

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, the 3rd December, 1963

CONTENTS

	Page
ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE :	
SPECIAL	3561
ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1963-64—	
Committee of Supply : General Debate— Speaker on Financial Policy— Mr. Jamieson	3553
BILLS—	
Administration Act Amendment Bill— 2r.	3551
Com.	3553
Report ; 3r.	3553
Alumina Refinery Agreement Act Amend- ment Bill— Tabling of Plan	3492
2r.	3548
Com. ; Report ; 3r.	3550
Criminal Code Amendment Bill (No. 2)— Returned	3548
Evidence Act Amendment Bill—Returned	3548
Firearms and Guns Act Amendment Bill (No. 2)—Returned	3548
Licensing Act Amendment Bill (No. 4)— Returned	3548
Milk Act Amendment Bill— 2r.	3526
Com.	3545
Report ; 3r.	3548
Mining Act Amendment Bill (No. 2)—Re- turned	3548
Mining Act Amendment Bill (No. 3)— 2r.	3550
Com. ; Report ; 3r.	3550
Native Welfare Bill—Returned	3548
Railways (Standard Gauge) Construction Act Amendment Bill— 2r.	3497
Com.	3520
Report ; 3r.	3526
Reserves Bill (No. 2)—Returned	3548
Road Closure Bill—Returned	3548
Stamp Act Amendment Bill (No. 3)—Re- turned	3548
Taxi-cars (Co-ordination and Control) Bill—Council's Message	3526
Totalisator Agency Board Betting Act Amendment Bill (No. 4)—Returned	3526
Workers' Compensation Act Amendment Bill— Intro. ; 1r.	3492
2r.	3550
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE—	
Civil Defence—Report by Mr. Lonnie on Overseas Visit	3493
Decentralisation— Effectiveness of Industrial Committees	3494
Seminars : Implementation of Policy	3494
Defaulters' Goods and Chattels—Items Subject to Seizure	3493
Education : Unemployed Youths— Parents' Guidance Course	3493
Training and Vocational Guidance	3493
Value of Leaving Certificate	3493
Hyden-Forrestania Area—Trial Plots, and Allocation of Land	3495

Parliamentarians' Inquiries—Departmental Replies	3495
Parliament House Extensions—Terms of Contract	3495
Railways : Standard Gauge— Grain Transhipment : Cost of Loading Equipment	3492
Surveyors' Course at University—Abolition and Assistance for Students Affected	3494
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE—	
Alsatian Dog Act—Repeal of Regulations	3496
Death of Native Child at Albany—Delay in Burial	3496
Postponed Questions—Non-Appearance on Notice Paper	3495
Railways Department— System of Ordering Oils	3496
Wheat Disposal—Nungarin Farmer's Ex- perience	3496

The SPEAKER (Mr. Hearman) took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

ALUMINA REFINERY AGREEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Tabling of Plan

MR. COURT (Nedlands—Minister for Industrial Development) [2.17 p.m.] : Mr. Speaker, when introducing the Bill to amend the Alumina Refinery Agreement Act, I referred to a plan of the two mineral reserve areas. Have I your permission to table the plan?

The SPEAKER (Mr. Hearman) : Yes.

The plan was tabled.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr. Wild (Minister for Labour), and read a first time.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE STANDARD GAUGE RAILWAY

Grain Transhipment: Cost of Loading Equipment

1. Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Railways:

Who will bear the cost of the specialised fast loading equipment to be used for transhipment of grain at the many receiving points along the standard gauge route from Perth to Southern Cross?

Mr. COURT replied:

Negotiations are proceeding on the details of this matter. It is not practicable to give details of the current proposal, but it is

being planned on a basis that at Northam and Merredin transshipment for standard gauge operational purposes will not be at the cost of the primary producer.

DEFAULTERS' GOODS AND CHATTELS

Items Subject to Seizure

2. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister representing the Minister for Justice: When a warrant is issued by the sheriff against a defaulter, empowering the seizure of "Goods and Chattels, Lands and Tenements" (see Form No. 385), what articles and possessions are left with the defaulter in the case of a married man with a dependent wife and large family of young children?

Mr. COURT replied:

Under section 118 of the Supreme Court Act, 1935-1960, the sheriff when executing a writ of *fiat facias* may seize and sell all the real and personal estate of the judgment debtor in Western Australia, or such part thereof as is sufficient to satisfy the judgment and the expenses of the seizure and sale. None of the judgment debtor's goods are protected from seizure or sale.

CIVIL DEFENCE

Report by Mr. Lonnie on Overseas Visit

3. Mr. DAVIES asked the Premier:
- (1) During the overseas visit of Mr. W. S. Lonnie was he required to or did he investigate any aspects of civil defence?
 - (2) If so, was any report submitted to the Government?
 - (3) Is any such report available for the information of members?

Mr. BRAND replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Yes. In regard to the United States.
- (3) A copy of the report will be made available on loan to any member who so desires it.

UNEMPLOYED YOUTHS

Training and Vocational Guidance

4. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Education:
- (1) As it is anticipated that 4,500 high school students, with academic qualifications, will leave school at the end of this year to seek employment, what action does the Government intend to take to counter the ever-rising number of unemployed youths?

- (2) Would the Government give earnest consideration to subsidising vocational youth training in all branches of employment with a view to helping the young to a better appreciation of technical training, this to be over and above the pre-apprenticeship training as envisaged?

Parents' Guidance Course

- (3) Would it be possible to introduce a parents' guidance course for instruction on problems of study and study periods with a view to closer relationship between parents, students, and teachers?

Value of Leaving Certificate

- (4) Have investigations been made whether the school leaving certificate is too academic; and, if so, what are the findings of such investigations?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

- (1) Every effort is made in the technical division to cater for the demands for full-time training in existing courses and the range of these courses is constantly being extended, one addition in 1964, for example, being a new business studies course for youth seeking employment involving accountancy and commerce.
- (2) It is not clear what type of training is implied in the question, but the technical division is always ready to introduce new courses where there is sufficient demand and public interest. Vocational information to assist students is available through guidance officers in secondary schools and the psychology and counselling service of the technical division.
- (3) This information is available to parents through the two sources mentioned in No. (2). Speakers at parents and citizens' association meetings have also discussed this topic and could do so in the future where parent interest requests it.
- (4) No detailed investigations have been made, but the members of the Committee of Inquiry into Secondary Education, 1963, made the following recommendation:—

The Leaving course should include, in addition to the courses already available, other courses of a broader educational nature to meet certain pre-vocational needs of students and to cater for their wide range of abilities and interests.

This recommendation is being investigated for implementation.

DECENTRALISATION

Seminars: Implementation of Policy

5. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

- (1) As he feels that the seminars held to evolve the best methods of decentralisation in this State were a success, can he now advise this House what practical action he intends to take to implement the policy of decentralisation and when?

Effectiveness of Industrial Committees

- (2) How many centres and country towns have established industrial committees and councils to formulate a policy for decentralisation of industry which are working in conjunction with the Department of Industrial Development and what are the names of the centres and towns?
- (3) Is it his considered opinion that such committees and councils are proving to be effective or not?

Mr. COURT replied:

- (1) Practical action to encourage the establishment and growth of industries outside the metropolitan area has been taken consistently as part of the Government's policy and will continue.

Each case is evaluated on its merits and the special circumstances. The types of action already undertaken to encourage the establishment of industries in country centres are—

Assistance in obtaining factory sites in suitable locations.

Provision of essential services such as power, water and roads to boundary of site.

Assistance to erect factory buildings.

Housing for key personnel.

Financial assistance.

In addition, specialised staff of the Department of Industrial Development are available to give advice on such matters as—

Finance and costing.

Markets and sales promotion.

Materials supply.

Engineering and chemical problems.

Land.

Some local authorities and committees have made regular use of these services.

- (2) Local industrial development committees have been formed in 46 country centres as follows:—

Albany
 Armadale-Kelmscott
 Augusta-Margaret River
 Beverley
 Boulder

Bridgetown
 Broome
 Bunbury
 Busselton
 Capel
 Carnamah
 Collie
 Corrigin
 Cranbrook
 Cue
 Cunderdin
 Dalwallinu
 Dardanup
 Donnybrook
 Dowerin
 Esperance
 Geraldton
 Gingin
 Greenbushes
 Harvey
 Irwin
 Kalgoorlie-Boulder
 Katanning
 Kellerberrin
 Mandurah
 Meekatharra
 Merredin
 Moora
 Murray (Pinjarra)
 Narrogin
 Northam
 Northampton
 Nyabing-Pingrup
 Pingelly
 Plantagenet (Mt. Barker)
 Serpentine-Jarrahdale
 Upper Blackwood
 Wagin
 Waroona
 Yilgarn (Southern Cross)
 York.

- (3) Some of these committees are proving to be effective and maintain contact with the Department of Industrial Development. An officer of the department is engaged full-time on liaison activities with these committees and other local people and organisations in seeking out industries which could be developed in appropriate centres.

SURVEYORS' COURSE AT UNIVERSITY

Abolition, and Assistance for Students Affected

6. Mr. HAWKE asked the Premier:

- (1) Is he aware of the action of the Senate of the University of Western Australia in abolishing the professional surveyors' course at the University?
- (2) How many students had passed into their second year in the course when the course was abolished?
- (3) Does he know the arrangements made for the students concerned to continue their studies at the

University of Melbourne, in Victoria, will make it impossible for at least one of the students to do so owing to financial difficulties?

- (4) Is the Government aware of the great importance of additional fully-trained surveyors being available from time to time for active service in Western Australia?
- (5) Will the Government agree to assist all or any of the students concerned financially to the extent necessary to enable all of them to continue their studies at the University of Melbourne?

Mr. BRAND replied:

- (1) I have been advised that the Senate took this action because of the small number of students requiring the course and the consequent heavy cost of maintaining it.
- (2) One, followed by a further two this year.
- (3) I was not aware of this.
- (4) Yes.
- (5) I understand that the Senate, in addition to the payment to the students of certain allowances, has agreed to meet return fares from Perth to Melbourne and to pay the difference in fees between the two universities. Any variation in these arrangements is a matter for consideration by the Senate and not the State Government.

PARLIAMENTARIANS' INQUIRIES

Departmental Replies

7. Mr. JAMIESON asked the Premier: With respect to my earlier questions this session regarding State Government department replies to Federal members' queries being forwarded via the respective Legislative Assembly member—similar to the Federal Government directions re Federal matters dealt with by State members—has he now made a decision on this matter?

Mr. BRAND replied:

I am informed that no recent instructions have been issued to Federal Government departments on this matter, the last instructions having been in 1943.

Mr. Graham: Well, what are you going to do about it?

HYDEN-FORRESTANIA AREA

Trial Plots, and Allocation of Land

8. Mr. HART asked the Minister for Agriculture:

Following the results of the trial plots in the Hyden-Forrestania area, will he recommend to the

Government the allocation of an area of land, on special conditions and adjacent to the plots, to a selected applicant who would be able and willing to establish the first farm in the area?

Mr. NALDER replied:

The Department of Agriculture has agreed to carry out further experiments at Forrestania by doubling the area now being used for experimental work, including pasture trial plots.

Development of land in new areas should be undertaken progressively from the settled areas east of Hyden moving towards Forrestania.

It is felt that further information is necessary before a recommendation can be made to throw the land open for selection.

PARLIAMENT HOUSE EXTENSIONS

Terms of Contract

9. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Premier:

- (1) Under the terms of the contract, what was the date for completion of the Parliament House building?
- (2) What penalties, if any, were provided in the event of non-completion within the specified time?
- (3) What is the anticipated date of completion?
- (4) Is it intended to enforce the penalty?
- (5) If not, why not?

Mr. BRAND replied:

- (1) The 1st November, 1963.
- (2) £20 per day.
- (3) It is estimated that the contract will be completed by the 28th February, 1964.
- (4) No.
- (5) The delays to the contract completion time have been outside the control of the contractors. These delays have been occasioned by modifications to the design and the final development of the ground plan which has, as yet, not been fully determined.

The contractor has co-operated with the department to the fullest extent and has, on occasions, gone out of his way to make available certain portions of the building.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE POSTPONED QUESTIONS

Non-appearance on Notice Paper

1. Mr. HEAL: On Friday several questions were postponed, including one of mine, and, to the best of my knowledge, they were not

answered on Friday. They do not appear on the notice paper today, and I was wondering, Mr. Speaker, if you could tell me what has happened to them.

The SPEAKER (Mr. Hearman): I do not know what has happened to them offhand, but I will find out for the honourable member.

Mr. Court: Those questions were answered on Friday.

ALSATIAN DOG ACT

Repeal of Regulations

2. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Agriculture:

In view of the protests made by the German Shepherd Dog Association, and by owners of this breed of dog, against the provisions of the Alsatian Dog Act and regulations thereunder, and the concern expressed by both Government and Opposition parliamentary members, will he take action to repeal the regulations, or take such other steps as are necessary to render the Act inoperative until such time as a full inquiry has been held in order to ascertain beyond doubt whether and what restrictions should be imposed in respect of alsatian dogs?

Mr. NALDER replied:

At present there is a move in the Legislative Council to disallow the regulations gazetted under the Alsatian Dog Act.

Mr. J. Hegney: Where?

Mr. NALDER: I am awaiting the decision of that place before taking action.

DEATH OF NATIVE CHILD AT ALBANY

Delay in Burial

3. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

- (1) Is he aware that the body of a native child who died last Friday, the 29th November, lies at the Albany Regional Hospital because the child cannot be buried in view of the fact that the father has insufficient money to arrange a funeral?
- (2) If he is unaware of the circumstances, will he undertake to have arrangements made to have the child buried, even if it means obtaining a recoup of the funeral costs from the father at a later stage?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

- (1) and (2) I am sorry I did not have notice of this question before the House sat this afternoon, because if I had been given notice I would have made immediate inquiries. In reply to both questions, I can inform the honourable member that I was not aware of the incident. I cannot imagine that the Native Welfare Department, if it were aware of the circumstances, would allow them to continue. I will make immediate inquiries into the case and advise the honourable member accordingly.

WHEAT DISPOSAL

Nungarin Farmer's Experience

4. Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Agriculture:

Recently, a farmer in the Nungarin district took his wheat to the C.B.H. installation and he was informed it was under weight and subject to a dockage of 4d. per bushel. He thereupon submitted a sample to a mill and subsequently received advice that the mill was prepared to pay him a premium of 1s. 6d. a bushel. Could the Minister make inquiries to ascertain if such set of circumstances could, in fact, exist?

Mr. NALDER replied:

If the honourable member will supply me with all the details of this case, I will have inquiries made and advise him at a later date.

RAILWAYS DEPARTMENT

System of Ordering Oils

5. Mr. HEAL: From the *Votes and Proceedings* of last Friday, I notice that the question of mine to which I referred a few moments ago was answered. I would now like to ask a further question arising from that answer.

The SPEAKER (Mr. Hearman): For the record in *Hansard*, the honourable member had better read the question he asked on Friday and the answer that was given.

Mr. HEAL: The question I asked was—

- (1) Is it a fact that he has issued an instruction to the Railways Department that it is to use one brand of petrol and oil only?
- (2) If so, what is the reason for such an instruction and what particular brand of petrol and oil is being used at the present time?

The answer given by the Minister was—

(1) No.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

My question now is this: Would the Minister explain the system that is used in relation to the ordering of petrol and oils by the Railways Department? Does it use separate oil companies for a given period of 12 months, and alternate its orders?

Mr. COURT: The position of the Railways Department in respect of buying and ordering its petrol requirements is far too complicated to enable me to give an answer off the cuff. If the honourable member will place the question on the notice paper I shall gladly get the answer for him; but if he does not desire to do that, then I am quite prepared to obtain the information, and give it to him privately.

RAILWAYS (STANDARD GAUGE) CONSTRUCTION ACT AMEND- MENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed, from the 27th November, on the following motion by Mr. Court (Minister for Railways):—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. KELLY (Merredin-Yilgarn) [2.32 p.m.]: Although this Bill contains very few amendments to the Act—and, in fact, very few words—I do not intend to allow it to pass without having considerable discussion on the matter. It chiefly aims at repealing and re-enacting some of the schedules in the Act. The main function of the Bill is that it seeks authority to make deviations in the routes originally proposed.

For quite some time rumours have been rife on the goldfields that the Government did intend to deviate the line from its original course. As a matter of fact, a Press release on the 23rd September, 1963, brought about immediate and widespread action in some parts of the goldfields; so much so that the shire council of Coolgardie sent me a very urgent telegram asking that I make some inquiries in connection with this proposed deviation; and, if possible, do something to prevent the matter going any further. The article which appeared in the Press of the 23rd September showed what brought about this bombshell. From the sketch which appeared in *The West Australian*, we could conclude that a certain amount of exaggeration crept into the route shown.

The people of Coolgardie, through their shire council, were very quick to take exception to the possibility of Coolgardie being bypassed. I shall quote some of what appeared in *The West Australian* of the 24th September, under the heading of "Coolgardie Condemns Railway Move." It is as follows:—

Kalgoorlie, Mon.: Coolgardie would cease to exist and become a ghost town if it was bypassed by the standard-gauge railway, Coolgardie Shire President John Topham said tonight.

The council and the people of Coolgardie could not believe that the State Government would take such a step.

Of course, they do not know as much as we do about the State Government; otherwise they would not have made that statement. There is a lot of padding in that newspaper article which does not have a great deal of relevancy to this question. It goes on—

Mr. Topham said: "We have a population of about 600 and buildings worth more than £500,000."

Further down, this appeared—

The feeling in Coolgardie was that the town had been let down by the Government and by Railways Minister Court and that the Government was not sincere in its statements about decentralisation.

