. The point I am making is that where this armoured escort service does exist, it is provided for the benefit of the customer who desires to avail himself of it and who is prepared to pay for it. In no way does it interfere

with banking. In fact, it speeds up banking, and where this service is provided, a special relationship exists between the armoured escort people and the various banks in that they are dealt with in a slightly different way from normal customers and in a way which is more convenient to the banking staff and the people conducting the armoured escort service and possibly has the result of being some real assistance to the customer.

This service is capable of providing, particularly, safe custody of coin and notes when such are transferred from the bank to the customer or vice versa. Part of such service is the provision of the immediate delivery for the wage employee of the "make-up" of the wage already provided in the pay envelopes and delivered prepared. That is a service which the banks in Australia have never provided. I have gone to some little length to explain the relationship between the armoured escort people and banks because, at their request, the evidence they gave before the select committee on banking—which included an explanation of their methods—was left out of the evidence which was tabled in this House. The reason for that was that the persons operating the armoured escort service thought that there was some potential danger in the publication of their methods of working.

Nevertheless, I refer those people who are interested in this subject to the evidence given by the representative of the Associated Banks wherein he states that the intrusion of the armoured escort people does not impinge on bank profits and in no way interferes with banking. In fact, he submitted his evidence in a way which showed that the banks encouraged such services by making use of them themselves. The armoured escort service is available only in areas where there is a large volume of banking. In Western Australia this service covers only the area between Fremantle and Armadale although it probably could be extended. There is no immediate likelihood of such extension being made unless there is a large increase in the population and in the commercial activities of some other area.

The point I am making in relation to that aspect is that the business the armoured escort service does in the cashing of cheques and the provision of change is not objected to by banks because it does not affect the income of banks. The service is available at a time when banks are not open and it would continue to be available at any time when the customer was prepared to pay for such service to be made available. To some extent the payment made for this service is cheapened to the customer by the direct result it has on the insurance premium of such customer.

I have been trying to make it clear that the provision of change, the cashing of cheques and the multitude of transactions that pass over bank counters—not only on Saturday mornings, but also on weekdays do not necessarily constitute banking business. The member for Nedlands may call it a service, but actually it is customer attraction, and if all banks were closed on any particular day, no bank would have any advantage over another as far as customer attraction was concerned.

Hon. A. F. Watts: It is a rather fine distinction, don't you think?

Mr. JOHNSON: It would not be hard for a lawyer to see the distinction although it might be difficult for some people.

Hon. A. F. Watts: I think it is fine, just the same.

Mr. JOHNSON: The point is that those are services from which there is no direct reflection in profits. If no banks gave those services, no results on banks would appear.

Hon. A. F. Watts: If no bank gave them, there would be no banking business done.

Mr. JOHNSON: That is not the point I am making. This would not affect the volume of banking business.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Most people would give the banks away if they gave such service.

Mr. JOHNSON: I did not mean those services. The services I refer to are not an essential part of banking. The essential part of banking starts with the primary transaction, that is, the availability of a safe place in which to deposit values, cash or credit. That is a service for which the customer pays. Admittedly in the majority of cases they pay only 10s. for each half year, but nevertheless it is a service paid for by the customer and which adds to the profitability of banking.

The customer also pays for the service of having money transferred from place to place. Finally, and most profitable of the services for which the customer pays, is the making of credit available by the banks. That is all the business of banking—looking after money, transferring it from place to place, and lending it. Those are the services from which bank profits are made. The other services which banks give were not always rendered by banks and have no direct contact with profitability.

The travel services now given by banks are a new expression, and they are an intrusion into a field of business which is not banking. That service is resented by the travel agencies. The provision of all sorts of "pretty pretties," of customer advice on this and the other, of flowers on the banking counter and so on, are not banking activities. They are just window dressing. Furthermore, although it has

been banking practice for many years to give change to customers, and at times to non-customers, for their businesses, banks are under no legal requirement to do so, and they get no profit from that service. The only value of that service is the tendency to retain the customer requiring change at that bank.

Mr. Court: Does that not in the final analysis increase the profitability? Banks would do more business and make more profit than under normal conditions.

Mr. JOHNSON: If a bank is to do more business, what it wants is more money to lend. The amount of business it can do is related to the amount of money it can lend, and that is controlled finally by the policy laid down by the Federal Government.

Mr. I. W. Manning: What about the money deposited? Does that not have some influence on profitability?

Mr. JOHNSON: It has some influence.

Mr. I. W. Manning: That is all tied up with added business.

Mr. JOHNSON: I fail to see what the members opposite are driving at. The customer who comes in for change is already a customer of the bank, and it has his business. The bank gives him the same service as other banks give to their customers. The bank retains his custom if it suits that customer; if it does not suit him, he will leave the bank. If he gets a parking ticket for parking outside the bank, he will promptly transfer his account to a bank where there is no parking restriction, and that might not even be a branch of the same bank—that is, if the customer has a credit account. If it is an overdraft account, he cannot manage it quite so easily.

The main point is not that I am suggesting these services should not be given, but I am suggesting that if they are not given by any bank, nobody will lose. Anyway, they are not banking business. They are only the "come on." Some people complain, as so many did before the select committee, that the "come on" was not available. That has no value in assessing what is happening to banking.

Mr. W. A. Manning: In their opinion, these services have much value.

Mr. JOHNSON: They complained that they had failed to get some service which they felt was of vast importance to them, but which I am trying to clarify as not a banking necessity. It is not part of the duties of banking, but is customary, just the same as free air is customary to the running of a garage. If all the garages were to get together and decide not to provide free air, or as they did at one stage to suggest a charge for compressed air to be put into tyres, there would be quite an outcry and

people would complain bitterly that they were being deprived of a right. Members should realise that if free air were abolished and people were required to pay for the air placed in their tyres, they would still go to the garages for the essential part of garage services, that is, the sale of oil and petrol and repair of motorcars. In other words, free air is a "come on."

Mr. W. A. Manning: People might still want it on Saturday morning.

Mr. JOHNSON: People might, but they might also want it at midnight on New Year's Eve or at any other time. It does not mean that a service is to be available at all times because people want it. The idea that people are to be given everything they want is a reflection of childishness.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Is not that the idea behind this Bill?

Mr. JOHNSON: That we should give people everything they want?

Hon. A. F. Watts: Yes, to the people affected by the measure.

Mr. JOHNSON: The people concerned, the bank officers, are asking for something that most other people have, and naturally they want the same.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Were you not saying that people were to be given what they want, and yet you are complaining that the public is asking for something it wants?

Mr. JOHNSON: The public is asking for something which is not normal banking, and in doing so, is preventing bank officers from receiving some benefit which 99 per cent. of the people enjoy. This is obviously unfair. That is my whole point. It is so unfair for one small section of the public to be restricted by people asking for something that is not a real part of the service to be given by that small section, and something which, in the main, does not take place on Saturdays. The main part of banking does not take place on Saturday, although some services are rendered, as was disclosed by the evidence before the select committee. Saturday services are trimmings and not normal banking.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Are they not the sort of trimmings that the ordinary man really appreciates?

Mr. Lawrence: Now we are really getting some free air!

Mr. JOHNSON: The ordinary man is not a customer of the trading bank, but a customer of the savings bank.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I cannot see your point. What would happen to the banking agencies that operate in chemist shops and the like? Would they continue to operate on Saturday mornings?

Mr. JOHNSON: I expect so, if the chemist shops stay open. The agencies stay open if the shops are open.

Mr. Roberts: What effect would this legislation have on such agencies?

Mr. JOHNSON: None at all.

Mr. Roberts: Not even on Saturday mornings?

Mr. JOHNSON: Not even on Sundays, if the shops were open.

Mr. Court: Have you obtained a legal opinion on that point?

Mr. JOHNSON: I do not need a legal opinion. The hon. member could get one if he desired it.

Mr. Court: We will if you like.

Mr. JOHNSON: They are agencies and not banks.

Mr. Court: You were responsible for this Bill and you should have got all that information for us.

Mr. JOHNSON: The agencies are not covered by the Bills of Exchange Act. They are agencies of savings banks.

Mr. I. W. Manning: What is the position of a trading bank which has a savings bank branch? Can it stay open on Saturday mornings?

Mr. JOHNSON: The position which the hon. member is alluding to is that which applies in Victoria where there is a State savings bank. That particular savings bank has not got a trading bank side. Is that the situation?

Mr. I. W. Manning: It could be. I am interested to find out if the savings bank agencies in chemist shops are able to stay open, why are not the trading banks which operate savings banks?

Mr. JOHNSON: There is no legal bar to any bank staying open on a bank holiday. The only point is that if they stay open on a bank holiday, they are not required to comply with certain provisions of the Bills of Exchange Act, although they will have to pay overtime to the officers. In the main the Bills of Exchange Act does not relate to savings bank transactions which are really transactions on a cash basis.