The leading article in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* of the 27th September deals with this question. I think it is worth recording, because it has a bearing on the entire position which the Minister has asked this House to agree to. The comments in the leading article apply not only to Coolgardie, but to the goldfields generally, and it deals with the opinions of many of the people in that area. It states—

The proposal to by-pass Coolgardie when the new standard gauge railway is constructed has been received with resentment by the goldfields. The State Government contends that the change will save £1,000,000 in the cost of construction but that it could mean the death of one of the State's more famous towns is apparently a smaller matter compared with reducing the cost of a scheme which already runs into many millions of pounds. Coolgardie may have lost the status it possessed in the early years of this century but it is still an important town and its historical importance cannot be over-estimated. Nor will it have much opportunity to expand or improve its present position if it is to be removed from the new railway line.

The Government's proposal is contrary to its policy to decentralisation. It also destroys the equity of business

people in the town. As the years pass, it is impossible to predict the future of Coolgardie. It may become an important centre for minerals. As a tourist resort, it may have an exceptional appeal. But it should be given the chance not only to survive but to utilise any new opportunities for expansion which may occur. The State Government should show a little more sympathy and imagination, particularly if the re-routing of the line will be in an area subject to flooding.

The Government's intention shows little appreciation of the goldfields and their problems. The goldfields areas remain an important part of the State making a big contribution to the economy. It is to be hoped the proposal is discarded.

A number of other references have also appeared in the *Kalgoorlie Miner*. In the issue of the 24th September, 1963, the following headlines appeared:—

Coolgardie Be Ghost Town if Bypassed.

Bitter Lament of Shire President on Amended Plan.

Broad Gauge Route North of Mt. Burges to Koolyanobbing.

It then points out that the town will become a ghost town, and reiterates some of the remarks which had been made by Mr. Topham, the President of the Coolgardie Shire Council. It continues—

Mr. Topham said that Coolgardie was the town which made Western Australia in early pioneering days and it was now being left out on a limb by the State Government.

"If we are by-passed by the railway all that will be left will be a handful of prospectors and a few graziers and they will not justify the existence of a town".

He said that all the small sidings and pumping stations between Southern Cross and Kalgoorlie would also be affected.

Coolgardie shire councillors agreed last night that proposed route of the standard gauge railway north of the town was an area which received severe flooding in the winter months.

After heavy rain it was reduced to swamp lands in many places. There was a heavy run-off from the Mt. Burges line of hills and there was a vast area of lakes and big creeks.

Coolgardie is at present the junction between the Perth-Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie-Esperance line. If it is by-passed by the standard gauge it will no longer be the rail junction. It is the road junction where the highway turns south to Norseman and joins the Eyre Highway to the Eastern States.

The Minister replied on the matter and the following is an article which appeared in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* on the 26th September:—

Criticism Of Government From Coolgardie "Unfair"

Minister for Railways Says Promise On New Line Route Being Honoured

I wonder how far this honour is going to carry us. To continue—

Perth, Sept. 25. — It was unfair to claim that the Government or the Minister had let down the town of Coolgardie or that the Government was not sincere about decentralisation, the Minister for Railways, Mr. Court, said to-day.

He was replying in the Legislative Assembly to questions by Mr. Kelly (Lab., Merredin-Yilgarn) on the possibility of the standard-gauge railway by-passing Coolgardie.

Asked for his comments on the statement made by the president of the Coolgardie Shire Council Mr. Court said he appreciated the concern of the president and residents at the possibility of by-passing Coolgardie and he had considered what effect this decision would have on the town.

I wonder how much consideration was given to it!

Mr. Court: A lot!

Mr. KELLY: Not too much, judging by the inhuman treatment meted out under this legislation.

Mr. Court: Don't talk nonsense!

Mr. KELLY: The article continues—

When he received representation from Coolgardie some months ago, he had promised to examine all aspects of the standard-gauge route and the claims of Coolgardie before a decision was made following surveys.

This promise was being honoured.

He said it was not a question of decentralisation as the total number of railwaymen and families which would be added to Coolgardie's population if the line went through the town was very few.

In any case employment would not be lost to the goldfields district.

I will make some comment on both those statements shortly. To continue—

The additional employees would not be sufficient to influence seriously a decision about the future of the town, particularly as the change from present rail operations would not take place before the end of 1967.

Again, some further comment directly. Continuing—

Mr. Court said reconnaissance surveys supplemented by aerial photography indicated that the area of a possible route would not be difficult in wet seasons.

Advantages of the proposed route were the saving of 50 miles of construction and location through country which appeared to entail far less earthworks.

How he arrives at the figure of 50, out of the blue, I do not know. In the same paper on the 3rd October, is the following article:—

**Bishop Advocates Community Effort
To Save Coolgardie**

**Existence Of Ghost Towns "An
Economic, Spiritual Warning"**

I hope the Minister for Railways is taking some note of the spiritual part of it, because it has a bearing on this matter. To continue—

Something can and should be done by the community at large to stop Coolgardie from becoming another ghost town.

Stating this in his address to the 13th Synod of the Diocese of Kalgoorlie last week-end, Bishop C. E. B. Muschamp said the very existence of ghost towns provided both an economic and spiritual warning.

I think we should add the economic side, too, because, undoubtedly, it should be heeded. Continuing—

Ghost towns were a natural and inevitable feature of gold mining areas, Bishop Muschamp said.

"Nothing can be done about them, at least for the present, and they are no disgrace to the mining industry or anyone else—but they have a message for us in other fields of the common life," he said.

People living in what are now ghost towns had taken all they could find of value, but gave nothing back. The result was the death of the town, or the way to that death.

"A ghost town can only come alive again when men start giving to it instead of taking from it," Bishop Muschamp said.

"I do not blame the creators of ghost towns—the process, as I have said, was economically inevitable.

Mr. Bickerton: The Minister is a manufacturer of ghost towns.

Mr. KELLY: To continue—

"However, in some cases where there is a good practical reason for keeping a place alive for the benefit of all concerned, the country as a whole, indeed the church as a whole, should recognise that it has received much wealth in the past from a place no longer able to give more gold but which can make other useful contributions if only given the opportunity to exist and progress."

The reverend gentleman had several other things to say, mainly on the spiritual side, and they have not a great bearing on this Bill.

I can assure the Minister for Railways that when the first statements were made on this matter, a gloom was immediately cast on Coolgardie. This town had already suffered under the heavy blow of losing its only remaining operating mine. The information regarding the railway was a bit too much to bear on top of the first shock, from which the town had hardly recovered.

In case the Minister does not know—and I can hardly imagine he does not—this is a very old established town; and, in fact, many people have lived there for 25 to 35 years. They did not move even though during that time Coolgardie had several periods of ups and downs. The people in the town—and, in fact, many people throughout Western Australia—have a very intense loyalty to, and faith in, Coolgardie's past, present, and future. Many workers have permanent homes there from which they travel to their various jobs.

Several folk who have had businesses in Coolgardie for a long time, have their entire savings sunk in the town. Quite a number of prospectors are still active in this district, and anyone who knows gold-mining areas knows that while prospectors are still active near a town, there is always a good chance that that town will be revived.

The State battery at Coolgardie has been operating for a number of years. Sometimes there has been no time to spare even for overhauls, and it is still in full operation. Therefore I would say that Coolgardie is not finished as a gold town, although at present it is in a precarious position because the only operating mine has ceased to function. The district has a very good mineral potential and is certainly not deserving of the death sentence which has had a very depressing effect on the town.

The Minister claims that re-routing of the standard gauge main line would involve less time than in the original plan. To substantiate that claim he stated that instead of following the existing line, which has been in use for very many years, it would be necessary to deviate all over the place. As a matter of fact, he said that there would be a disparity of 50 miles. In other words 60 per cent. of the line would have to be re-routed.

Just how ridiculous can our planning get when we have regard for a statement of that kind—60 miles out of 130 miles of line that has been operating for 70-odd years! That section is to be re-routed because some engineers feel that the grade would be a little easier if it were deviated in and out of the contours of the country.

Of course, that would not be necessary at all. Even with the methods we have adopted over the past 70 years, and with the types of engines and rolling stock we have had, we have never found great difficulty on the grade between Coolgardie and Southern Cross—never any difficulty at all.

Mr. Court: Not much!

Mr. KELLY: "Not much," the Minister says, and that is about right.

Mr. Court: With a big question mark! It has cost us a fortune.

Mr. KELLY: It is not sufficient to do what the Minister is endeavouring to do; and he did not tell us about this some time ago when he was questioned about it. A rumour was rife in that area at the time because one or two surveyors had made some comments in local circles.

Mr. Court: We have never denied the surveys; we told you that.

Mr. KELLY: That is so. But the Minister did more or less pass the surveys off as being "one of those things": that the Government wanted to have a few extra surveys.

Mr. Court: That is exactly the position; and no decision has yet been made.

Mr. KELLY: And I hope very much that no decision will be made in this connection unless the Minister wants to come in for a tremendous amount of ridicule. And not ridicule that will last five minutes, but a continuing ridicule; because the longer there is a railway out in the area in which the Minister proposes to put it, the longer will be the cost of running the railway in that area.

I have commented on the original sketches that appeared in the paper. There was far too much convex in one and too much concave in the other, and it made it look as if there was some justification for a move of this kind. I think, however, that could quite easily be denied because of the actual route and the measurements of the main line as it now exists. The Minister claims there is a big mileage differential. Undoubtedly there will be some mileage differential; but we do not need to look at the plan to realise just how little there is in order to justify the conclusion that this line will be 20-odd miles less than would be the existing line with its deviations.

We see that from Kalgoorlie it is almost a direct line, with very little wave in it at all, to Southern Cross. But we see a great camel's hump when we come to go out through the Koolyanobbing area and endeavour to justify what is being sought by the Bill. The Minister knows very well that his only way of bringing about what is suggested by the Bill is by treating this subject on an exaggerated scale.

Mr. Court: It is not exaggerated. It is a statement of engineering fact. You are saying these competent officers who have done the surveys are not telling the truth.

Mr. KELLY: I am saying insufficient work has been done, and that the Minister is proposing to put in this line; but what the Minister has said cannot be justified in actual fact, because the route proposed is a bad route. It gets better as it gets down towards Koolyanobbing, but there are many miles of it that will be a much worse route than the existing one between Coolgardie and Southern Cross.

Certainly there is nothing to justify leaving the main line at Kurrawang and going through to Koolyanobbing, any more than there would be to leave the line at Coolgardie; not that I am defending that as an official decision, because I feel that due to the experience we have had there, and the fact that the line was engineered by the late C. Y. O'Connor—probably one of the best engineers the State has ever had—the present position is a good one. The line has stood the test of time for 70-odd years, and it has stood that test with very little inconvenience and very slight wash-aways.

Some little time ago I asked a few questions, and one or two have significance in regard to the case I am endeavouring to put up at the moment. Question No. 5 on the 25th September was as follows:—

How much time was lost by the surveyors through wet conditions?

The reply was—

Surveyors were withdrawn from the area when ground conditions made it difficult for the movement of vehicles.

They were getting bogged on foot, let alone in vehicles. The reply continues—

No time was lost however, in arriving at the final details as sufficient preliminary information had been obtained to enable other work to proceed pending return to field work.

They had gone out there and were even in camp and operating, but they did not achieve a great deal. The local people know what they achieved and how far their examination proceeded. The surveyors were there for several weeks and were weatherbound without being able to do a thing before they were withdrawn.

That is another point. Once they were withdrawn they did not return for 2½ months, or about that time, I am informed by people living in the area. So for the Minister to reply in that manner and brush off the fact that it is not a wet area is something that will need a lot more examination in the cool winter conditions than has been given up to the present.

Obviously the surveyors could not get on to the ground, and the only information that has been of any great advantage—and I query very much whether this type of

information should be used in deciding a factor of this kind—is that which has come from the aerial reconnaissances that were made.

Question No. 6 was as follows:—

As the proposed route is known to pass through very difficult terrain in wet seasons, what advantage would be gained in adopting the suggested route?

This is the reply—

Reconnaissance surveys supplemented by aerial photography indicate that the area of a possible route will not be difficult in wet seasons.

Advantages in favour of the proposed route include the saving of some fifty miles of construction and location through country which would appear to entail far less earthworks.

It is interesting to see what are the thoughts of the local people who have been in the district for 30 and 40 years, and who have had a lot of experience of conditions other than those of an abnormal nature such as obtained last year. Under the heading "Flood Area", this is what the shire councillors had to say, as reported in the Press—

Shire councillors said the proposed route of the railway north of the town was an area which was subject to severe flooding in the winter. After heavy rain, it was reduced to swamp lands in many places.

So local opposition does not substantiate what the Minister has said as a result of a few aerial photographs. That was the main information contained in the advice the Minister has received up to the present.

Mr. Court: These men have been through on the ground.

Mr. KELLY: Yes; but this is not a matter of going through in five minutes and making a decision; and the Minister thinking he can save a few shillings. Of course that is not so.

Another matter warrants comment in connection with the Minister's replies when I asked him what his reaction was to the Press statements that had been made. He went on to say that he was not capable of misleading anybody; that in no circumstances would he do anybody an injustice of that kind.

This is not a matter of decentralisation; it is a matter of life and death to a town that has been in existence for 70-odd years and has solidity behind it and a decent record. The Minister went on to say that if the railway was taken away from Coolgardie, the employment would not be lost to the goldfields district. Of course, the people may go to Woop-Woop, or to

Payne's Find, or somewhere else. The point I was endeavouring to make, and am still trying to make, is that these people are Coolgardie people. The Coolgardie goldfields people do not want to be told by this Minister that if they want to continue to exist they had better go to Wiluna, or somewhere else. Definitely they do not want that to happen. They want to remain in Coolgardie, and they want to know that they are getting some attention and some consideration.

Mr. Court: These were railway people that we were talking about in answer to those questions of yours.

Mr. KELLY: I did not say anything about railway people. I asked the question from a general point of view.

Mr. Court: But they are the only people we have any influence over.

Mr. KELLY: They are the only people over whom the Minister has any influence so far as sending them from place to place is concerned. But I am talking about the townspeople—those who are prospecting, the business people, the storekeepers, the hotelkeepers, and those with little eating houses. Those are the people with whom we are concerned. So the Minister cannot get out of it that way.

I said earlier that I did not think much attention had been given to this town in general; and I do not think a great deal of consideration could have been given to the people who live between Southern Cross and Coolgardie. I asked the Minister what preparations the Government had made to give some service to the people between Coolgardie and Southern Cross who are going to be entirely swept aside. In that area there are three pumping stations, and there are a number of woodcutters who are living 50 to 100 miles from the nearest town of any kind. There are gangs of railway fitters and water pipe attendants in various places. There is a township at Bulla Bulling where, I suppose, there are eight to 10 Water Supply Department workers, as well as some other employees. There are a number of fitters' gangs also at various points, and there are townships at Yellowdine, Woolgangie, and Boorabbin.

Surely the people at those places are entitled to some recognition by the Minister, and some plans must have been made to look after the people in those intermediate places! What are they going to do for perishables? How are they going to get on for postal facilities? Are we going to revert to a mediaeval age when these people will not be considered but will simply be allowed to vegetate in the bush, because there will be nothing else for them to do? What arrangements have been made for transport for them? Up to the present time we have heard nothing about it.

There must be at least 150 people living in the area between Southern Cross and Coolgardie. I know the Minister will say that the Government is not going to take the line away from this area until 1967. But what a lot of consolation that is to the people concerned!

Mr. Court: They will be well cared for.

Mr. KELLY: They will want to be better cared for than the way some of the people have been treated in the past in various ways by the Government. I think the people concerned in this instance are entitled to some consideration; and, unless the Minister can give me a deal of information regarding their future, I will not be in the least happy about bypassing them in the way intended.

During his second reading speech the Minister made a number of statements, and I desire to mention some of his remarks and make some comment on them. At one stage the Minister said—

Examination has disclosed that deviations to obtain the stipulated grade of one in 150 would be necessary over about 66 per cent. of the length—

He was speaking of the route between Coolgardie and Southern Cross. He continued—

—and would approximate an additional length of 35 miles over that existing, or a total of 174 miles.

I do not think I need elaborate on that statement any further. I have already said that our present rolling stock, engines, and the methods that have been adopted over a period of years, have been quite satisfactory; and although, as the Minister indicated by way of interjection, he may have other ideas in that regard, the fact still remains that big loads have been taken over the line over a period of years, and I have never heard of where any train has slipped back, when half-way up a hill, to as far as Southern Cross, or anything of that kind. As regards these deviations, whoever has had charge of the section, in endeavouring to work out the course the line should follow, has evidently gone out of his way to ascertain that it would be necessary to have 35 miles of detours to miss certain grades.

Surely this should not have been necessary, particularly when we bear in mind that we are not going to use little puffing jennies on this line. The department will be using modern and up-to-date methods of haulage, and surely such equipment would be able to overcome any of these little problems that arise! Why is it necessary to have an area like a billiard-table in this instance, when trains will have to pass through some other areas where the grades will be very much greater?

As I said earlier, regarding the comment that the survey party worked right through, that is just so much poppycock; because the survey party did not go right through the

area I am speaking of. It was weather-bound for a long time, and under no circumstances could a thorough examination of this area have been made. There was not sufficient time for that.

Mr. Court: Are you saying that these men have told me a lie?

Mr. KELLY: I am not saying that these men have told the Minister a lie. All I am saying is that insufficient attention has been given to the matter because of the conclusion which has been reached. It is rather interesting to find that the Minister, in his comments on the second reading said—

The length of construction on the alternative is—

	Miles
Southern Cross-Koolyanobbing	34
Koolyanobbing-Kalgoorlie	124
Total	158

This meant a saving of 50 miles of construction at an estimated saving in cost of £1,989,900.

Of course, that is only one of three estimates that we have had; and if we go into the figures, and some of the other comments the Minister has made, we find that a fourth figure can be readily obtained.

It was first mooted that £400,000 would be the difference in cost in building the line on the route of the existing railway, or in deviating it through Koolyanobbing. The Minister said that the cost was not the deciding factor. However, when the bubble burst about what was likely to take place, we were told that the cost would be £1,000,000. Yet, according to the Minister's notes in regard to this Bill, he says that the saving in cost is now £1,989,900.

Mr. Court: That £400,000 you are talking about was the deviation factor of the work.

Mr. KELLY: That was the difference in cost on the work the Minister set out to do in the first place.

Mr. Court: That is the deviation factor. That is not the difference in cost.

Mr. KELLY: It read that that was the differential between the expected price and the sum that would be needed if the line was not deviated. Of course, if we take the Minister's comments a little further on we see, on the Minister's own figuring, that the cost is £48,432 a mile. If the distance is 50 miles, as the Minister says it is, we arrive at a figure of £2,421,600. So there we have a fourth figure; and I feel that the department is still keeping everybody in the dark regarding the difference in costs, or the anticipated difference in costs in building the line on the existing 3 ft. 6 in. route, and the other proposal.

A few moments ago I dealt with the Minister's statement that it must be appreciated that the problem will not be completed, so far as the Coolgardie area is concerned, until the end of 1967. Of course that comment is entirely beside the point. The moment an utterance of that kind was made, and there was a possibility of bypassing Coolgardie, there was a stampede among many people.

There was a stampede because they felt they were going to be deprived of house and home. Everybody was not able to assess just what had to transpire before they got to this point. It was found immediately that many of these people were making their plans to suit their leaving at the earliest date, because their confidence in the future had been shaken. The mere mention of the fact that Coolgardie was to be bypassed had a depressing effect on everybody; not merely on those who may have thought of leaving earlier.

The Minister also said—

The only real advantage to Coolgardie, if the standard gauge railway passes through the town, would be its possible use as a transshipment area in lieu of Kalgoorlie.

The people of Coolgardie, of course, approached the Minister 15 to 18 months ago to have the transshipment depot installed at Coolgardie. Just as the Minister gave them thoughts to digest previously, he said he was going to give this matter a lot of thought. I wonder how much thought was given to it.

The logical thing was for the Railways to have established this depot at Coolgardie, which is the centre and the junction for several railways that pass through. It would have been commonsense, both from the practical and the logical point of view, to put the depot in Coolgardie. As to its not making much difference to Coolgardie whether the depot is there or not; I wonder how simple the Minister must think we are, if he expects us to swallow anything like that; because I will show the House some figures which will give members an appreciation of how much this means to Coolgardie and the railways generally—not for just one year or a few months, but for 50 to 100 years. I will show the losses which must accrue to the railways, and which must continue.

I would like to give the House some indication of these things. Throughout his remarks, the Minister gave the House what he felt were the disadvantages of continuing the rail route contiguous to the existing 3 ft. 6 in. gauge. I propose to give some indication of what we consider the advantages would be in routing this line through Coolgardie.

For the time being let us not consider any further distance, but the existing line between Coolgardie and Southern Cross. Let us take it from the point of view that

the railways and the Minister are determined to put this line out in the wilderness to link up with Koolyanobbing; and it was on that basis that the Minister made his comments in his second reading speech.

I propose to show some of the advantages that will accrue if this line goes through as far as Coolgardie—provided, of course, that the depot is placed at Coolgardie, which is the logical spot for it to be; because that is where most of the heavy loading will be transhipped, even if there is the necessity to put a second and perhaps a lighter, depot at Kalgoorlie.

The existing rail through Coolgardie has served for many years, and has been found adequate and suitable for the requirements. There is no doubt in my mind that the gauge would not be the chief obstacle in determining the route to remain *in situ* as it is at present. The Minister says he will honour decentralisation promises. But if he cripples Coolgardie, the decentralisation promises he has made will be piecrust, because there is no doubt that Coolgardie is the centre and junction for interstate road, and rail traffic, from a very big seaport town which serves a number of mines from which a considerable amount of material has to be landed at all times.

If the Minister does not listen to what is being said, or if he does not make an exhaustive examination to prove, or disprove, what is being said, then, of course, decentralisation promises are just so much talk. I want to say that the Minister in the first place will save 50 miles by way of haulage each way if Coolgardie is not bypassed, particularly with the material that comes from Esperance, because that is where the main haulage takes place through Coolgardie. It is 25 miles to Coolgardie, and 25 miles the other way, so everything that goes up and down will be carted an extra 50 miles.

Let us see some of the tonnages that have been going over this railway. There has been an average of 40,000 tons of pyrites annually; 25,000 tons of grain have been shifted over this line; there are 5,000 tons of salt being carted—possibly more, because I had no means of finding out the exact amount—and there are roughly 1,000 tons of wool. There are in the vicinity of 5,000 tons of superphosphate; and there are thousands of sheep, lambs, and cattle which also go over this line all the time. So there are several thousand tons of general merchandise being hauled; besides which there is building material, cement, and machinery to be carted; and it is not difficult to imagine that the total amount could be well over 100,000 tons.

These haulage figures are on the increase, because we have only scratched the surface of some of the industries concerned. It is a poor outlook if we are going to cart 100,000 tons of merchandise a year—year in and year out—for the next

century, and if we are to lose 50 miles each way, and each train load that goes through.

A further consideration is that the 3 ft. 6in. gauge will require renewing before a great amount of time passes, unless we have some means of rejuvenating the rail that is unknown to the House at the present time. The cost of maintaining this extra rail will of course be tremendous. We must take into consideration wear and tear on rolling stock and engines. Everything that is done with this line, if the standard gauge bypasses Coolgardie, will entail extra cost and extra mileage each way.

Who is going to bear this extra cost? Are the people in the various industries that have been established going to bear the cost? Is the Government going to play Father Christmas to these people and grant them this extra amount of expenditure that has not been saved? Or is the Government going to pay the entire amount with the extra finance needed to continue, if the Minister persists with his idea to bypass Coolgardie?

Whichever way we look at it, it adds up to a colossal waste. There will be waste of man-hours, of money, of train crews, of travelling time, added to which will be the cost of wear and tear; and the Minister will have to answer for all of this. So the initial saving effected by bypassing Coolgardie will be lost a thousand times over and over again.

It seems to me the Minister has reached the stage of making penny-wise and pound-foolish calculations if he allows his engineers or anybody else to attract his attention away from what should be carried out in this connection, as there is no justification for what is proposed and no good purpose will be served; because, as I said earlier, Coolgardie is the logical junction. I do not know about some of the new-fangled engineers, but experienced railwaymen and everybody else regard this as being the necessary method of approaching this problem.

Coolgardie has a very historical significance and it was interesting for me to read the other night in the Minister's buffet carriage a great eulogy of Coolgardie and what it means to Western Australia and how every opportunity should be extended to it. I have here information from the *Pocket Year Book* of 1963—which is right up to the knocker—under the heading of "Land Settlement and Agriculture". I am making this comment because of the fact that if the Minister carries out his intentions Coolgardie will become nothing more than a ghost town. Apparently it played an important part in the history of Western Australia and it is destined to play an important part in the future. The Minister will say, "I am not going to interfere"; but, of course, he is interfering with the livelihood and set-up of the town.

Mr. Court: They will still have a railway.

Mr. KELLY: The Minister is going to bypass Coolgardie.

Mr. Court: At the appropriate time I will demonstrate to you how foolish your arguments are.

Mr. KELLY: I will be happy to put my head under a tap if the Minister can do that.

Mr. Court: Obviously you have not given serious thought to the economics of it.

Mr. KELLY: I have given it a lot of consideration, and so have a lot of other people, too. The *Pocket Year Book* says—

Since the rich discovery of gold by Bayley and Ford at Coolgardie in 1892, great activity in land settlement has taken place. In that year the area of land alienated and in process of alienation was 5,851,870 acres, and in 1962, 42,202,658 acres.

This demonstrates the great strides that have been made in land settlement at Coolgardie since the earlier times. The Minister does not think there is anything important about that, but it shows that a decision to bypass Coolgardie is not in the best interests of the State.

I do not know much about the rest of the programme that has been mentioned in this Bill; but in regard to the area I know quite a bit about, I am receiving repeated representations, and there must be some way out of the problem. The Minister cannot, I am certain, gainsay the fact that very little extra money would be required to retain Coolgardie at its present status, even if it did mean a slight deviation. The extra distance would be small; and goodness gracious me!—do we not take any notice of human rights? Do we have to be guided by the financial and monetary outlook in every instance? Surely to goodness the Minister has some humanity about him that will give us a ray of light so far as the future is concerned!

What a great thing it would be to see Coolgardie back in its greatness of the past and find that the railway bypasses the town up to 20 miles into the bush. What a wonderful Minister not to have foreseen something of that kind! The fortunes of Coolgardie have risen and fallen over a number of years because of the fact that it has been serviced by interstate rail and road traffic, and this is something that will be repeated again. Coolgardie may be in the doldrums at the present time. But that will not be the position for long; and what a silly stage would be reached if it were found that because of the Minister's lack of appreciation of the importance of this area the railway had been taken away into the wilderness and bypassed this town!

I hope what I have had to say will give the Minister some indication of the thoughts of the many people who live in the area; of many Western Australians; and of the people all over Australia who have known Coolgardie in its greatness of the past.

MR. JAMIESON (Beeloo) [3.26 p.m.]: Not a great number of my constituents are affected by this railway, but I would like to draw the attention of the Minister to the problem experienced by a few people in the Wattle Grove area. They have been considerably upset by the Minister's department and got exactly nowhere with their negotiations on account of the protracted runnings around by the department in realigning the standard gauge railway to suit the terms of the agreement with the Commonwealth in connection with different gradients necessary to fall in with the 4 ft. 8½ in. line.

With the former member for Darling Range (Mr. Owen), I went out, when the railway line was first mooted, to see what the problem was in regard to this line passing through blocks in Abernethy Road, Wattle Grove, causing considerable inconvenience and doubts as to whether the people concerned should proceed to develop their blocks as they intended. The main persons concerned happened to be professional people from Mt. Hawthorn who had their residences there, and had been developing their properties for a considerable time. The Railways Department would not give the details of resumptions, but at a later stage the people were given some sort of interim advice. Since that time there have been changes concerning this particular railway line to fit in with the standard gauge project, and the people have been left completely up in the air by the department.

I would like to read to the House a letter which I received from F. M. Brandreth, which is as follows:—

Am writing to you concerning the matter of my property and the Department of Railways, candidly I am finding their "could not care less attitude" really hard to take.

Since I saw you on my property way back in February 1962, a deal of correspondence has passed between myself and the Railway Department, needless to say not of a very constructive nature as far as the department is concerned. A stage was reached when the Secretary for Railways intimated that the matter was out of their hands and that further correspondence was useless, and to get into contact with the resumption officer. (Mr. Jarvis, P.W.D.) After numerous correspondence and an interview, I have got nowhere fast, the two bodies mentioned above have constantly tried to put the play into the court of the other.

Frustrated, I tried to make an appointment with the Minister for Railways, but cannot get past his Secretary, who has always got some excuse and at one occasion asked what difference would it make if the Minister was interviewed, he may have had something.

On approx. Nov. 17-19 we had another invasion of the property by surveyors without as much as "by your leave", just entered the property and there are now a lot more survey pegs. I wonder how they know what they are doing, because when questions are asked they know nothing.

I realise that you are a busy man, but I wonder if you could get a few definite answers for me to the following.

1. Is the survey done recently the final one?
2. When can I expect my property to be resumed?

You will realise it is of great importance to me, as since February of 1961, I have not been able to develop the property by the predetermined plan, only doing maintenance, and losing practically 2 years of time. A setback in itself, which I can ill afford. The whole matter is of extreme importance to me as time is getting very much shorter . . . and I must get an equivalent property, which by the look of things will be no easy matter. As we are to lose our home and property through no wish at all of our own, I do think that we should be kept acquainted of developments as they affect ourselves.

To reiterate, we must know soon as to what is to happen to our property, as we must start at an early date to make arrangements to get ourselves another home.

I do hope you will be able to find out something, of a reliable nature for us at an early date.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,

F. M. Brandreth

Mr. Brandreth has been very tolerant in his approaches to the department. The negotiations have been protracted. I feel that here is one case that has been very badly dealt with. It is one which could have been dealt with by the proposed ombudsman, who might have been able to say something severe to the Government of the day. The matter in question is one to which surely the Minister must give early attention. The people found themselves originally in between the proposed railway line and the future limited access road on an inaccessible tract of land. The Railways Department altered its alignment to such an extent that I understand the

Main Roads Department has told the Railways Department that when it stops shifting the survey pegs it will then determine where it will put the road. Between the two departments there should be a little bit more co-ordination, and some consideration should be given to such people as the Brandreths.

There are only four or five home owners affected in the area. They are the only people who are in residence there. The other areas are mostly vacant land. These people have indicated to the Railways Department that they have no desire to stay if they are to be cut to pieces by the railway. They have received very little consideration.

I know the other area, further south from that, which is in the territory of the member for Canning. The proposed line in that area cuts across, in the main, vacant land. There are very few houses there, before the line goes south of the Canning River and across to an area about which I know far less. There is no great tolerance in connection with this area as there is in the Coolgardie area. In the Coolgardie area there is a 35-mile tolerance. The Minister should insist that his officers give early consideration to the question of resumptions and to dealing with the problems which have a bearing on the home life of those people I have mentioned. It is desirable that these matters be completed at an early date.

Other matters concerning the alignment of the standard gauge railway have been covered in my remarks in connection with the marshalling yards. This small tract of land has caused a considerable amount of worry to the few people who are there. I suggest that the Minister should do something about this matter at an early date.

MR. EVANS (Kalgoorlie) [3.35 p.m.]: I regret very much that I must speak in this vein on such an important subject as the establishment of the standard gauge railway line in Western Australia. In my younger years this subject was the No. 1 topic for debate in debating societies throughout Western Australia. We discussed the likelihood of this line being established and its advantages compared with its disadvantages. I support the sentiments which have been expressed by the member for Merredin-Yilgarn. His sentiments were such that they could be readily endorsed. I would also like to support the actual facts which were outlined by the honourable member; facts which can be justified and which, I claim, cannot be refuted.

Earlier this year, and also last year, there were rumours circulating, and doubts were expressed, as to whether the line would pass in the vicinity of Coolgardie. Questions were asked in this Chamber, and questions were asked of the Minister and the Railways Department outside of this Chamber. In each case,

in the early stages, the official reply was that there had been no surveys conducted at that time. Yet the people in Coolgardie knew otherwise. They knew, for example, that surveys had been conducted; that the survey teams had passed through and had stayed for several days in Coolgardie. When questions were asked of the Minister and of the department subsequently, the official reply was that no surveys had been conducted, and therefore no answer could be given or suggested.

All this vacillating has set the people on their guard; and it was no great surprise to some of them when the map appeared in *The West Australian* showing quite clearly that Coolgardie was going to be marooned, as it were, as a result of the proposed new standard gauge line. Although some people were not surprised, the whole town was bitterly disappointed.

The member for Merredin-Yilgarn mentioned that the area is known to be of water-sodden terrain in winter-time. The Minister may or may not know that the area through which the proposed line is to pass in the vicinity of Coolgardie is known historically for its native gnamma holes. Prospectors seeking for gold in the early days of the goldfields knew the area to be one where they could always find water because of the nature of the terrain. It is common knowledge that the area is known to be a water-sodden area. Yet we find that this area has been chosen by the surveyors for the proposed railway line, and this advice has been accepted by the Government.

Is it little wonder that the people in Coolgardie—people who have lived there all their lives; men who are experienced in bush work and know the area, not as a result of a few days' visit but from living in the area and knowing the land intimately—regard the attitude of the Government as being cavalier, particularly in view of the tactics adopted by the department and the Minister in denying that surveys had been carried out, when these people had themselves spoken to the members of the survey teams?

Then they find that the area chosen has little to recommend it. As a result of the Government's acceptance of this area, they realise that a deathblow will be rendered to their township. The Minister speaks in salient terms of £1,000,000, because the route for the line he has authorised will pass 20 miles north of Coolgardie. However, when it comes to a question of safeguarding the future of a town, in my opinion the Minister's attitude is one that would be shown only by a cold-blooded banker. Therefore, I would not like to have it said that I have sat silently in this Chamber and condoned his attitude.

Does not the Minister also realise that by the proposal to have the line pass northwards of Coolgardie it is moving completely out of the established geological auriferous belt? Does he not also know

that Coolgardie is known as the centre of the goldmining industry even today, despite the fact that, at the moment, its mines are closed? The auriferous belt moves south of Coolgardie and not to the north. It is quite feasible that there are still large lodes to be found in that auriferous belt; and yet, for the sake of saving a few pounds, the Minister is making no attempt to encourage prospecting for this gold.

I understand the Minister has made no comment whatsoever about leaving the pumping stations in that area high and dry. Further, he has made no mention of the future of the town known as Bulla Bulling. At that centre there is a hotel and a few homesteads which, at the moment, rely almost solely on the patronage which they enjoy because the existing line passes through the township, and they have been hoping that the proposed standard line would follow the same route.