Mr. Roberts: Once a holiday is gazetted, they will have to close.

Mr. JOHNSON: I do not think they have to from a legal point of view. They are required to do so by the awards under which the officers work, but not under the Bills of Exchange Act, although they do. There is a difference between "have to" and "do."

Mr. Roberts: If a day were gazetted as a bank holiday, they would have to close.

Mr. JOHNSON: Perhaps I could put it this way: They would close. I would not say they have to close.

Mr. Roberts: That is a moot point.

Mr. JOHNSON: It is. Many things go on in trade and commerce that are not covered in detail by legislation. One practice relating to banking of which most members are aware is that banks close at

3 p.m. on week days and 11 a.m. on Saturdays. Those times are not covered by any legislation and can be varied by agreement between the banks without consulting the public. During the war the closing time of banks was covered by the national security regulations, and the period of trading was reduced to 2 p.m. When those regulations fell away and the war got cold, the banks reverted to 3 p.m. closing without any legislation, and they have continued business up to 3 p.m. until the present time.

Mr. Bovell: How many hours a week do they work?

Mr. JOHNSON: The banking award provides for a 40-hour week.

Mr. Bovell: Did the banks close at 2 p.m. during the war?

Mr. JOHNSON: I am told so.

Hon. A. F. Watts: For a time.

Mr. JOHNSON: All the time I was working in the banks they closed at 3 o'clock, but I know that it was done under national security regulations.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Did you say that if this Bill becomes law the trading banks will have to close, and that saving banks need not? Is that your contention?

Mr. JOHNSON: No. I am not even saying that trading banks will have to close. I am saying that they will close.

Mr. I. W. Manning: We have had that argument before.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Don't start that again!

Mr. JOHNSON: While it may seem that I am wasting the time of the House by going on and on and on, I am trying to clear up the points any member has in mind because I want to reduce the debate in its total.

The SPEAKER: Order! I was thinking that a good deal of this discussion could be left till the Committee stage. Members have asked many points half a dozen times. I suggest that the hon. member address himself to the second reading.

Mr. JOHNSON: There are a number of points which I have made in previous debates and which possibly could be mentioned for the benefit of those who are inquiring. First of all, there is the very real fact that banking could continue without the bank being open to the public at all. It is also a fact that in nearly all metropolitan areas there is at least one branch of one or more banks that does not open to the public and does all its trade by post.

The practice is growing throughout the world of encouraging postal banking, and I was recently shown a sample of a kit that is being produced for bank customers in order to encourage them to do all their banking business by post. The idea is that

the customer is supplied with a number of strong envelopes, self-addressed to the bank, together with the necessary slips for receipts and payments and so on.

Then there is the practice of providing deposit boxes in the foyer of large banks in which customers are encouraged to put deposits which contain no cash or coin but only cheques. These are left in the deposit boxes and go through that day's business after the bank is shut to the public. The book is returned to the customer the next day in a manner agreeable to him. I gather that the practice is for some customers to have two bank books. They put one in today and collect the one that was deposited the previous day. The idea is to speed up the service and reduce the total contact between the bank officers and the customers.

On that point I would ask members to cast their minds back to their own contacts with regard to banking, and to work out how many of a bank's officers they have contact with from day to day. In practice the contact of customers is practically only with the man behind the counter—the teller. There is a lesser degree of contact with people in charge of the bills department, dealing with commercial transactions, and with ledger keepers in relation to the marking of cheques for cash and the obtaining of statements and balances of accounts.

In practice, something less than one-third of a bank's staff have any direct contact with the public. They do their work behind a screen at tables away from the public; and they work all day and, at times, all night as well. I ask members to consider that point because it illustrates fairly graphically the fact that banking business at the contact point is not the major part of banking; and if one considers the staff at the contact point—which is something less than one-third—one realises that that point is not the major one—that the contact point is not the major one, and that the real business is done behind the screen.

Banking is not, as members opposite seem to think, a service industry. It is in the wholesale and retail trade in credit. That is its business—the wholesaling and retailing of credit. It does not provide a service like dry cleaning or polishing cars, or that sort of thing.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You are excepting the savings bank, of course. That is certainly a service.

Mr. JOHNSON: It is the retailing of credit, if members like.

Mr. Bovell: The member for Leederville is having a dream.

Mr. JOHNSON: It might be more polite not to comment on that. I do not think I can have made myself clear, and I will have to go over it again for the benefit of the member for Cottesloe.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member cannot repeat himself. The Standing Orders do not provide for unnecessary repetition.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Could he clarify the position, Mr. Speaker?

The SPEAKER: Order, please! I suggest that the hon. member address himself to the subject and not allow himself to be drawn away by interjections.

Mr. JOHNSON: I will have to ask the member for Cottesloe to read the earlier parts of my speech, because I have already covered that several times.

The Minister for Native Welfare: Hear, hear!

Mr. JOHNSON: That, I think, covers all the aspects of banking, as a business, with which I should deal.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Is the hon. member confused with what banking once was and what it now is?

Mr. JOHNSON: The difference between what banking was and what it now is this: It is now banking with a chromium-plated finish. Fundamentally it is still banking, just the same as the motorcar as it was in its early days is related to a motorcar now. In earlier days a motorcar was a means of transport. It was not very glamorous; but its job was to take people from place to place, and there was an engine under the bonnet. It is still a means of transport; but it has been glamourised terrifically, and one pays an awful lot for the glamour. It is still, however, fundamentally the same thing; and banking is still what it was in earlier days—the provision of credit and of a safe place for value, and a facility for getting money from place to place. Everything that has been added corresponds to the chromium plating on motorcars. It may be pretty, but it is unnecessary.

Having dealt with the banking aspects, I come to the principal part of the Bill which is that Saturday should be declared a bank holiday. The effect of that would be that the banks would close; there is no doubt about that. The banks have made that quite clear; and, furthermore, those who care to see it, can find it in the evidence tendered to the select committee. The desire for the closure of the banks on Saturday emanates from the banking staffs. They are not asking for a reduction of hours. They have already agreed—and an exchange of letters has taken place to underline that agreement—that they will make an agreement in the Arbitration Court for an amendment to the 40-hour week provisions of their award to provide for those 40 hours to be worked in five days instead of six.

The banks admit that the closing of their service on Saturday would not affect their profitability, and there is no need for bank shareholders to have any fears

on that point. The vast majority of the population are not opposed to the banks closing on Saturday; they are in favour of it.

Mr. I. W. Manning: Can you substantiate that?

Mr. JOHNSON: Yes. Amongst the people who gave evidence before the select committee was the general secretary of the Australian Labour Party and the Trade Union Industrial Council in Western Australia, who represents the organised workers and who gave evidence that the official policy of those organisations is the 40-hour week worked in five days.

Hon. D. Brand: Did he say anything about the Saturday morning closing of banks?

Mr. JOHNSON: That comes in the five days, does it not? Without going into tedious repetition, I may say that I made it clear earlier that it was impracticable for the banks to stagger work in such a way as to work shifts and give employees in a reasonable proportion their Saturday off.

Mr. I. W. Manning: Would it not be better to have Monday off?

Mr. JOHNSON: That might be so; and if the hon. member would like to move an amendment to take "Saturday" out of the Bill and insert "Monday" in lieu, when the Bill is in the Committee stage, I think I might be able to agree with him. But I have been requested by the bank officers to ask for Saturday, which at present is a half trading day; and I think it might be premature to seek Monday at the moment. However, if that is the desire of the hon. member, I think we could test the feeling of Parliament.

Mr. Roberts: Why is it that after four unsuccessful attempts by you to get this legislation through, Cabinet has not taken it on?

Hon. D. Brand: For obvious reasons.

Mr. JOHNSON: The leadership of my party—

Hon. D. Brand: Have you taken over?

Mr. JOHNSON: —believes that the man who starts a job should be permitted to finish it.

Mr. O'Brien: Hear, hear!

Hon. D. Brand: That was said with great gusto.

Mr. JOHNSON: I rather flatter myself that they have at least some confidence in me that I will deal with a small matter like a half-day off—

Hon. D. Brand: Was it at their express request?

Mr. JOHNSON: I think I can do the job as well as is necessary in this Chamber; and if members will read "Hansard" containing previous debates they will find

there was a statement made by the Premier during last year's discussion. I suggest they read it. That brings me back to the point that the bank officers are asking only for what the majority of the people have, and their request has the support of the majority of people.

It is notable that a very large number of organisations, representing quite large numbers of people, that were invited to give evidence to the select committee, did not do so, presumably because they felt their interests were not being interfered with. These bodies included the Farmers' Union and the Country Women's Association. Then there was the Shop Assistants' Union. We thought that union might be upset, because the shop owners said that the shop assistants would be over-worked cashing cheques and so on if the banks were closed. However, the shop assistants did not feel it important enough for them to come forward to give evidence either for or against the proposal.