I would also ask the Minister to consider the future of the felspar industry in Coolgardie. I do not know whether the Minister realises it exists. Does he realise there is a body of men mining felspar some 11 miles out of Coolgardie, and that their activities are keeping that centre on the mining map? At present, it is an economic proposition; but if the railway line does not pass through Coolgardie and their means of transportation to the coast is removed some 20 miles north, it is doubtful whether this industry could carry on. Therefore, if the terms of the present proposal are effected it will certainly mean a death-blow to the future of Coolgardie.

It would appear that the shire council of Coolgardie, which has all the facts and figures to justify its case, asked the Minister to consider its submissions. He replied he would, but after a few weeks he advised the shire council that his attitude remained unaltered and the present proposal would be put into effect. In my opinion he is taking a short-term view of this proposition, and it would appear that the office boy has been instructing those higher up on the accounting methods that have been used. Those are my sentiments on the construction of the standard gauge railway as it affects the future of the township of Coolgardie.

MR. HAWKE (Northam—Leader of the Opposition) [3.44 p.m.]: This is a very important Bill, but the proposal which has been discussed by the member for Merredin-Yilgarn and the member for Kalgoorlie is very important also. I can understand the Railways Department, investigating the subject of a future and alternative route for the uniform gauge railway line from Kalgoorlie to Southern Cross, and deciding on what most people would have considered the almost certain route for the line, the almost certain route being the existing route, with some alteration to the existing narrow gauge line.

I feel certain, in my own mind, that when it was first announced there was to be a uniform gauge railway line constructed from Kalgoorlie westwards, it was never thought the line would run out and away from Kalgoorlie through desolate country to Koolyanobbing, and then into Southern Cross.

Sitting suspended from 3.46 to 4.5 p.m.

Mr. HAWKE: Therefore it is no wonder at all that people in Coolgardie in particular, and on the goldfields generally, should have been shocked to hear of the possibility or probability of the uniform gauge railway line going from Kalgoorlie and linking up with Koolyanobbing, thereby missing altogether Coolgardie, and the centres between Coolgardie and Southern Cross through which the existing 3 ft. 6 in. railway line now passes.

We would be foolish to think the Coolgardie town and district is a ghost town and district. It is true it is nowhere near the town and district it was many years ago, when it boomed very greatly as a result of substantial gold production through a period of years; when it gave to Western Australia a great advertisement throughout Australia, and to some extent throughout the world, and assisted very greatly to build up the wealth, production, and economy of Western Australia.

I have some information available which shows the Coolgardie township is today a substantial township in regard to buildings and values. I shall set out some of the main items—

The town rating in capital value is £269,000.

State public buildings are conservatively estimated at £50,000.

Commonwealth public buildings are estimated also at £50,000.

A Roman Catholic convent valued conservatively at £30,000.

A 14-bed Government hospital at £20,000.

Approximately two years ago on this Government hospital £11,000 were spent in renovations.

Churches in the town are valued at £25,000, which would be conservative in regard to their valuation.

The local fire station valued at £1,500 to £2,000.

In the Western Australian *Pocket Year Book* for 1963 it is stated under the heading, "Land Settlement and Agriculture" that great activity in land settlement has taken place. In the year 1892 the area of land alienated and in process of alienation was 5,851,878 acres; in the year 1962 the comparative figure was 42,202,658 acres. It is clear, therefore, that the town and district are today active—certainly not booming, but active.

The proposal which the Minister has talked about is to crucify this town and district almost totally, for the purpose of putting in the uniform gauge railway line

through desolate and uninhabited country, so that some money may be saved in construction costs. I have had a look at the railway plan covering the existing railway route through Coolgardie to Southern Cross, and the suggested alternative route through just west of Kalgoorlie through Koolyanobbing to Southern Cross. If members cared to look at this plan from a distance they would be inclined to think the top route was the shorter run; however, according to the figures shown relating to mileages the bottom or existing route is the shorter route.

I think we can take with one hundred-weight of salt the estimated capital cost of constructing the uniform railway gauge line from a point a few miles west of Kalgoorlie, through the uninhabited and desolate country to Koolyanobbing, and then down to Southern Cross; as against the existing 3 ft. 6 in. gauge route. I know what can be done with estimates, and I know it is the easiest thing in the world to say that some project will cost £20,000,000, and another £30,000,000. Once someone is let loose with pencil and paper, it is remarkable how estimates can be developed sometimes.

I am not suggesting those who have prepared the estimates in this matter have allowed their imagination to run wild. I have no doubt they have put up figures which they consider to be approximately correct. However, are they in possession of all the necessary facts? Have they taken every possible factor into consideration? On the basis of common-sense it appears to me it would be a much easier proposition to construct the line from Coolgardie to Southern Cross over the existing route or very close to it, because there is already a planned railway route. For most of the distance there is the main road sealed with bitumen.

Obviously in that situation it would be ever so much easier and cheaper to service the operation of building the uniform gauge railway line through that area, as against building it through desolate and uninhabited country. As far as I know, there is no established road for motor vehicular traffic on the suggested route through Koolyanobbing. I should say that would be very difficult country to traverse, and very costly for motor vehicles to use. It is suggested by the member for Merredin-Yilgarn that in the wintertime the country becomes impassable for quite a substantial period of weeks.

Mr. Moir: That is correct.

Mr. HAWKE: The existing route through Coolgardie to Southern Cross would be traffickable at any time by road or railway. I doubt very much whether all the consideration which should be given to that phase of the situation has been given so far. I should think, myself, it would cost ever so much more by way of transport costs to build a railway line

through the uninhabited, desolate country which is involved in one of the proposals, as against building the line through existing well-established country where there is, as I have said, an existing railway line, and a main road with a bitumen surface.

Mr. Kelly: There is no telegraphic communication, either.

Mr. HAWKE: I was very impressed by what the member for Merredin-Yilgarn had to say about the railway freight which goes between Coolgardie and Esperance and comes from Esperance, and places in between, to Coolgardie. Most of that freight, of course, is consigned from places south of Coolgardie to the metropolitan area; and much of the freight which goes by rail to the places south of Coolgardie, comes from the metropolitan area.

It is clear a great deal of additional work will be involved in the haulage of this freight from Coolgardie or a point halfway to Coolgardie to get it on to the train for the journey through Koolyanobbing and Southern Cross, Perthwards; and in reverse, of course, when it has to be transferred from this point midway between Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie down and around to Widgelmooltha, Norseman, or Esperance, whichever is involved. These additional movements of freight, in point of railway mileage, would undoubtedly create a great deal of unnecessary additional transport work for the Railways Department and seem, on the surface at any rate, to be quite uneconomic.

On the argument so far put forward by the Minister, the member for Merredin-Yilgarn, and the member for Kalgoorlie, I would think this subject would require a great deal of consideration and attention and I would certainly hope the proposed alternative route would not just be accepted because, on the basis of some figures provided, there would be a fairly substantial saving in the cost of putting the uniform gauge railway line through Koolyanobbing to Southern Cross, as against bringing it down to Coolgardie and then constructing it from that point through the existing areas to Southern Cross.

It is quite easy to be caught up in a new proposal. It always looks very attractive on paper, especially if some figures indicate that so much can be saved by adopting one proposed route as against another. However, there are a lot of other factors which must come into consideration in this matter now before us. It may be, as this plan states, that the proposed route through Koolyanobbing would be less in distance than the normal one from Coolgardie direct to Southern Cross. It may be there would be an actual saving in capital construction in the one proposal as against the other. However, surely they are not the only considerations to be given attention in a situation of this kind.

I cannot see anything worth while being gained by putting a line through this proposed new area, because there is nothing there; nor is there ever likely to be anything there of any consequence; whereas there is something quite substantial at Coolgardie with the possibility, or maybe the probability, all the time of something very much bigger being discovered. There is also something quite substantial along the existing railway line from Coolgardie to Southern Cross. There are settlements, none of which is very large if we can compare what exist there with what exists, say, in the metropolitan area. However, they are settlements and those in them are carrying out a very essential service for the community, and especially for those in the goldfields areas.

We should not in the glamour of a proposal which, on the surface, seems to indicate a saving of some hundreds of thousands of pounds, or whatever the figure may be, embrace the new suggestion or proposal and leave for dead the existing practical settlements and situations. There would be no statesmanship and a good deal of foolishness, if not folly, in adopting that sort of attitude; and I would certainly appeal to the Minister and his colleagues in the Government to give this matter much more consideration, taking into account every possible angle of the whole situation.

I am satisfied in my own mind they would, if they were prepared to do that, come to the conclusion that the existing route is the one which, in all the circumstances, should be followed. If there were some reasonable prospect of something more than a railway line existing in the proposed new area of country, then the Government might have an additional argument with which to support its proposal. However, from what has been said, there is little or no prospect of anything of any great consequence being discovered out there.

Mr. Kelly: Other than iron ore.

Mr. HAWKE: If iron ore has some attraction for the Government, then I think we could say the deposits of iron ore in Western Australia are tremendous in their quantities and there certainly does not appear to be any need to go chasing after new deposits of iron ore at this stage or, indeed, for a great many years to come. Although iron ore is in demand today, it is not in so great a demand that we should be prepared to sacrifice other established assets, particularly those which exist at Coolgardie and on the established railway route and main road in that area.

Mr. Kelly: The Government has not actually sold a ton overseas in four years.

Mr. HAWKE: I think the glamour of the new proposal has proved to be very attractive to the Minister and his colleagues, as a new proposal can often be. However,

I sincerely hope and trust they will approach the whole proposal with solid commonsense. I am inclined to think that if they did so, they would finish up realising the existing route, towns, and settlements had much in their favour and, on balance, the factors which should sway a Government in this matter would sway them to make a final decision in favour of the existing route from Coolgardie to Southern Cross.

MR. MOIR (Boulder-Eyre) [4.26 p.m.]: I, too, must add my protest, and request the Minister to take a good look at this proposal before reaching finality in the matter. There are quite a number of things involved in this, and a number of people outside will be affected besides those along the existing railway line. In these days, when road transport plays an important part—and will continue to play an important part—in our transport arrangements, railway lines are still very important indeed.

This proposal of the Government will mean a very serious blow to the town of Coolgardie. Perhaps people in the metropolitan area, who do not have much knowledge of goldmining or the outback, will reason that Coolgardie is a town which has seen its day and had its past glory, and is now to become a town of the past. I would like to remind those who think along those lines that various centres—not the least of which is Coolgardie—have declined in the past, but have been resurrected.

I can remember that many years ago there was very little activity at Coolgardie, because the main producing mine had closed down. The buildings were in ruins and were tumbling down. The old appliances on the shafts, and the poppet legs, were in a state of disrepair. I can remember that in 1938 I was one of a crew which removed the original poppet legs from Bayley's shaft at Coolgardie and installed a modern steel head frame. The mine was surveyed and work was recommenced on it and continued until within the last 12 months. During that time it produced many thousands of ounces of gold worth quite a deal of money, and it played an important part in the export of wealth from this State.

We also know that in that time fresh discoveries were made at Coolgardie and mines were opened up that employed a considerable number of men for many years. Of course they made an important contribution to the economy of the State; and who is to say that history will not repeat itself? People who are aware of what can happen in those areas know full well that at some time or other circumstances can be such that profitable mining operations can be carried on on a large scale in the Coolgardie district. If the proposal before us is carried out this important centre will be without a railway.

There are other aspects to be considered when we recall this Government's assurances to the people on every possible occasion that it is in favour of decentralisation. But this proposition will have the opposite effect—that of depopulating centres which carry a reasonable population at present; and it will impose considerable hardship on other centres that are flourishing and have great prospects.

I refer to the longer route that will apply to the carriage of produce from the Esperance area and the country intervening. The mallee country is an important farming centre; and the Norseman area is important in goldmining and mineral production, and also in pastoral production.

I wonder whether the Minister has any proposals to maintain the present freight rates that apply to these people; or will the usual procedure be followed by which freights are charged on a mileage basis, with the result that the additional mileage added on to the route will represent an extra freight cost to the people between Kalgoorlie and Esperance? Will it represent a cost over and above the amount those people would have paid had the existing line been retained, or had the broad gauge line followed very much the same route as the existing narrow gauge line follows at the moment?

Like the Leader of the Opposition, I have serious doubts whether all the possibilities in regard to this route have been examined, particularly when we consider the present set-up: the country cleared on either side of the existing line; the facilities that are provided, such as the stations and loop-lines; the areas where traffic is shunted off to make way for other traffic; the signalling system; and the telegraph system. These things will all become redundant and will have to be provided anew along the proposed route.

It must also be remembered that the pipeline follows the existing railway from Kalgoorlie. It is understandable why the very progressive people in those days, who had the courage to evolve that scheme and put it into effect, took the pipeline along the railway. There is a simple reason: the pipeline has to be serviced. It not only has to be patrolled each day to see there are no breaks in it, but sections have to be relaid, and sometimes long sections have to be replaced in the course of years, and the material is transported by rail.

What is going to be the position in the future when there is no railway line? I cannot imagine the pipeline being shifted to run parallel with the new railway. We will find the pipeline will remain in the same position as it is now, but with this difference: The pipes that are required to replace the worn out and obsolete sections will have to be transported, whether from the new railway or by road, over considerable distances at a greatly increased cost; and, of course, that cost must be

reflected in the charges for water supplied to people who receive water from this pipeline. That is a factor which possibly has been completely overlooked in the estimates of costs for this railway.

The existing railway line also has a highway—a very fine bitumen-topped road—running parallel to it. Again, that is a great asset to the people on the goldfields; and it is also an asset as far as the railway is concerned, because at times there have been mishaps on the line when there have been unexpected floods; and if anybody thinks the goldfields is a dry area, he should see it when it really rains hard and flood conditions prevail. In those circumstances the passengers have to be taken off the train and transported by road bus to some place in order that they may not be marooned in country with long stretches without any habitation.

What is going to be the position on the new line? Is a bitumen road to be built parallel with it? If not, we can envisage the happenings I have just mentioned; and inevitably we will get extremely wet conditions resulting in floods, and rail traffic will be disorganised as it has been on occasions in the past. What then is to be done with the passengers? I am making these remarks with a knowledge of this country. I would say there is quite a lot of it with far more hazards, in regard to flooding, than the existing railway has to contend with.

We know there have been derailments during the last year. There has been heavy flooding on sections of the line, and rail gangs have had to go out and work around the clock in order to put in deviations for the trains. It was not very long ago that half a train overturned in that area. Such an occurrence is inevitable when we have the conditions that were then prevailing.

If the line is taken north, it will pass through country that is very subject to flooding—more so than the existing route, which is quite safe and has given no trouble in that regard. The proposed route—and I notice it is not shown on the map—goes right past Lake Kopi and several other lakes north of Kurrawang that hold a considerable amount of water in the winter; so much so that it has been a common sight in years gone by to see yachts sailing on those lakes, which stretch for several miles across.

The country there will prove, I think, to be of such a nature that railway construction will be faced with serious difficulties. The country is called kopi country and has a subsoil like chalk. There is no firmness about it at all. In the dry weather it cuts up like flour. In my opinion that is not the type of country to supply a firm roadbed for a railway such as this, which will be a continuation of the broad gauge line that will extend right across Australia some day in the not too far distant future.

In lengthening the distance to be travelled, it must be remembered that all east-west traffic will be affected as a result. The considerable traffic that exists today between Kalgoorlie and the metropolitan area will be affected by this longer distance.

Looking at the map, at first glance one would think the new route would be the shortest, but that is not so. When one compares the mileage, one finds that the new route will be considerably longer than the old one. Whilst no one journey represents a great mileage, when we have regard for the number of journeys which take place each day, and multiply them by the weeks, months, and years, we will find that the extra mileage that will have to be travelled by the trains, the livestock, the passengers, and the freight that will be hauled will be considerable; and so will the cost.

This will affect not only the people who reside at the terminus at Kalgoorlie; it will also affect the people all the way down to Esperance—and it will affect them pretty considerably, too.

In breaking through this new country to establish the railway line, we will be going into—I was going to say virgin bush, but it is not virgin bush because it has been cut over for firewood; but, as far as the railway is concerned, the whole of the railway reserve will have to be cleared for a distance of 158 miles. Telegraph lines will have to be provided for the safe working of the trains; and sidings will have to be built, not because anybody will live in them but because goods trains must be shunted off somewhere in order to allow fast passenger trains to go through, and because there must be some place where the materials used for ballast or for the maintenance of the railway have to be stored. So sidings will have to be constructed; but sidings already exist along the present railway. I have no doubt they will be duplicated along the new route.

Again there have to be fettling gangs stationed along the line, just as there are along the existing line. There have been considerable moneys spent in recent years to provide decent accommodation for these people. Indeed, there are quite little settlements along the existing line. Those people are reasonably housed; and, of course, that housing will have to be duplicated on the new line. It is not just a question of shifting the houses from one place to another; because we know perfectly well that when we start to pull down timber-framed asbestos houses we destroy a tremendous amount of the material, and they have to be practically rebuilt.

Another aspect is that the pumping stations along the existing pipeline will be without the services they have received from the existing railway; and that is no

small factor. Some of the existing stations have been dieselised, and the fuel has to be hauled by the railways and put off at the adjacent sidings. With the new proposal we will need a different concept altogether. The fuel and the supplies for these pumping stations will have to be hauled by road transport.

Also, along the existing route a good deal of mining timber is cut and it is transported by rail to the mines. The new route will pass through large sections of country where mining timber is almost non-existent, and this will probably mean added costs, which the mining industry can ill afford at any time, in the carting of timber to the new route and its transshipment to Kalgoorlie. All in all, I can see a good deal of added expense being put on to the shoulders of people not only in the goldfields area but also in the pastoral areas south of Kalgoorlie, and those who live in the farming areas around Esperance. The townspeople of Esperance, too, will have to pay more for the commodities that are railed to that centre.

Previously in this House I have discussed the question of high freight charges for people in the areas I have mentioned; and it is rather disconcerting to find that, by Government action, steps are being taken which will undoubtedly add to these already very high costs. The benefits to be received by taking the line along the new route will be cancelled out by the high costs involved and the disadvantages that will accrue from the change of route.

MR. BRADY (Swan) [4.47 p.m.]: As the route of the standard gauge railway is approaching closer to the settled areas, such as Midland, and the rest of my electorate, I think I should at this stage have something to say regarding the amendments proposed in the Bill. I also want to draw the Minister's attention to a number of factors that I think officers of the Railways Department might well consider while the standard gauge railway is in the process of being built. At the same time I want to mention a number of weaknesses that I believe are creeping into the standard gauge railway proposal; and as these weaknesses could ultimately result in a loss of goodwill, unless departmental officers realise that other people as well as the department must be considered, I think something should be done about them.

I am conscious of the fact that as the line approaches Midland ample warning lights should be provided at various crossings, because the eastern suburbs are now being built up at a fairly rapid rate. Within a decade or so the hills areas around Swan View and Greenmount, and places like that, will have big populations, and some cognisance should be taken of that fact. I know the Minister will immediately say, "That is not my concern. That is the concern of the Main Roads

Department, which is handling these matters." But the Shire Council of Swan-Guildford has already written to me asking me to make sure that ample protection is provided for vehicular traffic in those areas. I hope that the Minister will not lose sight of that aspect and that some announcement will be made in the near future as to what the department intends to do in this regard. I think the body which should take the initiative in this matter is the W.A.G.R., through the commissioner.

I regret having to mention this, but on half a dozen occasions over the last year or two I have raised the question whether the Midland Shire Council has been consulted regarding the standard gauge railway proposals. In the main I have been told that until the plans are finalised, and this is done, and that is done, it is not advisable to consult these people. As the member for the district I feel some early approach should be made to the Midland Shire Council so that its members will know the overall position. They have a responsibility to the ratepayers and the community generally; and while I do know departmental officers have consulted with officials of some of the lesser shire councils, officially they have not consulted the Midland Shire Council. I very much regret that.

I was invited, personally, on one occasion to go to see one of the senior departmental officers at his office in Perth. On that occasion I took the opportunity of taking with me one or two of the councillors from the Midland Shire Council. But that was not an official approach from the Railways Department. Therefore I would like the Minister to have the Commissioner of Railways, or the Secretary for Railways, in the very near future, invite members of the Midland Shire Council either to come to Perth to see the overall plan or, as has been done with other shire councils, take the plans out to the district and let the councillors have a whole afternoon looking at the matter so that they can be brought right up to date on the proposals. That is the very least the Minister and the commissioner can do if they expect 100 per cent. co-operation from the council.

In the very near future the Minister, by virtue of the fact that the Government is taking over the Midland Railway Company, and the standard gauge railway is to pass through Midland, will require all the assistance and co-operation he can get to ensure the ultimate success of the scheme. He cannot expect that co-operation unless he and his department do a little bit of co-operating. Therefore I hope the Minister will officially consult the people I have mentioned, and let them have all the information available so that they can advise their ratepayers as to what is going on.

The third schedule to the parent Act is to be slightly amended by provisions in the Bill. The third schedule, referring to Midland Junction, reads as follows:—

Midland Junction-Kewdale-East Perth Railway

Description of Main Line of Railway

Commencing at a point in Midland Junction station yard and proceeding thence in a westerly direction to West Midland and thence in a southerly direction alongside the railway to Kewdale and Welshpool authorised under Act number 62 of 1957 and thence in a north-westerly, northerly and westerly direction alongside the 3 feet 6 inches gauge railway constructed under Act number 55 Victoriae 30 of 1892 to East Perth to junction with the 4 feet 8½ inches gauge railway at that point.

It appears that the latter portion of that schedule is to be deleted. I have no argument about that; but as the Minister has all these railway experts dealing with the standard gauge proposal he might well give consideration to having the civil engineers, and departmental officers generally look at a proposal for building an entirely new railway station at Midland. The existing station is about 70 years old, and it is about time a more modern and up-to-date building was erected. I could argue about this proposal at considerable length, because I have had deputations to the Commissioner of Railways in regard to it. We were invariably told that the proposal was held up because of the building of the standard gauge railway line.

I accepted that answer; but I do not agree, and I certainly will not accept the idea that a modern railway should be built passing through that area and that it should be serviced by a decrepit railway station which is practically falling down, when, with the expenditure of a few thousand pounds, a modern station could be built.

I hope the Minister and his departmental officers will have regard for the fact that in recent times a major step forward has been taken with the Bushmead abattoir. The abattoir there has been extended considerably by the Abattoirs Board, and new sidings and new approaches, both rail and road, have been built to the abattoir. Some thousands of vehicles, sometimes daily, but certainly over three or four days of the week, are operating in the vicinity of the abattoir and are using the normal approaches to the abattoir and to the town itself. Therefore I think the Minister should get his departmental officers to consider the idea of building an overhead bridge to cross the line from Bushmead to Midland. I am sure the Abattoirs Board would agree with this proposal 100 per cent., because it would mean there would be no necessity to have

flashing signals, either for the standard gauge railway or for the 3ft. 6in. line. The Minister and his department would be rendering a service if this suggestion were investigated and something done about it.

For some years in this House I have advocated the building of an overhead bridge for use by people who want to go from the marshalling yards to Midvale on the one hand or Bushmead on the other. But up to date nothing has been done. This gives me an opportunity to emphasise the urgent necessity for this work. I think Country Party members, and even Liberal Party members, should look at the possibilities of doing something along the lines I have suggested; because if the abattoir is to be built up at the same rate as it has been built up over the last 10 years, my proposal will be of considerable benefit to farmers, the wholesale and retail meat vendors, and the wholesale and retail stock vendors who use the abattoir.

I hope the Minister will not wait until all these problems have become urgent before he does something about them. I want to see something done and I want it done as quickly as possible. I am taking this opportunity of bringing these matters to the notice of the Minister in the hope that he will get somebody to have a look at them. If he only says to one of his departmental officers, "have a look at Brady's speech in the House, because there may be a kernel of an idea" I will be satisfied. No doubt, ultimately, that kernel will turn into something worth while for the railways. That has been my experience in this House.

I have raised matters before; and I have been told, "It is not possible; it is not practicable; it is not desirable; and it is not warranted." Yet three or four years afterwards I find that what was not possible, practicable, desirable, or warranted is put into effect. One instance I can refer to was the Guildford station. For years I advocated that facilities should be provided to allow people who go to the railway station to park their vehicles. I was told it was not desirable, it was not practicable, it was not necessary; but today we find that the very thing I advocated for years is being carried out.

The departmental officers apparently do not wish to admit they have fallen down on the job; and, when everything is quiet, they go on with it and get it done. I do not mind if the departmental officers adopt that attitude with this speech, so long as the people who require these facilities get them within a reasonable time, so that we will not have all the bottlenecks we are already experiencing. We are definitely experiencing bottlenecks at the Lloyd Street crossing, which is manually controlled; and if someone forgets to tell the signalman to turn the lights off, they continue flashing for 10 to 15 minutes after the shunting has been completed.

I do not wish to upset the Minister in any way, but I hope he will look into this matter. The project will cost about £42,000,000, and it will ultimately cost the taxpayers of Western Australia about £30,000,000 of that amount. Accordingly, I do not think it is asking too much of the departmental officers, when I ask them to try to do something about making vehicular overways and pedestrian overways available at the point at which this standard gauge railway line is to come over to West Midland and Hazelmere. These overways should be established at Hazelmere. Hazelmere is a comparatively new suburb, which is building up at a reasonably good rate, despite the fact that the Housing Commission, and the other people who might well have helped the suburb, have done nothing in that direction.

The people there are building modern houses, valued at from £3,000 to £6,000, and now they are to have a standard gauge railway running through the centre of the area. Generally speaking, people accept it as being inevitable that the railway must go through; but I would like to draw the Minister's attention to the fact that when the railway line goes through West Midland or Hazelmere, there should be established a vehicular overway at the same time.

At the moment, the people in that area have no access from Hazelmere to West Midland, despite the fact that there is a notice at West Midland station which says, "Alight here for Hazelmere." As I have said, there is no vehicular overway. There is, however, a pedestrian crossing, which is all right in the dry weather. But when we have three or four months of wet weather, the people there can forget all about alighting there for Hazelmere. That difficulty could be overcome if the department thought about spending the required amount to establish an overway at Hazelmere. If that were done it would build up some goodwill, which would counter some of the ill-will which will be established because of the heavy tonnages that will have to be carried and the obnoxious noises which will be evident as a result of this railway going through that area.

There are two other aspects which I would like to mention. The first deals with the prevalent rumour that, in the Bellevue area, a new survey has been taken with a view to diverting the railway, not through West Midland as set down in the schedule, but via the Bushmead rifle range, and around the foothills. I do not know whether this is true, but I have been reliably assured by two or three people who have been at the Bushmead rifle range recently that survey pegs have been set out indicating the route of the railway.

The story I was told is that the railway is to go along the foothills. That may be a reason to save £1,000,000. As member for the district I would not be averse to

that money being saved. It would have the effect of diverting a lot of noise and difficulty from the Midland Junction railway yard, and from the West Midland area, into an area which is not built up to the same extent as Midland Junction.

I cannot understand why this schedule has not been amended if it is proposed to divert the railway and take it via Bushmead. It will be all the more remarkable if that does transpire, because all the fools, the mugs, and those who know nothing at all about railways, have been saying for the last 20 years, that this is where the route should go. No fewer than two Select Committees, and one Royal Commission have considered this matter, and the route set down in the schedule is the last one to which they agreed. The one agreed to previously was to go up the back of the Sandringham Hotel, on to Belmont, Bassendean, and so on. It is remarkable, therefore, that nothing is mentioned in the Bill about the surveys that have taken place.

Surveys have taken place between East Guildford and West Midland, with a view to putting in a triangle. According to the plans I saw it was originally intended to take the diversion through West Midland and run it through to Hazelmere and thence to Welshpool. In the last few months, people have been ringing me up asking me why surveyors and other people have been going through their properties on the East Guildford side. They wanted to know what it was all about.

When I rang up the Railways Department, I was told it was intended to put in a triangle across Hazelmere, back to East Guildford. If that is so—and it could be an advantage in the standard gauge set-up—it is rather peculiar that no reference has been made to it in the Bill. There is possibly an explanation for that, because it may not yet be finalised.

The people are, however, anxious to know where this is likely to finish. They would like to know the final plan. A man came to me the other day and said, "You can have my house, Jack, because the standard gauge railway will go through my front door." No doubt he had in mind this triangle to which I have referred. So if this triangle is not to be sited in that area, it is possible that the man in question might sell his property while under the misapprehension that such is to be the case.

One other matter I wish to mention is the speeding up of resumption payments. Two years ago I asked the Minister about resumption payments for a man named Woods, and I was given an assurance, that within a few months the final plans would be known, and that Mr. Woods would be contacted, and the final payment made. That was two years ago. Mr. Woods rang

me up a fortnight ago, however, and said he had not received his final payment, and asked me what he should do. I suggested that he see the land resumption officer who, no doubt, would give a sympathetic hearing to his case.

I would now like to refer to a man named Hatch, who has a property between Maida Vale and South Guildford. He tells me that for some time he has been trying to get finality in regard to payments for his property. He is a man who has been dealing extensively in pigs; and on account of all this resumption that is taking place the value of his property has been considerably reduced. It appears that, on the one hand, the Main Roads Department is bisecting his property in one direction, and on the other hand, the standard gauge railway will bisect his property in another direction. Despite the fact that he has had interviews with the Government departments; and despite the fact that he has had legal people handling the matter, he informs me that he has received no finality regarding his payments.

This man is asking a reasonable price for his property—a price which I feel ought to be paid. I will not mention the figure, because I do not wish to embarrass departmental officers. I would, however, like to put my own point of view as member for the district. This man had a property in an area which was left untouched when the civil aviation authorities bought hundreds of acres to extend the runways for the Commonwealth air services. Mr. Hatch was fortunate in that his property was bypassed by the civil aviation authorities, while dozens of other people were being bought out. That immediately made his property more valuable by about 25 per cent.

He assures me he is prepared to provide a balance sheet for the scrutiny of the departmental officers, to show what he has taken off his property; but he finds he cannot get anywhere near the figure which he feels the property is worth. He has told me the figure he has asked; and having regard for the fact that £42,000,000 is to be spent on this standard gauge venture, I would say his figure is a very reasonable one.

Anybody who deals in pigs would know Mr. Hatch and his property very well, because he has, perhaps, one of the biggest pig-raising ventures in the metropolitan area and beyond. He is a fairly active man. He has worked long hours over a period of years, and has had the foresight to build up a good property. His grazing facilities for pigs are second to none in Western Australia, and yet the departmental officers say he is asking too much for his property. If this land were not required, I think his first reaction would be to immediately convert the property into some other venture—possibly for raising stock, which would make it more

valuable again. If the property were bought now it would probably save the department many pounds an acre.

I would like to see the departmental officers get on with the job of paying the amounts owing on the various resumptions that have taken place. They should also have some regard for the people who are seeking to have their properties taken over—I refer to those on the route of the railway line.

I call to mind the case of a widow who has her property on the boundary fence. The department, however, will not take over the property, because it claims that the railway does not pass through it. The fact remains that if the railway does go through this widow's property the value will drop by half. She should not be expected to suffer that loss. If the officers would go to West Midland they would discover there is only one widow in the area to whom this could apply.

I hope the department will have some regard for human feelings, quite apart from the properties that are likely to be affected by the railway when it is built. There is a human aspect that must be considered. As a member in this House said earlier, "it is all very well to visualise the millions of pounds that are going to be saved by the Railways Department; it is all very well to visualise the facilities that will be provided to B.H.P.; and it may be all right to consider the future economics of the project; but we must give some thought to the little person who has a small acreage"; and who, in my opinion, must be given some measure of justice. All I ask is for the Minister to mete out some measure of justice to these people. I hope the departmental officers will stretch themselves a little in this matter of resumptions, and help the people concerned.

The Minister assured me in this House that the Koongamia-Boya line would have to go by the board. He said that the cost of laying the Koongamia-Boya railway would be between £75,000 and £100,000. I know the Minister has not tried deliberately to mislead me, but I cannot for the life of me see where between £75,000 and £100,000 will be involved to deviate a line about 1½ miles in length. I may be a fool as regards railway engineering, but it seems to me to be rather exaggerating to say that it will cost £75,000 to £100,000 to deviate a line for about a mile and a half or two miles. Whether that figure has been used to justify the pulling up of this little bit of line, I do not know. But I would say that, having regard for the future of the railways; having regard for the hills; and having regard for the areas beyond the hills, the Minister for Railways and his staff should be seeing how they can keep this railway line in operation, whether it be standard gauge or not.

We have to realise that Western Australia is being built up at a rapid rate. Factories in Western Australia are increasing at a rapid rate, and the people in the hills are going to expect up-to-date transport; and those people who are contemplating building in the hills, and those who are contemplating erecting factories in Western Australia will be going to the hills, and the highways and roads at the present time will not carry the required vehicular traffic.

So the Minister should work out ways and means with his departmental officers to keep open the Koongamia-Bellevue line, because the area has developed in such a way that the cost of keeping it open will not be between £75,000 and £100,000. Another angle could be the establishment of a spur line off the marshalling yards in the vicinity so that this big expenditure would not be required.

I have travelled around Australia and I have seen what has been occurring in various parts of Victoria, around Melbourne; in New South Wales; and in Queensland; and the people in those places are obtaining a reasonably good service from the railways. The services in those States have been speeded up to approximately one mile per minute; and that is exactly what can be done with our services. We have to speed up the traffic to provide a better handling of the potential passengers. We will have to cater for those people going to the abattoir at Bushmead and so on.

Whilst I do not want to speak at length, I want to apologise to the Minister; but as member for the district I felt I should let him know that I can foresee a lot of problems in my area. All I want the Minister and his officers to do is to co-operate with the people in the district; because, whether he likes it or not, Midland is destined to become one of the greatest railway centres in Australia, because of the takeover of the Midland railway line, by virtue of the fact that the standard gauge railway will go through there, and by virtue of the fact that the hills railways will ultimately go through there, even though that is not envisaged at the moment.

I feel that Midland Junction will have to be taken into account and the town council will have to be consulted. If this is done 100 per cent. co-operation will be given by the people in the area, and a great deal of goodwill will be built up. Ultimately, the best will be given to the State from the standard gauge railway. I support the Bill.

MR. COURT (Nedlands—Minister for Railways) [5.19 p.m.]: The debate from the Opposition side was led by the member for Merredin-Yilgarn, and all I can say is that he has shown a rather lamentable lack of knowledge in regard to the economics

of railway systems. One of the great problems that has beset the railways in this State is the fact that we inherited a system which is physically uneconomic in many of its lines. We have areas where the grades are one in 60, one in 80, and less than one in 100, which are poor operating grades. We have had areas where there were not only bad grades, but very bad curves; and if there is a combination of bad grades and bad curves, then there exist the two worst factors so far as economic railway operation is concerned.

One of the important things in the agreement with the Commonwealth is the fact that we negotiated for either one in 200 or one in 150 as the ruling grade; and this does wonders to the economics of the system. This is most evident, for instance, in the Avon Valley. The fact that a better grade will operate there instead of the bad ruling grade down the hills through Northam, Chidlow, to Midland, will save something like £500,000 per annum in operating costs on that particular line. This is something we cannot ignore. If railways are to take their rightful place in the transport system they must be given a chance to operate on an economic basis. In other words, they have to be run as a business.