A general invitation was issued to the public, while a personal invitation was issued to all members of another place to hear the evidence or give evidence. No member of the Legislative Council took advantage of that offer and I believe only one member of this Chamber—apart from members of the select committee—watched or heard any part of the proceedings or evidence. I wish to emphasise that the only groups that produced quantities of evidence were those relating to retail trading.

We did get some evidence from people in the farming communities and so on, and in that regard I wish to underline the fact that those who were to give evidence for the country people were brought forward as witnesses through the good offices of the Liberal Party members representing those districts—one in Bunbury and the other in Donnybrook. To the best of my knowledge, no member of the select committee—and certainly not I as chairman—was aware, until we took evidence in those towns, who was going to give evidence, although there was some consultation between me and the other members of the select committee as to the type of person from whom we would like to hear.

I make that explanation so that members will be aware that although I may be considered as prejudiced in this matter, the evidence was arranged by people who in each case disclosed an objection to the whole idea, and so the evidence was certainly not loaded in favour of what the Bill seeks. Despite that, one of the farmers who gave evidence at Bunbury stated definitely that the proposal would not affect business in the town and the gentleman concerned was a prominent businessman in Bunbury prior to retiring to a farm nearby. I think an examination of

the evidence of the other witnesses would show that none of them would be violently affected.

Some seem to think that there would be some minor disturbance to their comfort or that they might have to give a little more thought to arranging their business, but it is obvious that even in the country, it is normal practice for farmer customers to be in town on days other than Saturday and there was a remarkable weakness shown by the small number of farmer customers that make use of the services to which I have referred earlier—banking by post.

Mr. May: Most of them live in town now.

Mr. JOHNSON: I thank the hon. member for that information. The bank officers believe, as did most people when the 40-hour week judgment was given at the Federal level, that it would result in a universal five-day week. They were forcibly disabused of that opinion and have ever since tried to achieve a five-day week along with the other industrial workers who have secured it. One aspect which makes them bitter and hostile on the subject is that they know this reform would not interfere with the profitability of their employers' institutions and that it might even reduce the costs to some slight extent.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: But that is not the real point at issue.

Mr. I. W. Manning: It is not a major point.

Mr. JOHNSON: No, that is not the only reason why they want it. They want it because everyone else has it.

Mr. I. W. Manning: Do they say there should be no objection to the proposal because it would not interfere with the profits of the banks?

Mr. JOHNSON: If members opposite say they have no regard for the profitability of banks, I simply do not believe them as I thought that was one of their greatest concerns.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: That is a minor point in relation to the argument for getting a holiday on Saturday morning.

Mr. JOHNSON: It is just one of the points.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: It is service to the community which matters.

The SPEAKER: I suggest that the hon. member addresses the Chair and leaves these points for the Committee stage.

Mr. JOHNSON: The bank officers desire this reform because most industrial workers have it—practically without exception, and particularly in the clerical industry. One reason for their bitterness is that they know that the reform would

not affect the profitability of their employers. They know that the service they are called on to give on Saturdays is not in reality banking and that it is only as important to banking as chromium plating is to transport. Very little of the business done on Saturdays has any direct effect on the trading of the banks.

The employees know from bitter experience that were the banks to remain open until midnight each night, there would be customers selfish enough—mainly from the retail trade—to demand service until 1 a.m., and that is a practice against which both the employers and the employees constantly set their faces. It is in what I might call the standing orders of all banks that no business be done after 3 p.m., although there is always some evasion of that provision. This is an industrial reform to which the group of workers concerned is entitled because most other workers have it. The opposition to it comes solely from one group—the retail trade—and there is no opposition from the manufacturing side.

The whole of the industrial movement, which covers the majority of those who work for wages and salaries throughout the country, support this reform at least in principle. They know that the savings bank customer, who is generally a wages man, is well provided for by the increasing number of agencies, should it be necessary—as has been said on occasions—for him to put his money in the bank before he can spend it in the pub. That position is well catered for, and I do not think the idea that such a service is necessary is applicable to the majority of these people, although there are a few weak-minded persons in all sections of the community.

My final point is that it was not long ago that members of the Liberal Party were courting bank officers with a phoney argument related to the effect of potential changes in banking legislation on the employment of bank officers. The bank employees were given to understand that the Liberal Party and the bank managements would look after them, but they now find that when this reform which is for their benefit and which will not affect the profitability of their employers is sought, the Liberal Party and the bank managements oppose it.

I think they would agree with the suggestion that people who join and remain in banks are naturally dumb and weak-spined in doing so but they give hostages to fortune by entering pension schemes and so on, with the result that it is not as easy for them to move to other industries as the member for Nedlands so blithely suggests. There is no doubt that if this reform is delayed, the bank officers will be aware of who has obstructed, delayed and refused it, and note will be taken of those who opposed it in a political sense. I think note has already been taken

to some degree although I have tried on all previous occasions to keep this question from becoming a purely political one.

Mr. Roberts: Do you believe that?

Mr. JOHNSON: I said I tried to keep it from becoming political.

Mr. Court: I have seen letters you wrote and which make it very political.

Mr. JOHNSON: The fact that I tell the truth may be objectionable to the hon. member. If the truth happens to be political and it hurts him, that is unfortunate.

Mr. Court: It does not hurt me, but you have written letters which make this a party political issue.

Mr. JOHNSON: That is not accurate. I may have pointed out the truth and if the hon. member feels that everything that does not redound to his credit should be silenced and makes the matter political, I would point out that those who make it political are people such as he who object to what is a reasonable reform. I have tried to answer every interjection and question and any further answers can be found in the select committee's report. I feel there should be no need for further debate on the matter but I wish to emphasise that even the spineless worm that the average bank officer is industrially—

Mr. Roberts: They will be glad to hear that.

Mr. JOHNSON: They agree with me on that, and they will not entirely forget those who tried to help them or those who opposed that move.

Mr. Bovell: I would like you to elaborate on this spineless worm business, because it is a serious reflection on bank officers.

Mr. Lawrence: Do not blush!

Mr. JOHNSON: I know the hon. member was a bank officer and I know he would not like it thought that he was a spineless worm. I point out that he found occasion to retire from the service and he has not been the only one to do so. I might mention that moves are afoot in all States of the Commonwealth to introduce legislation to amend the provisions for bank holidays. There are some practical difficulties because of the mechanics of the various State Parliaments and to some extent owing to the set-up of party machinery, and so on; but I would remind members that one of the first actions of a certain Liberal politician in the storm-racked State of Queensland, on being elected, having been a teller in a bank, was to raise this subject. It is not political unless one cares to make it so.

Hon. D. Brand: How did that Liberal Party member get on with his Bill?

Mr. JOHNSON: He received the same sort of unintelligent opposition from—

Mr. Roberts: The Labour Government!

Mr. JOHNSON: —the Gair Government as I am getting from Liberals here. I recommend the Bill to the House and move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Minister for Labour, debate adjourned.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

MR. HEARMAN (Blackwood) [8.33] in moving the second reading said: I hope I do not take as long over this Bill as the previous speaker took over his.

The SPEAKER: That is hardly a statement in connection with the Bill before the House!

Mr. HEARMAN: I hope that it applies to it because I do not want to take nearly as long in introducing it. This Bill has been introduced to try to remedy an anomaly that now exists in the Traffic Act because of the amendment that was passed last session, which amendment increased the traffic fees. The anomaly in question refers to licence fees payable on agricultural tractors which are used by farmers for the haulage of goods on the roads.

Members may recall that last year it was decided, among other things, that all vehicles which used fuel other than petrol would have a scale of fees double that which applied to petrol-driven vehicles. Today practically all agricultural tractors are either kerosene or diesel-driven. This means that these vehicles not only have to bear an additional licence fee but also the normal collection is doubled. I would point out that this request for relief from the additional licence fee has been sought by a branch of the Farmers' Union in my electorate because it so happens that in my electorate it is common practice for farmers to use tractors with trailers attached to do a lot of their carting on the road.

It is particularly useful to orchardists who very often use their tractors for picking purposes in the orchard and then, if their orchards are within a couple of miles of the packing shed, they take the fruit straight to the shed on the trailer without off-loading it on to a truck and then taking it to the shed. This is not only a great convenience to them but it also has an advantage to the industry and to consumers inasmuch as it saves the double-handling of fruit. The less fruit is handled the better it is, and the less damage is done to it.

The Minister for Health: What are the views of the local authority on this question?