There is a reason why some of the lines were put down on an uneconomic basis in the early days. Many of them were put in for political reasons at a time when costs were not very important—when labour was cheap—and, in fact, many of the lines were built as a labour-absorption factor in the State. There was not the same care and attention given to the grades and curves that should have been used on those lines. Probably the predominant idea in those days was to get the line down as cheaply as possible and then allow operating costs to look after themselves later. In these modern times, we cannot afford to ignore these factors; but the member for Merredin-Yilgarn brushes them aside and says that the line has been operating for years and years and the old order should continue.

Mr. Kelly: You are going to carry 100,000 tons of material over 50 miles each way.

Mr. COURT: If the honourable member gives me the opportunity I will demonstrate to him that he is completely off-beam with respect to the economics of transport from Coolgardie to Kalgoorlie and back on the equivalent sector towards Perth. I want to establish the basic fact that our engineers would be failing in their responsibility if they did not say to the Government of the day that this is the best way and this is the best place to put this new railway. We may not get another chance like this in a hundred years.

During the critical examination of this matter it was suggested the line go from Southern Cross to Koolyanobbing and

Kalgoorlie. This concept of going through Koolyanobbing to Kalgoorlie is not new. If one takes note of opinions given on the goldfields by those interested in the economics and engineering of railways, one will find this has been advocated before. There was a very strong opinion in favour of this route. If I remember correctly, one of the first letters appearing in the Press after announcement of the standard gauge project was from a person in the goldfields who wanted to know why the route was not going north from Southern Cross through Koolyanobbing to Kalgoorlie instead of the old route.

I received a deputation at Southern Cross of people concerned about a suggestion of the line going direct from Merredin to Koolyanobbing and Kalgoorlie, that probably being the best route if one had to consider the economics and economics alone. However, it was unthinkable to go that way and completely ignore the development between Merredin and Southern Cross. So a compromise was reached by the engineers, and they submitted the proposal to go from Southern Cross through Koolyanobbing direct to Kalgoorlie.

If the member for Merredin-Yilgarn wants to oppose this route, that is his right, but he has a responsibility to put forward sound figures and a sound argument in support of his contention. I am certain the honourable member did not study the full implications of the proposals that were placed before the Government and are now before Parliament. It has not been accepted lightly by the Government that there should be a change in the route, and that we should go direct from Southern Cross to Koolyanobbing to either Coolgardie or Kalgoorlie. This was accepted only after the most careful examination; and it should be accepted that the Commonwealth's own experts, who examined the submissions for amendments, would not tell us this was the best thing to do, unless that was the position. In other words, it was necessary that they should agree there would be a change in the route as a prerequisite to this legislation.

Practically all the argument this afternoon, with the exception of that brought forward by the member for Beeloo and the member for Swan has surrounded this question of Coolgardie. I would have thought members on the other side would be equally anxious to examine every part of this route, which will be very important in the final project when it is completed by 1967. The member for Merredin-Yilgarn kept harping on the ghost town idea; and this was followed up by other speakers. I would remind the honourable member that when he was a Minister in Government, this thought never seemed to occur to him; and that he was party to the motion for the closure of some hundreds of miles of railway lines, which involved dozens of towns.

Mr. Kelly: They were entirely different circumstances.

Mr. COURT: Not one town only was involved such as Coolgardie. Strong arguments were put forward that these towns could get by with road transport and that there was no need to keep operating the railways to those areas; that they would be equally prosperous, and development would take place just the same as in the past if they were served by road transport.

Mr. Kelly: You supported that, too.

Mr. COURT: With reservations which the honourable member's Government did not observe; and we have done something about it since we became the Government. Through the action of this Government, some of the position was retrieved; but I well know of the hue and cry in those areas where they had been completely left to their own devices and the road system that was to be developed to meet their needs was not developed before the railway system was withdrawn.

Let us face the facts. There is still to be a railway at Coolgardie; but if one listened to the speeches from members on the other side and did not know the facts one would assume the railway system through the Coolgardie area was to be completely withdrawn.

Mr. Kelly: Only from Esperance to Kalgoorlie.

Mr. COURT: This system will continue to operate from Leonora through Kalgoorlie, Coolgardie, and down to Esperance. There is no suggestion that it will not continue. Coolgardie will have a rail system just as it has today. This is a question as to whether the standard gauge railway goes through Coolgardie; and the honourable member would give the impression to anyone listening to him that the Government, without humane considerations, brushed Coolgardie aside.

Mr. Kelly: That is how it appears to people on the goldfields.

Mr. COURT: The fact remains that numerous problems had to be met and we had this matter examined and re-examined; and at this point of time no decision has been made as to whether there will be a deviation of the Koolyanobbing line through Coolgardie. It will be sufficient if we can justify the economics of going through Coolgardie, to deviate into Coolgardie. The Government of the day has the responsibility of undertaking this project in the most economic and sensible way. I agree we have a responsibility to have regard to the existing towns and existing industries, and that is precisely what we are doing.

Let us examine the situation in Coolgardie. If we are going to deviate at Coolgardie, it will mean the transshipment centre for the 3 ft. 6 in. line and the 4 ft. 8½ in. line will logically be in Coolgardie;

and any freight coming from Leonora for Perth will be transhipped at Coolgardie; and any freight from the southern line from Esperance, Norseman, and towards Coolgardie, will be transhipped at Coolgardie. But if we cannot make out a reasonable case—we are prepared to allow some elasticity—obviously the transshipping should take place at one common point, and that is at Kalgoorlie.

Mr. Kelly: Is there not justification for having that depot at Coolgardie?

Mr. COURT: I have already said that if the two lines met there, Coolgardie would be the transshipment point.

Mr. Hawke: What about the "if" part?

Mr. COURT: Let us examine the question of transshipments. The main commodity involved is pyrites; and they would have to go from Norseman into Kalgoorlie, and then be transhipped and come down to Perth, where the pyrites would be consumed by the superphosphate works.

Mr. Kelly: Fifty miles haulage.

Mr. COURT: That may be. What the honourable member overlooks are the other items that have to be transported over the main line from Perth to Kalgoorlie and *vice versa*. Pyrites are but a fraction of the total tonnage that is going to be moved from east to west and west to east.

I have explained to the House why the old route from Southern Cross through Coolgardie to Kalgoorlie would be so much longer than if we go through Koolyanobbing. It is no use the honourable member brushing aside the fact that we would have to deviate the line over 60 per cent. of its length to get the proper grades. The engineers have to advise the Government of the best way to build, if we want a grade of one in 150, and the deviations that will be necessary over 60 per cent. of the total line. That is what will take the extra 35 miles.

It is all very well for us to say that it is silly, it is poppy-cock, it is not sensible; but the engineers have the task of telling us how to go about building a railway line and where. Because this bad grade has been incorporated in the line for so long, should we, in 1963, still incorporate it in the new system? We would never live it down. We would never get the approval of the Commonwealth for the money if we did not conform with the standards laid down in the agreement concerning grades and curves.

If we are going to go by this line that the honourable member wants us to go by, to save this movement of a very small percentage of our total tonnage from Coolgardie into Kalgoorlie and back again—

Mr. Kelly: It is the entire amount of tonnage.

Mr. COURT: —the great bulk of the tonnage would be transported an extra 50 miles.

Mr. Kelly: What tonnage are you referring to? Only superphosphate would come under that category.

Mr. COURT: The honourable member has overlooked the fact that it is comparatively small when measured against the tonnage to be bought from the eastern States through Kalgoorlie to our west coast, and the increased tonnage which will go from the west coast to the eastern States. The amount carried is building up at the rate of 15 per cent. per annum. The business will increase at a very fast rate.

Mr. Kelly: You will still have that amount of business going through in the normal course.

Mr. COURT: I will try once more to explain to the honourable member. Instead of doing a return journey of fifty miles for a comparatively small amount of freight, he would try to force us into doing a journey of fifty miles for the bulk of our freight.

Mr. Kelly: Of course not. That is ridiculous.

Mr. COURT: If we study the mathematics of the suggestion, we will soon see that the sum would not add up so far as the honourable member is concerned.

The other point which the honourable member overlooks is this: that Esperance is being developed as a port. Esperance will soon have a land-backed wharf. It is hoped to bring as much freight as possible in and out of Esperance by sea. When the superphosphate works at Esperance are built, the logical thing will be—if we believe in decentralisation—for the superphosphate ingredients to come in through the port and for the superphosphate to be distributed throughout the district.

The produce of the land should be distributed through the port to the ports of the world, and of other parts of Australia. Less and less will come back to Perth. At the present time the superphosphate comes from the metropolitan area, and much of the grain comes back to the metropolitan area. With the advent of the land-backed wharf, there will be efficient bulk-handling facilities, which will enable cargoes to be sent out of the port and will also assist in getting cargo in. It follows that the tonnage that will move up north of places like Salmon Gums and Norseman will be less and less.

All these things have to be taken into account. The railway will commence to function by the end of 1967. By then we will have a land-backed wharf in Esperance, and we will have the superphosphate. The main problem to be contended with will be the pyrites. In view of the fact that pyrites are heavily subsidised by the Commonwealth and State Governments—

Mr. Tonkin: You will have to increase your subsidy.

Mr. COURT: —It follows that we must ensure that the pyrites get to the works at that time on an economical basis. At the moment they are carrying two subsidies. When we improve the grades and curves on this line, it is hoped to improve the economics of the situation to such an extent that it is possible, in the interests of the railway system, to haul the freight the extra distance at little extra cost.

Mr. Kelly: They have really sold you something.

Mr. COURT: I am only glad that the honourable member is not in charge of the railways. This principle has been demonstrated by the best brains in the State, and those associated with other railway systems. It must operate south of the river line if we are going to handle our wheat on a better and cheaper basis, despite the fact that the wheat will be carried a few extra miles. An engine could haul something like 2,400 or 2,500 tons on the south of the river route, compared with 1,500 or 1,600 tons hauled by the same engine through the city route. The extra few miles are quite unimportant in view of the greater economics of hauling bulk loads by the south of the river route. This principle will apply on the Southern Cross-Koolyanobbing-Kalgoorlie section.

Members are overlooking the fact that under the original agreement we have to complete a spur line out to Koolyanobbing of from 34 to 38 miles. Is it not logical to have this incorporated into the system, so that instead of its being a spur line it could become part of the east-west traffic line; and instead of its being purely a captive line, devoted to iron-ore traffic, it can be part of the main line? For that reason it is doubly desirable that we should go through Koolyanobbing to Kalgoorlie.

I now want to get back to the point I tried to make earlier. I do not think I have managed to impress the honourable member. No decision has yet been made on Coolgardie. If we can make out a reasonable economic case for deviation of the Koolyanobbing-Kalgoorlie line into Coolgardie then that will be the position. I emphasise, however, that at the moment the figures are heavily against the Coolgardie deviation, whether we measure it by capital expenditure or by actual operating efficiency and economy.

The Leader of the Opposition asked why there was need to build a line out to this iron-ore country; that there was plenty of iron ore in Australia. I would remind the Leader of the Opposition of the great steel industry that we are going to have in Western Australia; and Heaven forbid that we should do anything to detract from that getting started on the new due date, which is 12 months ahead of the original date.

Mr. Hawke: There is provision in the existing agreement for that.

Mr. COURT: Yes; by a spur line. The member for Merredin-Yilgarn has tried to introduce this matter on an emotional note rather than getting down to the logic of the problem that we have in mind. I am sure I have not convinced him about the extra mileage factor. In the interests of a comparatively small amount of our tonnage—that which comes off the Esperance line, through Norseman and other places on that line—he would force us to carry the rest of our freight an extra 50 miles, every day and night of the year. I will never convince him about this because he does not wish to be convinced. He might find himself in a very silly position if his wishes were followed and people, for the next hundred years, complained about the traffic being carried all this distance unnecessarily.

Mr. Kelly: What is all this about unnecessary distance by running to Coolgardie?

Mr. Tonkin: According to your map, the route you propose to traverse is 19 miles longer than the one through Coolgardie.

Mr. COURT: We have endeavoured to give the House the figures in connection with the proposed route. The distance from Southern Cross to Koolyanobbing is 34 miles. We have to build that line whether we like it or not. If we go from Koolyanobbing to Kalgoorlie direct we go a further 124 miles, or a total of 158 miles. The honourable member may dispute the findings of the surveyors and the engineers, if it is his wish, but I am not going to do so when the figures have been given to me in black and white.

Mr. Tonkin: Regarding the point about carting the bulk of the cargo a further distance, I cannot follow you on that one.

Mr. COURT: I will endeavour to explain. If we go from Koolyanobbing to Kalgoorlie direct the total distance is 158 miles. If we go from Southern Cross to Koolyanobbing via Coolgardie, because of the grades and curves we will be travelling a distance of 174 miles. We could go all the way through Koolyanobbing to Kalgoorlie and still save 16 miles.

Mr. Kelly: You would be travelling the same territory from Koolyanobbing to Kalgoorlie, if you came from Kalgoorlie to Coolgardie.

Mr. COURT: I am sure the honourable member does not want to be convinced. I repeat that the mileage from Southern Cross direct to Kalgoorlie via Koolyanobbing is 158 miles. From Southern Cross to Koolyanobbing, deviating via Coolgardie and then proceeding to Kalgoorlie, is 165 miles. Bearing in mind the grades and curves we would have to travel a distance of 174 miles if we used the Southern Cross-Coolgardie-Kalgoorlie route. Surely the honourable member does not want all the freight which generates from and to

Kalgoorlie to go that extra distance, simply to please somebody who wants to do something in connection with a comparatively small amount of freight. Coolgardie will not be deprived of a railway system under our proposal.

Mr. Tonkin: Who suggested the system—B.H.P.?

Mr. COURT: Definitely not. All the company is concerned with is the railway line to Koolyanobbing, and whether it is a spur line or a through line is of no concern to them.

Mr. Hawke: They will be sending stuff back to the east.

Mr. COURT: Not by rail. Some of the fines will be sent from Kwinana to the eastern States by ship, and they will be backloading coking coal from the east, without which we could not function.

Mr. Jamieson: I think you will find that some of the iron ore will be going east.

Mr. COURT: I think we shall find some of our steel going east. Under the agreement iron ore will be transported from Koolyanobbing to Kwinana.

The member for Boulder-Eyre was concerned about servicing the new route from Southern Cross to Kalgoorlie via Koolyanobbing. This will not present any more problems than railway lines in other parts of the State. The bituminised road will continue where it is and we will look after the present personnel and the water supply service already there. There will be no great problem in connection with servicing. There are only a few people between Southern Cross and Coolgardie and in the final analysis all their requirements will be taken good care of. The maintenance of the pipeline will be done as it is at present. Transport problems are not very severe.

Mr. Moir: The pipes are carried by the railway line.

Mr. COURT: They are not a tremendous factor. I am afraid the honourable member has not set his sights very high. On this proposed new route we will be dealing with freights which will amount to millions of tons in any one year, and yet the honourable member is worrying about a few tons of freight. I am afraid he is worrying about the shadow and forgetting about the substance.

The member for Swan dealt more with local problems. I can only assure him that I will examine the two cases to which he referred. In any great projects there are always some problems when resumptions are made. After all is said and done, Mr. Jarvis, the resumption officer, and his assistants always try to help to reach agreement whenever they possibly can on any resumption—

Mr. Brady: He is doing a good job, too.

Mr. COURT:—rather than attempt to push it down a person's neck. It always takes two people to reach agreement. However, when sometimes agreement cannot be reached an arbitrary figure is stated, and if that is rejected the person concerned has the right of appeal.

The member for Swan also stated that the Midland Shire Council had not been consulted. I want to make it clear to the honourable member that as soon as we can see our way clear to come to a firm decision on this proposal we will approach the shire council in regard to the matter. Nothing would have been more embarrassing than to approach the shire council with a tentative proposal and then, at some subsequent stage, inform the shire council that it had to be altered, and this could quite conceivably happen four, five, or six times. In other words, a proposal could be put forward to the shire council and in five or six months' time it might be found that it has to be drastically changed and, as a result, many people could be adversely affected.

Until there is reasonable clarity with the proposition, it is desirable, in the interests of the local authority as well as in the interests of the Railways Department, not to talk to the local authority. It is true that some local authorities of lesser size than the Midland Junction local authority have been consulted. The senior officer has visited the district in company with members of the shire council and local members of Parliament to discuss the proposed plan, and in each instance expressions of satisfaction have been received from those concerned. We will follow exactly the same procedure with the Midland Town Council as soon as the position is clarified. It must be realised that Midland Junction is the focal point in this proposal, and I can appreciate the concern of the member for Swan.

As soon as we have become firm on the method of dealing with the standard gauge connection at Midland Junction, we will enter into consultation with the shire council. At this time it so happens we are able to think in terms of the acquisition of the Midland Railway Company land if the Bill dealing with that company's railway is ratified, and that land can be incorporated in any future development at Midland Junction. It is our express desire to bring about some town planning improvement in conjunction with all this railway planning at Midland Junction as a result of the standard gauge construction. I agree that the present position in regard to the Midland Junction town-site is untenable and that it represents a focal point in the railway traffic system. That sums up the position, and I ask the House to support the measure.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr. I. W. Manning) in the Chair; Mr. Court (Minister for Railways) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3 put and passed.

Clause 4: Section 3 repealed and re-enacted—

Mr. HAWKE: This clause proposes to give authority to deviate in the construction of the proposed uniform railway line from Kalgoorlie to Koolyanobbing, and the allowable deviation on that proposed line is 10 miles on either side. Later on, another part of the same clause deals with the proposed line from Koolyanobbing to East Northam.