Mr. HEARMAN: As far as I know, the local governing authorities are sympathetically disposed to it because, from such

inquiries as I have made, there seems to be a tendency to regard the present fees as completely unreasonable and certain subterfuges have been adopted, to my own knowledge, such as the suggestion that trailers be brought in with a manure spreader attached so that they can be classified as agricultural implements. That sort of thing is undesirable and, personally, I think it is much better if we deal with these specific problems separately.

All the Bill seeks to do is to add a proviso to the Third Schedule which will simplify the whole matter, and I think it will meet the requirements of both the users and the local authorities. I would emphasise that the actual mileage travelled in a year by a farmer using his tractor for such purposes would be relatively small. The speed of the vehicle ensures that the mileage travelled is not very great and, furthermore, due to the slow speed, I would suggest that there is no vehicle, with the exception of a push bike, which would have a lesser impact on the road or do less damage than a tractor which has large tyres and which is just bowling along slowly. Bearing in mind the fact that the mileage in a year would be very small for each tractor involved, I think we could safely agree to this Bill.

I would also point out that in a number of instances the farmers who would benefit by the passing of this Bill would be the small men in the industry—those farmers who are just starting out. Once a man gets to the stage where he can purchase a motor-truck, the use of a tractor on a road may not be so important to him. To the man on the small property, who is hard-pressed for finance, the additional expense of employing a carrier or purchasing a motor-truck is considerable, and I think he is the person we should endeavour to help. Under the old schedule the licensing fee was not particularly heavy and, taking it as an example, the Fordson diesel tractor could be licensed for about £12, and, because of the dispensation a farmer could get under Section 11 of the Act, that fee was reduced to £6 and he could license a trailer of the type that he would be likely to use for such a tractor for about £5 or £6. So he would get out of the double licence fee for about £12.

Under the new schedule a Fordson diesel tractor would cost about £22 10s. or thereabouts to license and the trailer, with a possible average weight of about 15 cwt., would cost about £7 10s. That means it is a step up from about £12 in round figures to about £30, and I do not think it was the intention of this House to penalise the small farmer to that extent. There are considerable variations in the schedule that was brought down as compared with the old one; but, generally speaking, the additional impost is about 40 per cent., and not a jump from £12 to £30. So I think members should consider this Bill; the

anomaly which it seeks to correct does affect a number of farmers and it will be of particular benefit to the small men.

Also, a farmer in a small way who might possibly own a small car, gets no relief because of his car under Section 11 of the Act; the question of a half-licence fee applies only to commercial vehicles. For the man who does not own a motor-truck, it means there is little advantage from the half-licence fee. Under the new schedule unless the person who owns a tractor is a farmer the licence fee for a Fordson tractor is £45 4s., which is very considerable and even allowing for the fact that if he is a farmer he is allowed half fees for his tractor, the cost to the small man is quite large.

It might be suggested that there is a provision in the Act for licensing for a short period. That might be satisfactory in some cases where a man has a seasonal crop of potatoes, or something like that. But where a man does not own a truck and he uses his tractor for work on the farm and for carting his produce on the road, he requires the tractor to be licensed for travel on the road for 12 months of the year. The small orchardist in my area might start picking his stone fruit about December and he might still be picking his Granny Smith apples and late varieties, such as Yates, right up to May or June. In addition, he has other carting to do such as super spraying materials, and so on throughout the year.

Some farmers live close to town and have no vehicle other than a tractor which, with a carrying platform attached, can be used for general farm work. This applies particularly to the farmers in a small way. To them the expenditure of £1,000 or more on a tractor is considerable and when the capitalisation per acre is taken into account, a man on a 500-acre property who spends £1,000 on a tractor has a capitalisation of £2 an acre on his tractor alone. So if he is not in a position to utilise that vehicle to the fullest possible extent, it can become a bad investment for him.

In view of the fact that these vehicles do not cause great damage to the roads, and because they are of considerable economic advantage to the farmer who uses them for the transport of his goods, and because of the additional impost that was inadvertently imposed by Parliament last year—and that additional impost was considerable—I think members could agree to this Bill. A study of it will disclose that the intention is to cut out all formulae in connection with this charge, and simply allow a man to license a tractor with a trailer for a payload of two tons. But I have suggested that because there are so many tractor and trailer attachments—for instance, one could have a small tractor pulling a large trailer, or a large tractor pulling a small trailer—it would be reasonable to license the whole

outfit. Apart from this, any formula that might be devised generally involves the weight of the trailer unladen and that is a most difficult matter to determine in country areas where the facilities are not available.

Further, there could be considerable discrepancies or differences in the weights of some tractors. For instance, the Fordson diesel tractor I mentioned might weigh two tons 18 cwt. without the hydraulic linkage and perhaps three tons odd with it. Again, the possibility of water in the tyres might add another half ton. Therefore I suggest it is most difficult, indeed impossible, for local authorities to determine the weight of a tractor at the time it is brought in to be licensed. It is possible that the tractor might quite easily have other attachments and I am sure nobody would wish to put the farmers to the additional trouble of dismantling these attachments before having their tractors licensed.

I have mentioned the figure of two tons as a suitable payload because I think it is the maximum load that would be reasonable. I know a tractor is capable of pulling more on the road in top gear, but I think two tons would be a reasonable load. In many instances there may be relatively small tractors pulling larger trailers and others may have dual wheels to facilitate haulage in boggy ground, etc. In some cases the determining factor as to the size of the load is likely to be the tractor rather than the trailer. In those circumstances, I think it is extremely difficult to provide a satisfactory formula that will not raise many anomalies. I think the simplest way is to accept this Bill and to let any farmer license his tractor for a payload of from two tons.

In the case of a man who has no other concessional licence at all and who wants to license his tractor and trailer for this purpose, he would automatically get it for two tons. In the event of his holding a concessional licence, the discretionary powers given to the local authorities are carried on and they would decide whether they would grant this concession to a tractor or some other vehicle. The man may also want to develop a second property for his son and one truck may do the carting for both properties. For that reason I would not like to see the discretion taken from the local authority. We should ensure that every encouragement is given to people who are endeavouring to develop new properties.

I placed the provisions of the Bill in the Third Schedule because it seems to me that it would be simpler to deal with from the point of view of the convenience of the secretary of the road board. It is the schedule from which they all work when determining licence fees. I think it is preferable to giving a dispensation to the farmers under Section 11 which is one that gives them a half-licence fee for the

commercial vehicle; apart from dispensations to kangaroo-shooters, sandalwood pullers and others. For that reason the Bill has been drawn up in the form of an amendment to the Third Schedule. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Minister for Transport, debate adjourned.

MOTION—RAIL CLOSURES.

Rescission of 1956 Resolution.

Debate resumed from the 25th July.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. H. E. Graham—East Perth) [8.50]: This question of the discontinuance of certain railway services was discussed at considerable length both in this Chamber and in the Legislative Council last December. I make so bold as to say that the question was then determined on the merits of the case, and I will proceed to say that the matter is now before us not on account of any merits of the case, or any change in circumstances, but because of political considerations. In that respect I make no charge against the Leader of the Country Party or, indeed, against those who sit behind him. I do suggest, however, that they have been encouraged in this move because of the uncertain movements and activities of members of the Liberal Party.

The question, I repeat, was resolved last December on the merits of the case. The facts and circumstances surrounding the continuation of the railway services in Western Australia and the impact they are making upon this State have not altered to any extent or degree whatever.

Mr. Bovell: There is only the matter of a deficit rise of £2,500,000.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: If that be so, it means that the deteriorating position of the railways is of even greater concern in July, 1957, than it was in December, 1956, and, accordingly, it calls for—if I might use the term employed by the member for Nedlands—bold steps to be taken.

Mr. Nalder: Closing the lines does not constitute bold steps.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: It means that a half-hearted attempt will not be sufficient to satisfy the position. That resolution was agreed to by a majority of four to one in the Legislative Assembly notwithstanding that the pairs entered into were by persons who were almost without exception—both for the ayes and noes—in favour of the resolution. A cursory examination will show that to be true.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: We straightened that out.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: This whole question was before Parliament for a period of almost two months and there was discussion on the cessation of railway operations for a period prior to that. Accordingly, no one can suggest that members were not fully informed or that a snap decision was made. I repeat, because of political considerations, we, this session, are hearing—unfortunately to a very great extent—a rehash of all that transpired last December. It has been suggested to me that the Liberal Party is feeling the effects of some of its sources of income being denied it because of the feelings of certain country people.

Mr. Court: That is completely without foundation.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I wonder!

Mr. Court: I can assure you it is completely without foundation.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: In that case I will go on and assure the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, or at least remark to him and other members in this Chamber, that there is a great deal of rumour to the effect that certain members of the Liberal Party—and I could mention them but I will not—are going to receive political opposition at the hands of the Country Party at the next general election, and for this reason it has become politically necessary for the Liberal Party to do what it can. The attitude of that party is "Hang the State of Western Australia." All the Liberal Party wants to do is to look after the interests of those two or three individuals who may be threatened by Country Party opposition.