In the Railways (Standard Gauge) Construction Act, which this Parliament approved in 1961, there appears in paragraph 9 of the first schedule, the following:—

Kalgoorlie to East Northam, parallel to the existing narrow gauge railway, except where deviations are necessary to obtain the required grading as set out in the second schedule.

That appeared in the Act which was passed only two years ago. There was no shadow of doubt then in the mind of the Minister, or in the minds of his railway advisers, that the section of the proposed uniform gauge railway line from Kalgoorlie to East Northam would be constructed parallel to the existing narrow gauge railway system, except in relation to such small deviations as might be required to achieve the best grades. Now, all of a sudden, the Minister comes up with a proposition to alter that proposal.

Instead of the proposal of two years ago being the rule of the road in connection with the construction of this proposed railway line between Kalgoorlie and Southern Cross, we are to have an entirely new route altogether. The existing narrow gauge railway line from Kalgoorlie to Southern Cross is, for the most part, to be abandoned, and one wonders why there is this sudden change in outlook and attitude. The Minister tells us it has to do with grade; it has to do with the anxiety of railway engineers to achieve a better grade. Surely they must have given some thought to grades two years ago! Surely they did not just throw up the proposal which they had two years ago without giving any thought to the question of grades and requirements! At that time they must have given some thought to grades and grade requirements before putting up the proposal to Parliament which it approved.

We can see from the information so far made available to us that a uniform gauge railway line, running from Kalgoorlie through Coolgardie to Southern Cross close to the existing narrow gauge line, would traverse many miles less than the new

proposed line from a point west of Kalgoorlie, running away through uninhabited country to Koolyanobbing and then into Southern Cross. There is a difference involved of at least 19, or near enough to 20, miles in length.

I will take a lot of convincing that one could not so organise a uniform gauge railway from Kalgoorlie to Southern Cross along the existing route, with reasonable and satisfactory grade, at a cost no more than that which will be required to construct this proposed railway along this area from a point somewhat west from Kalgoorlie to go into Koolyanobbing, and then from Koolyanobbing into Southern Cross.

I want to know, frankly, what caused this new proposal to be thought of. I cannot be convinced on the basis of grade, because, as I said earlier, I expect the railway engineers must have given this a great deal of thought two years ago when they put their proposals up to Parliament. This proposal is something out of the blue. I have tried to check the distance that would be involved in relation to freight coming into Koolyanobbing and going from Koolyanobbing back to the Eastern States.

I cannot vouch for the accuracy of the figures I am about to give; but under the 1961 proposal, the distance from Koolyanobbing via Southern Cross, to Kalgoorlie, was approximately 192 miles. That would apply in relation to freight going from Koolyanobbing through Southern Cross via Coolgardie to the Eastern States, and also freight coming from the Eastern States and consigned to Koolyanobbing.

However, under the new proposed arrangement, the distance, by rail, would be only 125 miles; or a distance, in all, of 67 miles in favour of the proposed new arrangement. Broken Hill Pty. Ltd. would be the only established concern in Koolyanobbing to enjoy the freight advantage which this new proposal would offer, as against the proposition in the 1961 agreement. So it does seem, whether it was intended or not, that the one company in Australia which will benefit tremendously from this new proposal which has suddenly come out of the blue, will be B.H.P., because it would be saving, over a comparatively small area of railway line, 67 miles on freight coming from the Eastern States consigned to the company at Koolyanobbing, and on freight consigned by the company from Koolyanobbing to the Eastern States.

I am not satisfied to agree to this new proposal for the benefit of B.H.P.; and, as far as I am able to judge, it will be the only company that will benefit to any great extent. Everybody else will suffer because the distance in traffic of the other consignees will be much greater in length. They will have to pay much more in freight. Therefore it seems to me that this new proposal is loaded, and requires a great

deal more consideration and attention by members of this Chamber than it has had so far.

Clearly, the existing narrow gauge railway line is the route which the broad gauge line should follow, and I am positive, as I said a few moments ago, that the capital cost of constructing the proposed line from a point west of Kalgoorlie, then away out to Koolyanobbing, and then into Southern Cross, would be greater than that of constructing a line from Kalgoorlie to Coolgardie and along the existing route to Southern Cross. I am also satisfied that if the much greater cost which would be involved with the new proposal, as against the 1961 proposal, were expended on the job of making better grades between Coolgardie and Southern Cross, all the saving which the Minister has talked about in general terms could be achieved on the 1961 proposal, as set out in the Act which Parliament passed in that year.

Mr. COURT: I am afraid the Leader of the Opposition is shying at the usual bogey of B.H.P.

Mr. Hawke: Is there anything wrong in the distances I mentioned?

Mr. COURT: The B.H.P. will gain nothing out of this Bill whatsoever. It would be a different matter if that company had finished products at Koolyanobbing which it wanted to ship to the Eastern States. In fact, it is only going to mine raw ore at Koolyanobbing, and the destination of that ore is Kwinana. We have an agreement to that effect. The freight charges are all tied to the use of the land in question and the transport of the ore from Koolyanobbing through Southern Cross to Kwinana.

Mr. Kelly: Why did you not answer my question as to the freight rates when I asked you? You said no decision had been made.

Mr. COURT: I gave the honourable member the information on the freight rates; in fact, they are set out in the agreement passed by Parliament. It is impractical at this point of time to declare freight rates on a line which is yet to function, on which we based the economics of the operation.

I want to clarify the distances involved, because the Leader of the Opposition referred to the distance between Koolyanobbing and Coolgardie under the route laid down in the original agreement of 192 miles. But who would want to consign goods from Koolyanobbing, through Southern Cross to Coolgardie? If anyone did, the distance would be 192 miles under the old surveys which were used for the purposes of the original agreement.

Let me refer to the facts. Following very careful surveys, and the use of aerial photography and ground surveys of a

much more accurate and precise nature, the distances have been set out. If the Opposition wants to dispute the figures, that is their business, but the distances are set out, and they have been verified by the Commissioner of Railways, and have been subjected to investigation.

The distance from Southern Cross to Koolyanobbing is 34 miles. The distance from Koolyanobbing to Kalgoorlie direct, ignoring Coolgardie, is 124 miles, making a total of 158 miles. If the route from Southern Cross to Kalgoorlie takes in Koolyanobbing and Coolgardie, the distance is 165 miles. If it is desired to retain the grades—in spite of what the Leader of the Opposition says; and I back the opinion of the engineers who made this report against his—the distance to Kalgoorlie via Coolgardie will be 174 miles for all time.

Mr. Tonkin: Were not detailed surveys made two years ago?

Mr. COURT: Surveys were made on the existing routes, but when the engineers got to grips with the problems and examined the cost of the line to Kalgoorlie new problems arose. For instance, with all the surveys undertaken on the Avon Valley route in connection with the state of the soil, when they got to grips with the actual cuttings they found all sorts of different problems arising in connection with the geology of that land. When the engineers got to grips with the area dealt with in the Bill before us in more detail, they found very different problems from those which they anticipated if they stuck to the grade of one in 150. I can hardly imagine this House wanting to construct this railway line at a grade worse than one in 150.

Mr. H. May: They knew the line was going through two years ago.

Mr. COURT: It is possible to achieve a grade of more than one in 150, if the money was available; but I cannot go beyond the advice of the experts that the line will cover 174 miles, because there will be a factor of deviation of 60 per cent. for the whole route from Southern Cross to Coolgardie. Those are matters which we cannot dispute. We cannot go beyond the advice given by those who are experts on this subject, now that they have had a couple of years to come to grips with the problems. We would be culpable if we did not follow this route, leaving out Coolgardie altogether. This Bill provides for a 10-mile deviation factor, in accordance with the undertaking given that the Government would examine the possibility of a deviation into Coolgardie if it were at all possible.

Mr. KELLY: The Minister bases the whole of his argument on what has been given to him by the engineers. It is perfectly obvious that the terrain between Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie is substantially the same for 10 miles either north or south

of the line. If there is need for a great deal of deviation between Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie on the existing line site, there will be just as many deviations on the new route, but they are not shown on the map which has been referred to. The line of the proposed route is almost a completely straight line. The Minister has emphasised that the engineers have agreed to the proposed route as being the best, but that is far from factual, because there will be as many deviations whichever way the route follows. The same problems will have to be faced up to. There will be just as many deviations in the proposed route as in the one laid down in the agreement, for the section from Kalgoorlie westwards to about the position of Coolgardie.

The Minister is totally ignoring the fact that a tremendous cost will be involved in earthworks, not immediately north of Coolgardie, but nearer to the north-east of Coolgardie and continuing north-west of Coolgardie, because the terrain is very bad. The Minister has ignored that factor.

The Minister talks of deviations of 60 per cent. which he claims the engineers consider to be necessary between Coolgardie and Southern Cross; but he will encounter just as many deviations on the straight route proposed in the Bill. He is prepared to ignore that totally. He endeavoured to placate the people of the area affected by saying the route was not finalised; but if he were to speak the truth he knows very well in his own mind it is finalised.

The case I am putting forward is not my case, but that of the people living in that area. They have brought to my notice the various discrepancies which arose in connection with the proposed new route. An alteration of this nature in the route could not commend itself, if the examination had been very thorough and complete. The Minister has had little more than an aerial survey to go on. He has undertaken surveys at both ends of the route, but has filled in the middle.

Mr. Court: The engineers have done their ground survey work.

Mr. KELLY: They have done a portion of the ground work. They could not get to that area for two months, but these plans were made a long time ago before these men went on to that country. They did a bit of ground work at both ends and filled in the middle according to guess work and an aerial survey.

Mr. TONKIN: One aspect of this Bill concerns me very greatly, and I am not at all convinced on the point which is being dealt with. I tried to follow the Minister, in order to ascertain whether his conclusions were feasible. I find it difficult to believe that the new route will actually be shorter than the route proposed in the

original agreement. The Minister's explanation is that the route originally proposed would be much longer, because of the necessity to make deviations, but that is hard to believe.

On the map, the distance between Coolgardie and Southern Cross is shown as 139 miles. The Minister indicated that, because of the difficulty of grade, the distance of 139 miles would be increased, and in fact would exceed the distance of the new route. I would like to see some evidence produced to prove the Minister's contention.

I have travelled along this line quite often, but I cannot think of many places where the cost of construction of the standard gauge line will be so heavy, as a result of deviations, or where all of them will be required.

If the position is not as envisaged by the Minister, then we will have this situation: the people using this line in the future will have to send their goods, and receive their goods, over a much longer distance than would be the case had the original route been followed. That is a very serious matter for the economy of the State. It will be a very serious matter if industry is to develop in Western Australia in the way we hope it will. If we can reverse the trade balance between this State and the Eastern States, the longer distance will cost much more money for the consignment of goods interstate. There is no possible justification for such additional impost, and it will not apply for a day, a week, a month, or a year, but for many years ahead.

As industry develops in Western Australia, business people here who hope to compete with those in the other States, will be faced with increased freight charges as a result of transporting goods over the longer route, unless the contention of the Minister that the original route would, in actual practice, be longer is correct. That is the criterion.

I wonder whether the Minister will make available for the perusal of members, the papers in connection with this proposal so that an opportunity will be given to study what the engineers have reported, and to obtain information about the genesis of the proposition, and so on. Because of the benefit which appears to accrue to the B.H.P., one cannot be blamed for thinking that that company was the force which initiated this movement.

The engineers who outlined the route for the consideration of Parliament initially, should have been reasonably sure of their ground. It does not say much for the efficiency of the engineers if, after putting up a proposal, which becomes the basis of agreement and passes through Parliament, they subsequently find it necessary to make substantial alterations—as is now proposed in the Bill—because

the grades do not meet the requirements of the agreement between the Commonwealth and the State Governments.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. TONKIN: As far as I am aware, the Minister for Railways did not say whether it was anticipated there would be any addition to the estimated 158 miles between Kalgoorlie and Southern Cross via Koolyanobbing. The member for Merredin-Yilgarn said that in his view allowance would have to be made for some deviation on that route, and he felt it would be somewhat similar to the deviation required on the more direct route of 139 miles. That is very important because, if one is to make a comparison of the actual distance to be traversed, one requires to know whether in the now proposed route any substantial addition in mileage will be necessitated because of deviations resulting from unsatisfactory grades.

Of course it must be remembered that with regard to the railing of pyrites to the coast, which is already the subject of fairly substantial subsidy, the probability here is that an increased subsidy will have to be paid because it would be uneconomic for the company to rail pyrites this greater distance over and above what is involved at present.

I hope all those factors were taken into consideration by the Government when it decided to make this proposed alteration. What I cannot get out of my mind is that it indicates inefficiency or too much haste when, within a period of two years, we have to consider a proposed alteration of this nature. Surely railway engineers do not work this way, although I can recall an occasion here under the McLarty-Watts Government when the Railways Department engineers were crawling over themselves to get on with a certain job called the chord line. It was supposed to be so urgent that the Bill be passed that session, that a number of engineers were brought here and addressed members in the ministerial room. They impressed upon members how urgent this chord line was—and it has never been built from that day to this. Therefore one has to take a second look at proposals which are brought forward, and not just accept, as being absolute gospel, the dictum which is submitted from time to time.

One requires to know the reasons which have actuated the moves being made, and I must say that, up to the present, I am not at all convinced that this proposed route should be substituted for the one in the existing agreement. I repeat that the criterion is definitely the mileage to be traversed in either route, and whether, making due allowance for any deviations necessitated by difficult grades, the new route will be shorter than the route provided for under the existing law, when the necessary alterations are made to meet Commonwealth requirements with regard

to grade. That is the point which has to be satisfactorily settled, and around which, I think, the whole argument revolves.

Mr. COURT: I agree with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that the whole proposition revolves around this particular point. If we go back to the basic factors of this particular proposition, we find that the present ruling grade is one in 60, which is an intolerable grade. It has been one of those things the railway system has borne for many years. Under the new agreement with the Commonwealth, provision is made in this particular sector for a ruling grade of one in 150 and that is a standard to which we should all aspire. In other parts, such as in the Avon Valley, the ruling grade is to be one in 200, which is better still.

To achieve this, the engineers, as a result of their research, have put forward a proposal to the Government which makes it more economic of construction and operation to proceed on a route from Southern Cross to Koolyanobbing and to Kalgoorlie, in preference to a route from Southern Cross to Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie.

I want to assure members that this has been the subject of hours of discussion between the Minister concerned, who happens to be me, the commissioner, and various officers. It has been the subject of very close examination by both railway engineers and consultants. It has been the subject of detailed survey on the ground and from more modern methods used to supplement ground surveys. They have advised the Government that these are the new mileages.

I took the precaution over the dinner hour to check with the chief civil engineer and the commissioner as to whether they had allowed for the difficulties of construction in this new area, and they assured me that they stand by these mileages as a result of surveys. Therefore we find that the mileage from Southern Cross through Koolyanobbing to Kalgoorlie is 158 miles, and if they deviate that line into Coolgardie, which is within the limit of this particular Bill, the distance would be 165 miles. But if they proceed from Southern Cross through Kalgoorlie via Coolgardie and preserve the grade which must be preserved, the distance comes to 174 miles. I pointed out that there was a certain amount of query as to why the mileage jumped from 139 to 174 traversing approximately the same area. Certain people found it difficult to reconcile this extra 39 miles with the need to achieve this grade of one in 150. I am assured by these officers, in whom I have complete confidence, that these are the correct figures. It would be possible, of course, if money was no object, to achieve the shorter distance and the correct grade

by proceeding along the old route. However, this would be achieved only at a cost which would be intolerable, and we could not make out a case.

The economics of transporting the pyrites has not been ignored. It would naturally suit us if we could tranship them at Coolgardie; but when we weigh up the total freight on this line and compare it with the amount of freight on the through line, any minor inconvenience in taking the Esperance line freight to Coolgardie for transshipment is unimportant in the overall economics of the system.

It is very easy to explain why it would be advantageous to the railways to travel extra miles for the same price. We are going to do a similar thing in the Avon Valley, because the route there is further than the route from Northam and Chidlow to Midland. But the economy of operating a line with a ruling grade of one in 200 is so much better than that in respect of one in 60, that the extra mileage is of no great consequence. It is a fact that the line south of the river will involve a few extra miles than a line through the city; but here again it is cheaper in the long run.

In the final analysis these things have to be viewed in the overall economics of the system, and this is a chance we will not get again—a chance to get many of the bad spots of the railway where the traffic is very heavy to a grade and the curves which are the best for the economic operation of the system.

Mr. H. May: Why was this not apparent two years ago? That is the point I cannot understand.

Mr. COURT: Naturally this question was asked by me and other Ministers when the matter has been under consideration from time to time; but let us face the situation. When we put the original proposition to the Commonwealth, it had to be done with a considerable degree of haste and was based on the best information then available. There has been no secret of the fact that most of the information then available for standardisation was based on some of the concepts which have been in the railway system for 30 years or more. The Avon Valley was not a new concept. It has been spoken of for donkey's years. Other parts of the system were more or less taken as routine within the system, but it was agreed with the Commonwealth, and it was also an instruction from the Government to the commissioner—and I think I made it plain to the House—that the whole project was to be under review all the time.

We would be culpable if we did not adopt the best route and methods. For instance, we would be culpable if we did not come to Parliament with this south of the river route in preference to the route through the city where the cost of construction and operation would be so heavy and adverse.

Therefore I explained in simple terms that not only this sector, but other parts had been, and will continue to be, under very close scrutiny by engineers within the system, and our consultants, in addition to the Commonwealth engineers, who are constantly reviewing the project.

This matter, of course, extends to other things which are probably not so obvious to members. For instance, the method of signalling is under review all the time. We do not want the second-best system, but the best one. So the original concept of signalling, as foreshadowed in the agreement, is under review. That is a technical matter within the normal system and does not require parliamentary sanction as does a change of route.