Mr. Bovell: Rubbish!

Hon. D. Brand: You do not want to judge other people by yourself.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: The new Leader of the Opposition may tonight say all sorts of irresponsible things; it will not be the first time he has done so. But I can guarantee him that if he is in touch with the members of his own party, he could not get all of them to assure him from their knowledge that they are not going to be opposed by a Country Party candidate.

Hon. D. Brand: Rubbish!

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: If the hon. member is describing himself, well and good. At any event, it may well resolve this matter.

Mr. Bovell: It will not be the first time. We are not afraid of those sort of things.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: The hon. member's party is afraid of the electors.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Rubbish.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I do not want to keep repeating things for the member for Cottesloe. Matters which

are quite obvious to other members have to be repeated ad infinitum before they penetrate the skull of the member for Cottesloe. I would like to proceed with the presentation of my case—and let me state that I am in no respect deterred by anything the Leader of the Opposition has said or, indeed, might say in connection with this matter.

It may be recalled that in what was virtually his maiden speech the Leader of the Opposition introduced a motion to censure the Government with respect to this matter of rail closures. He revealed that he was completely and utterly out of touch with what had transpired; so much so that he had to prevail upon the Government to supply him with information—it was laid on the Table of the House this evening—as to what had been done and what had been arranged. In other words, from his own mouth he admitted that he did not have a clue as to what was going on; indeed, he desired to be informed on the matter.

I find—if one can take any notice of this evening's Press—that even the Country Party has had to appoint a special committee for the purpose of working out some sort of railway policy. This, to me at any rate, suggests that there is not one at the moment, except resolutely to oppose the closing of so much as one mile of railway line in Western Australia irrespective of the circumstances. I wonder what it is that has transpired since December of last year to cause members of the Liberal Party—indeed any members—to perform this political somersault of which they have, I repeat, given evidence this session.

Mr. Bovell: The great bungling of the Government.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: The question of the bungling of the Government was dealt with in this Chamber several weeks ago and the Legislative Assembly decided that that was not in accordance with fact.

Mr. Roberts: By a brutal majority.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Any democratic government exists because of a majority; a fact about which perhaps the member for Bunbury is not particularly pleased. I do not know what other form of government he desires. I think I can say I have listened to every speech delivered in this Chamber in connection with the proposals for the cessation of railway operations, as well as to those in criticism of the action taken. In addition, I have read all the remarks made by members of the Legislative Council, and can say that quite honestly. Members will recall that I threw out a challenge—I think I was called to order at the time—by asking this question of the Opposition: "Can you give one case

where the Government has not observed the conditions imposed by Parliament?" I was supplied with none. I listened to many speeches and read the reports of the other speeches. I found there was a whole lot of hysteria in certain cases and fabrications and utter untruths in others, and for the balance there was a great deal of conjecture as to what might happen in the future.

Their imaginations have been drawn upon to show that values of properties will fall. Somebody who bought a property less than nine months ago—to quote one of the people—now finds this property has lost value to the tune of no less than £3 per acre. When this person bought that property, the speaker said he had no idea of any rail closures. We all know the matter of rail closures was well known less than nine months ago, and I defy that hon. gentleman to substantiate the case that within nine months, because of rail closures—which have only been in operation a few weeks—the value of that man's property has fallen £3 per acre.

That is apparently the sort of stuff we are supposed to accept. It is turning a complete somersault on what we decided a few months ago.

Mr. Roberts: I bet you will think this is a good speech when you read it.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: The member for Bunbury always interjects without thinking.

Mr. Jamieson: He is—

The SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I do not think it is necessary to traverse the whole course of the railway situation in Western Australia. We know, however, that in the past three years there has been an impact or burden of somewhere approaching £80,000,000 in respect of the lines entailed through railway losses, added to the amount of loan moneys that had to be spent on the railways during that period. In Western Australian monetary language, £80,000,000 is an exceedingly tremendous sum, and, there being no sign or indication of any improvement, can we, as those charged for the time being with certain responsibilities, sit idly by and knit whilst this situation continues? It is one which calls for courageous action. Surely all of those who have been Ministers, irrespective of the type of Government, have been called upon, from time to time, to do things which are intensely unpopular but which are in the best interests of the community and State.

I think there should be a little more of that attitude at the present moment in respect of something which has such a tremendous impact, instead of playing the game of party politics, as is being done

now. I do not want to suggest to members that I have not played politics in my time, but I would not do so in a matter of such tremendous importance as this. If something is not done, it could completely engulf the State of Western Australia because of the magnitude of the money involved, and it behoves all of us to show responsibility and rectitude in regard to this matter rather than indulge in the sort of complaining we have heard in recent times.

It is not sufficient for us to close our eyes and do nothing about it. It is easy to talk about the necessity for a change in administration for greater efficiency to be instilled into that tremendous machine known as the Railway Department. I have been a member of Parliament for almost—

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Too long!

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT:—fourteen years, too long for the member for Cottesloe.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Too long for the good of Western Australia.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. D. Brand: And the Labour Government.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: For fourteen years I have listened to these fullsome speeches in general terms, some picking on specific matters. I remember, before entering Parliament, reading the speeches in Parliamentary Debates particularly by one who was member for Pingelly and who later became the Minister for Railways, and I know that what is being said now in 1957 was also said in 1937 and 1927 and, I daresay, in years before that. If as much is done or attempted as in those intervening years, the present position will continue and become aggravated. Quite a number have talked about sackings that should take place. Some of our friends, who are not far distant, have said that 2,000 employees should be dispensed with. They are a little more hesitant in this Chamber because we are answerable to the people and therefore more reticent in connection with dismissals. They are a little more outspoken, however, in other places.

There was an inquiry some six or seven years ago—maybe several years longer than that—undertaken into the railway system by the McLarty-Watts Government. There were technical men who were engaged to undertake the investigation and certain recommendations were made. So far as I can make out, the only change in substance that was made was to settle upon an arrangement with which everybody now disagrees—a triumvirate type of administration—yet this Government is criticised because it has not a professional or technical man who is undertaking the inquiry at the present moment!

All these inefficiencies, of which much is made, have not happened in the year 1956 or 1957; they have always been there. These things have been said most readily by people at the present moment. I might mention that a few months ago members were drawing upon their imaginations and were fearful of the future, convincing themselves that all sorts of terrible things would happen outback if the railways were not operating.

Mr. Ackland: Did you call it imagination when you said that the Bonnie Rock line would break down in six weeks? You were wrong. It carted more wheat than in any other period.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Perhaps we can deal with those things in a few minutes. I have a letter here dated the 31st January, 1957, addressed by the Minister for Railways to the member for Murray, who had approached the Minister for Railways on behalf of somebody—I think in regard to the Laverton-Leonora line—who was concerned as to what might happen in the future. Portion of the letter reads—

I can clearly appreciate your correspondent's concern at the prospect of losing the rail service. It recalls my own efforts to prevent your Government from discontinuing the rail service between Port Hedland and Marble Bar. Fears, similar to those expressed by Mrs.—

I shall call her Mrs. "X."

—were held by the community living near the railway and also by myself. A few months experience with road transport, which followed the closure of the Marble Bar railway, changed the thoughts of all concerned. During my frequent visits to the district I have not met one person who wanted the railway reopened.

So there we have the opinion of the present Minister for Railways that he was fearful of what the plight of the people might be. It proved to be completely unfounded.

Judging by the diligence with which the Leader and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition are studying certain documents at the present moment, I am certain that they are seeking to inform their minds of the position because several weeks ago, judging by the speeches they made, they felt the heavens were falling. Now they are checking up and finding, no doubt to their astonishment and dismay, that much of the information they have picked up from fishwives and other people around the corners, is not in accordance with facts.

Hon. D. Brand: We certainly did not get it from the Minister for Transport because he could not provide it; he did not know. It took him a week to provide it in the House.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Let us put a few things right. When the Leader of the Opposition asked me for this information I indicated that it had to come from several departments; and I can tell him that it was only yesterday that I received the information from the railways, and only this morning from the Main Roads Department.

Hon. D. Brand: You should have had this information before you closed any lines.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: It is a matter of particular information being collated for a particular purpose. As is known, a whole lot of information has been placed upon the Table of the House and, as should be known, information has been sent by the Transport Board to the members of affected districts, public statements have appeared, and all the rest of it. But I am certain that quite a few of the people who sit opposite me have been busy listening to other types of information—not information but propaganda—and all the rest of it instead of paying heed to the official statements, or checking up on the actual situation.

Mr. Court: This information was sought by the Leader of the Opposition only by way of confirmation because you made certain allegations during the debate on his censure motion. From the casual survey we have been able to make of this, since you tabled it, it only confirms our worst fears in most cases.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Like the man pushing the wheelbarrow, it is up to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to prove that. Many general statements have been made in connection with this matter that have, upon examination, been proved to be completely valueless. Statements have been made by parliamentarians that it takes from 15 to 20 days for persons, who are 15 and 20 miles from a line that has ceased to operate, to get their mail. Did members ever hear of anything so absurd? Yet these are so-called responsible people and we are supposed to be influenced by their statements!

In addition to the type of thing I have been discussing, there has been a whole lot of talk about the potentialities of certain localities. It has been said that whilst at the moment there may not be sufficient traffic to warrant, on an economic basis a continuation of the railway service, we should just wait for a few years and see what the position is. Well, this is the position: In the territory represented by the member for Vasse, in a period of four years—the latest figures available—production increased 100 per cent., but the amount carried by rail fell 50 per cent.

Mr. Bovell: Because road transport pinched most of it.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Of course.

Mr. Bovell: Railway road transport.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: No; I am talking about railway road services. The facts of the situation are, over all, that in the year just concluded we managed to cart as much by rail as we did in 1928. In other words, in 1928 so many million tons of goods were conveyed over the railway system of this State and then for certain reasons, including the depression, there was a falling off, and it has taken us right up to this last year to carry the same amount of goods as we did then—a generation ago.

Mr. Oldfield: Is that ton miles or total tonnage?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I think it is total tonnage. Surely everyone will admit that there has been a tremendous increase in production, development, manufacture, and in the variety of goods purchased, and that there has been an advance in the general standard of living which, in all, has made it necessary to transport, per head of population, a greater weight and volume of goods than previously! Yet, notwithstanding all these considerations, it has taken us a generation to catch up to the situation that existed in 1928; and that notwithstanding what some members are pleased to call a tyrannical—almost—Government department, namely, the State Transport Board, which prevents goodness knows how many tens or hundreds of thousands of tons of goods being carted by road. In other words, if there were no Transport Board and no restrictions whatsoever, I venture to suggest that the volume of goods carried by the railways would be immeasurably less than was carried as far back as 1928. These are the facts of the situation, and it is no good blinking our eyes to them.

Mr. Ackland: If we had an efficient railway service, people would not want to cart their own stuff.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Before there was anything like an established road service, these charges of inefficiency were being made; and no doubt in 20 or 50 years' time, they will still be made. The fact, whether we like it or not, is that a new form of transport has come into being—a form of transport that was not in existence at the time our railway system was laid down. I venture to suggest that had it been, the railways, in the great majority of places, would not have been constructed.

There is no turning back the hands of time. I notice from Press reports that the Country Party says that no railways should be closed. But some of our lines carry virtually only a few ounces per week. From memory there is one which carts 16 tons of regular light traffic in a period of 365 days. Apparently it is to be kept open and we are to run a service for this volume of freight; and I do not know how many years have passed since a passenger was carried on that line.

Side-by-side with that proposition, I notice a declaration to the effect that the Country Party will rigidly oppose any tightening of the Transport Act. In other words, it would appear that it is insisting that all the railways are to be kept open notwithstanding that they are not being used in the great majority of cases; and only as a convenience where they are being used. According to the Country Party, not one line of the railways is to be closed but at the same time these people, because of the importance and the necessity of road transport, are to be permitted concessions which no other section of the community enjoys.

That is to say that many country people bring down a couple of chickens in a crate and take back from the metropolitan area several tons of fuel, and that is done even by members of this Parliament, but there is no one in the metropolitan area who can take some tons of fuel to the country and bring back a couple of chickens in a crate.

Mr. Wild: Leave the chickens alone.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I appreciate the point. If we can reduce this question to a common denominator, it seems that the country people do not want to use the railways but merely to see the "puff puffs" come in and go out. Statements have been made that the Government has failed to honour the conditions that were attached to the resolution agreed to by Parliament. Those assertions have been answered in this Chamber and in the Legislative Council. I stated in this House that no doubt it will be possible to point to an anomaly here and another there or make a suggestion that there should and could be an improvement in certain directions. I think, as is well known to most of us, that where there is a change in system, a good deal has to be learned by experience.

This matter is being closely watched by the Transport Board and if it is found that people in a certain locality desire to transport their goods northwards to a rail terminal instead of southwards, there will have to be some adjustment of the plans in order to meet that situation. There has been a lot of talk about what happens to the railways and what will happen to the roads. I cannot answer for the Main Roads Department engineers, but I think the Minister for Works would be prepared to assure the House that those engineers—I will not go so far as to say they chuckle over it—have assured and reassured us that there is no such thing as a road problem in connection with this question.

Mr. Ackland: What about the bogged trucks and broken axles?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: A few bogged trucks and broken axles can probably be found every day in the week in various parts in the State but they are not confined to the roads, as such things happen on the railways also. Surely no

one will suggest that a misadventure here and there proves anything! Of course it does not, and the great majority of these roads are in a better state and are more traffic-worthy than are the roads which are the approaches to them and over which the vehicles travel in bringing goods to the major roads at the sidings or townships as the case may be—

Mr. Ackland: Do not show so much ignorance!

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: The member for Moore is a classic example of that; he and a few people like him who have been associated with the Farmers' Union. As I stated before, there was published a map which, I repeat, was deliberately designed to mislead the people and it was circulated by the Farmers' Union—

Mr. Ackland: It had reference to the recommendations of this Parliament and you would be putting it into practice now if it was not for the hullabaloo—

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: This Government has made no decisions because of any hullabaloo created by the member for Moore. I have suffered the ordeal of listening to some of his firebrand type of speeches over the air and have read reports of what he and some of his colleagues have said in the country and I say there has been a wilful and deliberate campaign of mischief and misrepresentation for the purpose of stirring up the people into all sorts of fits of frenzy and hate and to make them believe that certain things were going to happen.

The Premier can tell his own story, but he has been invited to attend two meetings in areas where there has been no suggestion by the Government of any closure of lines, but because of the member for Moore and people of his ilk, the people of those districts were, until reassured by the Government, of the opinion that something was contemplated with regard to them and their rail services. I repeat that, in respect of a matter of such transcendent importance and the financial implications of it, a man is being false to his own State when he carries on in such a fashion, instead of measuring up in a responsible manner to the issue before us.

Mr. Ackland: You have been false to the State in closing these lines.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: It has been stated by the member for Moore—and no doubt he sowed the seed of untruth in the minds of others—that the Premier gave certain undertakings that certain investigations would be carried out and that somehow a mischievous Minister or a person with a bee in his bonnet—such terms were used as the hon. member well knows—was responsible for what took

place, because he came out with the statement that rail services were to cease from a certain day, and the hon. member asked who was in charge of the Government, what was going on, and so on.

The facts of the position were that the cessation of rail services was deferred by the Government at the request of the Premier in order to meet representatives of country organisations and listen to their pleas. That was done, and subsequently, after certain investigations had been carried out, the matter was submitted to Cabinet and it was Cabinet that decided the dates of the closures.

Mr. Ackland: In spite of what the Premier had told the people!

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Not in spite of what the Premier had said. Members can see how the member for Moore, on being found out, seeks to change his ground. The position, I repeat, was that the Minister for Transport merely announced the dates that had been approved by Cabinet as those on which road services would commence, and that was done expeditiously for the purpose of giving the tentative dates a wide circulation so that the people in affected areas would have the greatest amount of notice possible.

But, of course, people with evil and malicious minds would endeavour to create in the minds of others the feeling that there is some sort of a split or division in the ranks of the Government in connection with this matter, when, of course, there is nothing of the sort. The Leader of the Country Party expressed some concern about people in remote places. I would point out to him something of which he is well aware, namely, that there are many people in Western Australia who are in far more remote places than those affected by the cessation of railway operations following the motion agreed to by Parliament last December—

Mr. Bovell: But the railway system was not part of their lives.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: And road transport was not part of anybody's life at that time. These people have gone to those remote areas and have developed their properties and businesses. Many of them have thrived and succeeded, while others have fallen by the wayside, but they have been much further from the metropolitan area or from any large township than are the great majority of those affected by these closures.

Mr. Cornell: What particular places have you in mind?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Marble Bar, for the sake of argument. Is that satisfactory?

Mr. Cornell: It is to you but not to me.

Mr. Bovell: Has the Minister ever been to Marble Bar.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: The Leader of the Country Party was concerned with what he described as incorrect figures supplied to him from several sources, or supplied to Parliament on several occasions. While he was speaking, I interjected that he ought to know what was responsible for this apparent anomaly or inaccuracy. He replied that he did not. I interjected further "telescopic freights." Members know what they are. To use an example, the freight rate for 50 miles might start off at 6d. a ton, then drop to 5d., 4d., 3d., 2d., until at the end of the journey the freight is being carried for virtually nothing.

Surely it is obvious that if this year, again to use an imaginary figure, the average haulage is for 150 miles whereas last year the average haulage was 200 miles, the ton mile rate would be different this year from what it was last year. That happens to be precisely the position with respect to the two years concerned, and that is why the figures were 2.90d. and 2.68d. The Leader of the Country Party—and I do not blame him for this because he was not sufficiently informed in connection with it, and this might have been the fault of the report in one case and the answers to questions in the other case—drew the conclusion that the Railway Department did not know what it was about.

Mr. Ackland: What about the figure of 2.2d for ore? That is in the report, too.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Because ore, on the average, is being transported over longer distances than grain, on the average, naturally the rate per ton mile is less, namely, 2.02d. But when the question was asked in respect of the cartage of wheat over a certain distance, the answer given was 2.68d. and for the cartage of ore, over an identical distance, the reply was naturally 2.68d; it was the same in both cases.

Mr. Ackland: They were not quoted for distances. They were quoted at pence per ton mile.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: That is so. Over an equivalent distance, or words to that effect. I could find the question if the hon. member wants it read.

Mr. Ackland: Yet wheat was carted at a loss at 2.9d. and ore was carted at a profit at 2.2d.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Who said that?

Mr. Ackland: We had that in this House.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: No, we did not have that in this House.

Mr. Ackland: We had it in a statement by the Premier.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: For my part, I will make a double apology to the member for Moore if he can show me

where that statement has been made in this House. Therefore, I hope that that relieves the position so far as the Leader of the Country Party is concerned. I repeat that on his part it was not wilful; it was a misinterpretation of certain figures and if I can give the exact figures, they were 2.90d. for wheat, which happened to be over an average journey of 144.5 miles whereas for ore it was 2.02d. over an average of 240.3 miles.

I think the Leader of the Country Party said that one member on this side of the House stated that it will cost more for roads than to continue the railways in operation. It will not, of course. The roads are there and they will have to be maintained for traffic in any event. The only additional cost will be for the extra work involved because of the extra traffic; and in some cases that extra traffic will be so small in volume that the extra expense can be completely dismissed. Surely this is not a matter that private members can bandy about! This is a matter for engineers of the Main Roads Department. They have inspected these roads over and over and over again at the request of the Government. They have no fears whatever in connection with the matter. If members feel that they are able to establish otherwise, perhaps it requires some sort of investigation into the integrity of these Main Roads Department engineers.

A person quite prominent in public life, whose name would probably be known to all of us, informed me that in a certain locality in which he is established in business, the road board, for political purposes, has deliberately refrained from undertaking any road repair work since the passing of this resolution by Parliament in the hope that motorists and truck drivers would get bogged, break axles and so on. It was not quite as direct as that but it was done so that drivers of vehicles would be in difficulties and this would embarrass the Government and as a consequence the railway services would be reinstated.

Hon. D. Brand: Where was this?

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I did not say where it was. I was merely indicating that there is a person of some standing in business whose name is known to almost all of us, who assured me only last week that he had been in the locality for some 30 odd years and he had never seen the roads so completely neglected as they have been since the motion for the cessation of the railway services was dealt with. No doubt if he cares to participate in the debate at a later juncture, the Premier can have something to say with regard to the transport of iron ore from Koolyanobbing to Perth, or the particular spot where the ore will be treated, if the Commonwealth Government agrees to certain proposals. It might be Bunbury or it might be adjacent thereto.

However, I think that there should be an appreciation of this position: Where there is a railway service already in existence, and where there are commitments and maintenance charges which have to be met, whether any trains operate over the lines or not, if it is possible to send some additional trains over that length of railway line it can be accomplished at only a fraction of the cost as against apportioning part of the overhead expenses.

In other words, the expense of administration, of manning certain points along the line, of meeting interest and the cost of rehabilitation and maintenance, will continue without trains carrying iron ore. That is to say, some extra commitments will not derogate from the railways financially but will give them some additional revenue without making any appreciable addition to their other costs. There may be something more heard in that connection when I speak to another measure of which I have already given notice.

Mr. Court: But if you accept that principle, you leave yourself open to similar claims in regard to other products.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I have heard it suggested by members, when they have sought to have the privileges obtained from their gold passes extended a little further, "The train is running from point A to point B anyway, so what does it matter if I take my mother-in-law with me because there is a vacant berth on the train. Therefore it will be no added cost to the railways."

Mr. Oldfield: It would be an added cost to the member if he did so.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: We have heard something akin to that advanced by quite a few members of Parliament. However, I do not want to pursue that aspect any further because we could get to the ultimate ridiculous position—as I have already stated—of where there is nobody left to pay these recurring overheads and commitments. The Leader of the Country Party was also concerned about the accounting position or the crediting of freight revenue to various sections of the railway line. Of course, I am not the Minister for Railways, but I think I am right in saying that the present system of accounting has been in operation for many a long day, including the period when the Leader of the Country Party was the Deputy Premier of Western Australia.

I have thought about this matter on previous occasions when I have heard it raised. I have discussed and read documents on it on this occasion and I am firmly of the opinion that the present system is the only commonsense way to achieve proper accounting, otherwise we would get to the extreme position that I mentioned in regard to the last point discussed, namely, that the only part of the railway system that would pay would be

virtually the siding right at the end. That is, if we do not apportion the expenses right along the full length of the track. Where are we to stop? Are we to say that the section shall be from Bonnie Rock to Burakin or from Northam to Chidlow? Where do we stop?

Mr. Cornell: I would suggest that we stop at a quarter to 10.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I think I had better put the hon. member's mind at rest. The fair lady, whose portrait was published in the newspaper last night, is no longer with us and therefore it does not matter if he is unable to leave the Chamber before 10 o'clock tonight. It was also suggested that the 45 clerks in a certain section of the railways accounting staff should be unceremoniously sacked or their services used elsewhere and that if this were done, the State would be better off to the tune of £60,000. These officers are employed in the statistical division of the Railway Department and the matters referred to by the Leader of the Country Party occupy only a small portion of the total activity of that division.

The question of discontinuing rail services on various lines is not new. Rail services have been discontinued by successive Governments in the past, including the one which this Government succeeded. On those occasions there was not all the fuss, the noise and the bother that there is on this occasion. I venture to suggest that there were more inquiries made this time than on any other previous occasion and greater steps have been taken to ensure that there will be something worth while provided as a replacement following the cessation of the services on these various lines. I have received a letter from the Minister for Transport in Victoria in which State there is a Liberal Government—

The Premier: A Liberal Party!

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: They call themselves a Liberal Government. The Victorian Minister was seeking information from me because he was thinking of taking action similar to that taken in this State. I understand, also, that the world famous organisation known as Ebasco, which has been inquiring into railway administration in New South Wales, has recommended the closure of certain lines in that State. When we, in Western Australia, have a look at the overall picture we, too, will have to make up our minds on the matter.

There are one or two items to be dealt with concerning the sins of omission and commission of the Government. The statement has been made that, notwithstanding the reduction in the number of miles along which rail services will operate, the same number of men will be employed in the Railways Department.

Indeed, it has been said, that at the present moment, 2,000 more men are being employed than when the McLarty-Watts Government was in power, but that the Government increased the number of employees in the Railway Department by 3,004; that is, from 10,026 to 13,030. On the 14th December last, the number of staff was 14,184; that is to say, an increase of 1,154, but between December last and the 30th June this year the total has fallen to 13,712. In other words, there are 472 fewer employees than there were six months ago.

Mr. Ackland: On a reduced mileage, you have 4.3 men employed per mile, according to those figures.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: In contradistinction to the beliefs held by some of the colleagues of the member for Moore, this Government does not believe in wholesale retrenchments.

The Premier: The member for Moore advocated sacking 6,000 of them.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I would not be surprised. When replying to the debate that was held last December, I indicated that there was, in the previous 12 months, a turnover of not less than 3,686 employees in the Railway Department. Accordingly, it was unnecessary to effect any dismissals and as this Government was not going to proceed along those lines, all that would be required would be to wait for a few months for the position to adjust itself. Accordingly, that has actually happened. But certain people went on the rampage, one might say, in certain parts of the State, pretending all sorts of things. They made no mention of the reduction in manpower but they said that this Government had increased the personnel of the Railways Department by 2,000 men since the McLarty-Watts Government went out of office. Of course, that statement is totally untrue, without having any regard to the reduction in staff that has occurred in the last six months.

Everyone is aware of the delicate and important investigation being undertaken by Magistrate Smith. I cannot say anything about that investigation. In fact, I do not know a great deal about it, but I think this much can be said: This officer who is making the inquiry has been able to discover many things of considerable importance. As members have probably observed from reports in the Press, as soon as Magistrate Smith is able to submit a report to the Government, immediate consideration will be given to it. This indicates that something very definite is being done in regard to a reduction in manpower and also that something very definite is being done in regard to railway administration and operation generally.

Mr. Oldfield: How many commissioners have you sacked?

The SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: In view of the circumstances, I do not think an answer to that interjection is warranted. Some mention has been made about metropolitan transport. I think I indicated six months ago that this matter is receiving attention. I would point out that the problem is not as easy to solve as would appear on the surface. Not so very long ago the State of New South Wales decided to increase very considerably fares on public transport, particularly those charged in the metropolitan area. What happened? From the reports which appeared in the "Sydney Morning Herald"—I have several clippings here with me—I read that in 12 months that State lost 12,000,000 passenger journeys and £2,000,000 in consequence of those fare increases. In other words, there was passenger resistance. Surely, therefore, we in this State have to be extremely careful that we do not do something that will bring about a result similar to that which confronted the authorities in New South Wales.

As is known, Parliament shortly will give attention to the formation of a metropolitan passenger transport trust. We will, of course, await the determination of Parliament in connection with it. But the indication is that if that is established, then there must be an overhaul and co-ordination of services in the metropolitan area which could have a very considerable effect upon the metropolitan-rail passenger position. But all these matters must follow their proper sequence. We must await the meeting of Parliament and the consideration of measures. Meanwhile, because of the seriousness of certain aspects, action has to be taken immediately. If the community generally will be patient, I think they will find that more bold and progressive steps are being taken in connection with transport matters in their largest and smallest sense, and that they are being undertaken at the present time to a greater extent perhaps than at any other time in the history of the State.

Mr. Court: There is only one weakness in that, and that is that there seems to be a frantic rush to close the country railways, and yet you say these other things can wait until the matter is sorted out.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: No, that is not so. After all, it is some eight months since the matter was determined, and some of the railway lines are not yet closed. The final decision has not been made with respect to one of them. One is to continue to the 30th September. Surely it cannot be suggested that there is any indecent haste in connection with it.

Mr. Court: I venture to say that you could have saved yourself a lot of trouble in connection with this matter had you looked into it more thoroughly.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I think the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is trying to appease his own conscience in this matter, because in Hansard of last year, I had scored heavily his own words advocating bold action to be taken.

Mr. Court: That is all right, as long as you read the rest of the speech.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Has one ever heard anything so weak? The Deputy Leader of the Opposition endeavours to escape the charges I made in connection with it by pointing out that there was a question mark at the end of a paragraph of one of his speeches.

Mr. Court: Is not that important?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I have read that speech many times and I could probably repeat it now.

Mr. Roberts: It must have been a good one.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: It was a good one to quote back to the hon. member.

Mr. Court: In view of the reorganisation and the economies of which you speak, can you tell us how it is that you are expecting a deficit of £7,300,000?

The Premier: That is not correct?

Mr. Court: You have said so and the Minister for Transport added another £108,000.

The Premier: No one has said that. If it has been said, it is a misrepresentation.

The SPEAKER: The Minister for Transport may now proceed.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Perhaps it may be as well to give some small warning to the members of the Liberal Party and tell them that Mr. Morton, the Leader of the Opposition in New South Wales—who incidentally is a Liberal—is pleading with the Government of New South Wales to reduce metropolitan fares in order to overcome the position that has been created—

Mr. Court: He also put another proposition to them of which they took no notice.

The Premier: I think he might become a statesman some day.

Mr. Court: I think he might become Premier of New South Wales before long.

The Premier: You are the greatest optimist.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: The question of the closure of the railways has already been resolved by Parliament in a more or less calm and dispassionate atmosphere spread over a period of the best part of two months. It is only when the political machines have got moving that there has been some hesitancy and doubts, and reservations, in the hearts and minds of chicken-hearted people. That is

all it amounts to. The facts of the position have not been considered at all; only fear of the political consequences. Accordingly we have this resolution.

Mr. Nalder: You mean a chicken-hearted Minister.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Supposing this resolution is agreed to, it virtually expunges from the minutes a certain record. There is nothing in the resolution which calls upon the Government, or requests it, or insists or makes it replace the railway services that have been discontinued.

The Premier: The member for Nedlands knows that.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: The matter of cessation of railway services does not appear, as far as I am aware, on the platform of any political party. It is not portion of its philosophy or ideals or anything else.

Mr. Ackland: You are talking about people being chicken-hearted, and yet you are sheltering behind legislation passed by Parliament last December.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: In what way?

Mr. Ackland: You are blaming Parliament for it.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I have not blamed anybody other than the member for Moore; and I blame him for his lack of responsibility to this State.

The Minister for Lands: He has never ceased to mislead the farmers of this State.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: And never so much as on this subject; and when we have some of his colleagues saying from a forum not very far from here, that a person like the Premier is telling a deliberate lie, then we have some conception of the depths to which persons associated with the member for Moore have descended in connection with this matter, because the person who made that statement is one who has been hand in glove with him in connection with his meanderings around the countryside, misleading, misrepresenting and giving all sorts of wrong information to the people; and then, because the people are perturbed, pretending to us that the Government should do something to allay the concern expressed in country districts. This concern was only evident because of the half truths and untruths of certain speakers; the concern was not because of what this Government has done.

Mr. Ackland: From the introduction of this legislation you have done everything to try to mislead this House on the state of the railway lines.

Mr. Nalder: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I will say right now that I have not carried out a personal inspection of the railway lines.

Mr. Ackland: I have.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I can imagine the member for Moore doing so, and I suppose he considers himself a great expert on them.

Mr. Ackland: I know more about it than you do.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: That is possible, because I would have a greater sense of proportion; I would not examine the railway lines to decide their roadworthiness, but the member for Moore would take on anything.

The Premier: Even in between the dog and the post!

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: If there was any prospect of that, I would undertake to train the dog to ensure that it got a bulls-eye! I have no personal axe to grind whatever in connection with this matter. I repeat, I do not know the state of the railways—surely that is a job for the railway engineers, those who are qualified for this purpose! Surely the state of the road is a question for the road engineers, and not one for the member for Moore or the member for East Perth!

Mr. Ackland: Has not one of your engineers given a report in direct contradiction to what you have said, and you have not put the file on the Table of the House?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Not that I am aware of. I certainly have not refused to table any file.

Mr. Ackland: You said that it could be seen in the office of the Minister concerned.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: The member for Moore, surely is revealing himself absolutely and completely in connection with this matter. He knows, or should know, that the Minister for Transport cannot lay on the Table of the House a file which is the property of another Minister. He knows that, but he imagines he is talking to people in the never-never who are not closely in touch with political affairs, and thinks that because he could get away with it there, he could do so here. Surely in the interests of our State we can afford to be honest in connection with these matters! If this concerned the hurly-burly of a political fight I would enjoy it as much as the member for Moore.

I conclude on the note on which I opened. If we have a situation where in a short period since the conclusion of hostilities, the best part of £80,000,000 has been devoted from revenue and loan moneys to prop up a system which the people are indicating in ever-increasing

numbers that they desire less and less, because of the greater proportion who are going by road, and on the other hand, where a terrific impact is caused by the losses, then surely that situation calls for some drastic action. I referred earlier to the speeches that I mentioned I have read or listened to for a period of some 30 years. Surely we require something more than mere criticisms on the ground of inefficiency and maladministration! Surely it is time that some Government, irrespective of how unpopular such action might be, had the courage to face up to the position and do something about the matter!

Over the years taxation has been increased in Australia, but did the Governments which imposed the added burden think they would be awarded a popularity certificate, or did they take that action because they felt that the interests of the country, which they were charged with the responsibility to govern for the time being, required them to take action along those lines? In this matter the present Government could have sat by idly and done nothing, and allowed the position to deteriorate until the State was completely engulfed with this tremendous financial burden? No; this Government decided that the time had come for action—for bold action as we were advised by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

So that we would not, and could not, be accused of doing something extreme and precipitous, the matter was brought before Parliament. We received an overwhelming endorsement for the course of action we intended to take. All that is before us now is some pettifoggish criticism that the Government has not moved far enough in this direction, that it has not dotted every one of the "i's" in connection with another proposition. It can honestly be stated that every one of the requirements that were laid down by both Houses of this Parliament has been tackled energetically, vigorously and sincerely by the Government. If people would pay greater attention to the matter in dispute, and less attention to political manoeuvrings, they would be a little more patient.

I am certain as I stand here that in the course of a very short space of time, what action the Government has taken will be demonstrated by the success of the results. I am asking this House to vote against the motion and not to make a spectacle of itself by taking a complete somersault in respect of a decision arrived at by a majority of four to one only a few months ago.

On motion by Mr. Nalder, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.3 p.m.