Mr. MOIR: I have listened very closely to the Minister's replies to various members, and I think there is an awful lot which has not been explained, especially when one has in mind the questions in regard to surveys asked by the member for Merredin-Yilgarn on the 21st November, 1963. The honourable member asked the Minister for Railways—

- (1) How many standard gauge railway surveys have been made between—

- (a) Merredin and Southern Cross;
- (b) Southern Cross and Coolgardie;
- (c) Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie;
- (d) Kalgoorlie, Koolyanobbing, and Southern Cross;
- (e) Merredin and Kellerberrin?

The relevant portion of the Minister's reply was that the Southern Cross-Coolgardie section was surveyed by aerial photography by the Lands and Surveys Department. The answer states—

- (1) Since work on the standard gauge project commenced, surveys have been made as follows:—

- (a) Merredin - Southern Cross — Aerial Photogrammetric survey by Lands and Surveys Department with establishment of ground control levels by the Railways Department.
- (b) Southern Cross-Coolgardie Aerial photography by the Lands and Surveys Department.
- (c) Coolgardie - Kalgoorlie—Aerial photography by the Lands and Surveys Department.
- (d) Kalgoorlie - Koolyanobbing-Southern Cross — Aerial photography by the Lands and Surveys Department and ground reconnaissance by the Railways Department.

- (e) Merredin - Kellerberrin—Aerial photogrammetric survey by the Lands and Surveys Department, with establishment of ground control levels and pegging of traverse by the Railways Department.

I take it the ground reconnaissance covers the section between Koolyanobbing and Southern Cross. I am forced to the opinion that there was not much detailed information available on this question. The Minister, certainly up to the 21st November, supplied no information that would give us any indication of an actual survey of the terrain in order that we could have an informed opinion of the grades that would be encountered on the new route. The Minister says the grades of the existing route are 1 in 60. Does that mean it is 1 in 60 in certain places, or all along the line?

Mr. Court: That is the ruling grade.

Mr. MOIR: The Minister then informed us that on the first section, which goes up the escarpment of the Darling Range, it will be 1 in 2.

Mr. Kelly: That will be the limiting factor in respect of what can be drawn along the line.

Mr. MOIR: Yes. Anyone would know that the grades would be much steeper going into the Darling Range than travelling along the more or less undulating plateau that exists a few miles beyond Northam.

Mr. Court: We are not going through the Darling Range; we are going through the Avon Valley. That is the whole object of the new route.

Mr. MOIR: But the railway has to get up to the plateau, no matter what route is taken. Certainly by going up the Avon Valley the grades will be better, but the railway has to gain a certain height before it gets on to the undulating plateau that exists some distance behind Northam.

I fail to see how a comparison can be made between the existing route and the proposed route from Southern Cross to Coolgardie when a natural ground survey has not been carried out. No levels have been taken; the proposed route has not been travelled. According to the Minister—and he was asked the question very comprehensively by the member for Merredin-Yilgarn, who asked him how many surveys had been made, all that has happened is that a survey had been made by aerial photograph by the Lands and Surveys Department. I cannot accept the position that that is an adequate survey. It appears to me it has just been decided to take the railway through this particular area, and that is all there is to it. Cognisance has not been taken of the

type of country involved or of the position as far as flooding is concerned; and we know that is an important aspect when considering building a road or a railway.

If the present route is so bad, I wonder that the railway was taken along it in the first place; because, presumably, the authorities in those days would have been looking for the easiest grades. The plan we have been supplied with does not show any deviations; it is drawn almost in a straight line. Anyone who knows that country at all realises that a railway could not be constructed in a straight line, because there are all sorts of features that have to be taken into consideration, and detours have to be made.

I do know that in the area that the new line will traverse, north-east and north-west of Coolgardie, there is a lot of difficult country, and country that is subject to flooding—more subject to flooding than is the country over which the existing railway runs; and we have had experience of floods on the present line. There have been many washaways. In order to avoid the hazards that will be caused by floods, it will be a costly job to build a line through the country over which it is proposed to build this one. I am sure the Minister is completely unaware of that aspect, and I feel his advisers are unaware of it too.

I cannot see that the proposed route is going to be any improvement on the present one. On the contrary, I think we will be a lot worse off with it. When the railway is in operation, we will find it will be subject to many interruptions unless costly safeguards are taken, such as the construction of many long causeways in order to carry the traffic over the water, which will be present when we have years of above average rainfall, such as we have had this year.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5 to 8 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr. Court (Minister for Railways), and transmitted to the Council.

TAXI-CARS (CO-ORDINATION AND CONTROL) BILL

Council's Message

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Assembly's further amendment to amendment No. 4 made by the Council and to the Assembly's further amendment to Clause 7.

TOTALISATOR AGENCY BOARD BETTING ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 4)

Returned

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

MILK ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed, from the 28th November, on the following motion by Mr. Nalder (Minister for Agriculture):—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. HALL (Albany) [7.57 p.m.]: The measure seeks to do three things: firstly, to give the Milk Board power to borrow money in order to provide better accommodation for the board; secondly, to maintain and enlarge the percentage of treatment licenses as affecting the industry; and, thirdly, to deal with the price fixing of the commodity involved.

Dealing with the first point, I can find nothing in the measure in regard to the board's powers to borrow that would make one feel embittered. When one has regard for the rent the board has had to pay in past years, and when one considers that it has had to move from premises to premises, one can realise its difficulty in not having accommodation in which to work efficiently.

In respect of this primary industry throughout the south-west corner of the State, as well as in the southern portion of Western Australia, and perhaps in the coastal region also, we have pasture development and ideal conditions for enlarging the milk industry as well as the beef industry. The board has, for a period of years, had to work inadequately because of the conditions under which it has had to function.

I propose to strike a note here and say that when it is raising finance for investment, I hope any advantage it gains over a period from its investments—and this has happened before under the Dairy Cattle Industry Compensation Act—will be ploughed back into this particular field for the advancement of the industry as a whole.

I can enlarge a little here to say why I feel that confidence in this industry will grow. We know of the migrants that are coming to the State and those, in particular, that are going into this industry; and know that we are now chasing Asiatic markets for the products of this industry, particularly the by-products; and the Milk Board has made inroads into that field. The commodities manufactured by this industry would be well received by the Asiatic market if they could be sold there at a reasonable cost.

The stock statistics are rather enlightening, and I believe the introduction of this type of industry into the Albany agricultural zone—and I am sure it will be established there in the very near future—would enable us to look forward to a great development in the dairying industry in that portion of the State. I should like to quote some stock figures in regard to beef and dairy cattle respectively, and they are as follows:—

	Dairy Cattle	Beef Cattle
Albany shire and town	5,238	13,956
Broomehill	171	2,487
Cranbrook	294	8,197
Denmark	6,325	2,695
Dumbleyung	258	882
Gnowangerup	769	3,814

In the overall picture the dairy cattle number 20,563 as against 81,291 beef cattle. I think with a little inducement it would not be hard to picture a swing to the dairying side of the industry by many farmers. I do not say that they would swing over completely to dairy cattle as opposed to beef cattle, but if we had the markets for their products, I am sure they would try to get the best type of beast to give them the maximum production in that field.

The other point I would like to mention is the extension in the number of treatment licenses. I should say that most members here are well aware that the present basis is on a quarter or 25 per cent. of the holding licenses in the State. That percentage is to be increased to 40 per cent., with the holding of four licenses on an overall basis. That is the position generally without going into details.

We find today that the bigger firms in this particular industry are looking for further development in country areas. Because of the population growth in Australia, and in Western Australia, and particularly in the agricultural zone, it is possible that a bigger market will exist in these areas. In the Albany agricultural zone there are approximately 50,000 people at the moment, and the growth of the industry will provide many avenues of employment for young people in the decentralised areas, including some lucrative forms of employment. I would be failing in my duty if I did not lean towards an expansion of the industry, if only on that score. One of the weaknesses in this State today is the provision of employment in the decentralised areas. In the hope that we can reduce unemployment we should do everything possible to encourage this type of industry.

I was going through the remarks made by a previous Minister for Agriculture in 1946. I refer to the present Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who was Minister for Agriculture at that time. I did not think he knew as much about agriculture as he obviously does, as one can see when one

reads through the speech that he made on that occasion. He felt then that there should be some restriction to prevent monopolies. I think we all agree that the creation of monopolies is something we do not want to see happen in this State. We have to face up to the realities of this situation, and my experience in this particular field has been gained from the approaches which have been made by several firms to establish certain industries. I should like to make reference to these in the course of the few words I have to say on the measure.

I can well remember making representations to the firm of Sunny West some four years ago in the hope that that firm would venture into this field. I thought it was going to do so until, unfortunately, it saw an opportunity to buy into a firm in the centralised areas. Apparently the firm thought it had a greater opportunity by buying into a firm in the metropolitan area, but it reduced the possibility of its obtaining a holding license under the Act as it exists. Peters made some inroads into this field by the establishment of works at Albany. That firm branched out into a portion of the field, although it did not build treatment installations.

Approaches have also been made to the Milk Board by a local group which has hopes of going into the industry and obtaining a license. I would say in all fairness that we should have a look at this group, and if it can stand up to financial inspection, and the character of its shareholders is good, I think it should be given every opportunity to enter into the field of production. I say that without casting any reflections on Peters; because I know that firm endeavoured to branch out into this particular field and would have done so except that, like Sunny West, it bought into a firm in the metropolitan area to prevent a monopoly taking over that section of the industry.

Feelers have also been put out, I understand, on behalf of another firm; but as I have had that information only from hearsay, and it has not been confirmed, I cannot elaborate on it. I am sure the Milk Board will make a decision in these matters, but I hope it will take some cognisance of the points I have mentioned, and that it will be quite fair in its judgment. I am sure I could say, without fear of contradiction, that if the firm of Peters were to establish itself in Albany it would expand the industry, and there would be a big export of its by-products. When we remember that the Milk Board has gone so far afield to get Asiatic markets we can realise that some expansion is required in order to meet the demands from that market. I look forward to the day when such an industry is established and the young people are employed in that particular part of the State.

As regards the other point, which is concerned with the price-fixing of the product, this is something we must view with some suspicion. I have been reluctant at all times to impose added costs upon the community generally. On some occasions it is unavoidable because costs which were not envisaged previously have to be met.

The containers in which milk is retailed are also a source of much controversy. The position with the milk bottles is chaotic, and perhaps some other method or container could be devised for the retailing of milk so that there will not be such a demand for the return of the container. We have seen the difficulties experienced by cool drink manufacturers. The cans now being used have been a source of annoyance on many occasions.

I would also like to point out that some years ago Kraft Foods Ltd. made an intensive survey into the Albany agricultural zone with the idea of establishing an industry there. Their idea was to establish other industries as well for the manufacture of cheese, the processing of vegetables, and so on. Mr. Hunt has now branched out into one of these forms of production, and we are hopeful that we will soon see the pasteurising of milk carried out in that area. If that were done the by-products from this particular industry would be of far greater value to the district than the pasteurising of the milk.

Earlier I made reference to the remarks of the Minister for Agriculture in 1946, and I would like to quote a small section of his speech. I refer to page 296 of vol. 1 of *Hansard*, 1946. He had this to say—

There are other factors entering into this question that oblige me to take this attitude. To pasteurise milk requires a lot of expensive machinery, which in these days is very difficult to obtain.

The Minister was challenged in the debate by Mr. Seward regarding compulsory pasteurisation. On that particular occasion the then Minister said he did not wish to impose compulsory pasteurisation upon the public; but he pointed out the many redeeming features of the process and why the industry should be established. I commend him on the fact that as early as 1946 he mentioned the fact that the machinery involved in this process was most expensive.

That brings me to the portion of the Minister's speech where he mentioned that there could be a cancellation of licenses, bringing the number back to ten. That indicates to me that the particular firm in question might have a lien on these licenses, which means that if modern machinery is installed, the machinery which is in operation now will probably be taken into the country areas.

I may be wrong in my assumption; but on reading what the Minister had to say, and what is in the Bill, I think that could be the position. I hope my suspicions are

unfounded; because the installation of machinery which is considered obsolete today would mean placing a burden on a new industry which is being established in the country areas. Also, whichever firm is involved would be taking a business out of one portion of the State and transferring it to another.

When the Minister replies I hope he will dispel my fears, and confirm my thoughts on this matter. I would like it to be understood that the Board which makes the decision should be fair and impartial in deciding who has the right to take up this industry in the country areas. This will affect other country areas besides my own; and, accordingly, other members might find themselves in a similar position to mine, where I am advocating a particular line, and at the same time know I have a leaning to the people I represent. I think 40 per cent. is elastic enough to ensure expansion for some time to come. I do not think we need worry that we have not been elastic enough.

The Minister said it will be necessary to review this question from time to time. I have no fears, however, that with the continued increase in population in this State an increased expansion is inevitable. I have nothing to say in opposition to the measure, and I hope the Minister will take notice of my suggestions, and allay any fears I have expressed.

MR. KELLY (Merredin-Yilgarn) [8.16 p.m.]: On first examination this Bill does not appear to have any great pitfalls. There are, however, one or two matters on which I think we ought to be told a bit more than we have been told up to date, in order that we might know what is in the Minister's mind. The Minister did give quite a commendable lengthy address, but I still think some of the important points were not ventilated sufficiently.

The Milk Board undoubtedly performs a very important function in this State. Dairy products represent a colossal national turnover. The dairy industry directly, as well as indirectly, sustains a very large employment force, and it is, of course, a very important industry to all of us. I think members will agree, however, that this industry is capable of a great deal of expansion; a great deal more than the advances that have been made in the last decade.

I also think that, as in many other industries, the State and the Commonwealth Government must come into the picture more in the matter of undertaking a great deal more research than has been done in past years. The Minister will probably say we have increased the grant, and that we have done many things we think should have been done; and undoubtedly the industry is making some progress.

At the same time, I feel that the future of this industry, as well as that of many others, will be dictated by the amount of

research that is carried out into such industries to enable them to exploit some of the avenues open to them. I speak now with particular reference to the dairy industry. I think there is a very wide field beyond that which we have achieved in the matter of the trading of our by-products. We are certainly making use of our surplus milk; and, in a national sense, there is quite an amount of that added attention which is being given to the by-products, and which is forming part of our export trade.

It seems to me, however, that, as the years go by, our milk production is not increasing nearly as fast as an industry like this could increase its production. One of the reasons, of course, is that we are still working under a quota system which is not advancing to any great extent. It appears, from the quota point of view, that as long as the board is able to grant a few extra licenses, and as long as it is able to handle a little extra milk which is produced, it feels it is achieving quite a success. I think the time has come when this industry should be placed on a very much larger framework than has been the case in the past. There is undoubtedly room for more expansion, and for more encouragement to many of the small dairies which are at present on a 40 to 45 gallon quota. They should be able to advance to a much higher quota, and thereby increase the amount of available milk the country can handle.

I know it is comfortable to be able to coast along and handle that which is being produced, without there being any anxiety on the part of the board, or the Government. The people who are anxious, however, are those on a very low quota basis. If dairymen were able to produce more, knowing full well the absorption angle, and the degree of research necessary to absorb the extra gallonage produced, there would be no doubt in my mind that the milk output would be tremendously increased.

I know the Minister will probably say that we are now, in a national sense, subsidising the dairy industry with £13,500,000, and that any increase in quantities would necessitate an increase in the amount of subsidy that the Commonwealth Government is finding now. That would be true only if we were to remain static; if we did not go on with industrial expansion of our dairy products; and if we were prepared to float along as we have done in the past. If we did that there would be no danger of any surplus, and there would be no possibility of any expansion of the order of which this industry is capable at the moment.

Scientific research is very important, and it could, undoubtedly, within the next few years—possibly a decade or perhaps less—make a substantial contribution to the other uses to which milk can be put;

different from those which we are employing in a Commonwealth sense at the moment. I think it could be said that the field for research is limitless. It is limitless in regard to the sphere we have covered up till now. No doubt with fresh investigations, and with the adoption of overseas methods which have proved successful, the dairy industry could go a long way towards further expansion. In an atmosphere such as we have today, and with a totally progressive outlook, it is proper and fitting that the Milk Board of this State should be given the opportunity to house itself in better conditions than it has had in the past.

Up to now it has had a haphazard existence in regard to housing; as a matter of fact, I would say it is one of the poorest housed departments we have in this State. The Bill provides the board with power to borrow finance; and in the event of there being a surplus of finance, or if it has operated ahead of its requirements, because of some special contingency, the measure also empowers the Treasurer to invest such funds, and to declare a percentage of interest to be payable on the funds advanced to the body borrowing such funds from the Milk Board through the Treasury. All the interest that accrues will go to the board.

The only qualification with regard to that fact is that the rate will be determined by the Governor. That of course means it will be determined by the Government, and that would be in order.

The board will be able to negotiate loans for buildings and construction of works, for providing funds for the exercise of the powers conferred on it, and for any other purpose approved by the Governor. Finance may be raised by debentures as well as by loans. I think that is a wise provision, because it gives the board an added field in which to gain money required for building purposes, and that would meet with everybody's approval. The creation and issue of prescribed stock, also provides another field which the board can exploit when it requires finance. The Bill covers the usual provision of interest rates, and repayment of debentures.

One provision has been added on this occasion, and this appeals to me as having some merit. I refer to the fact that debentures may be paid ahead of the actual time they fall due. There is often embarrassment because of the circumstances under which we now trade; and this provision would be an improvement. A sinking fund may be created, and applied for the repayment of loans. That, too, is another means by which the board can finance its activities, and discharge its obligations. Both those provisions have my approbation.

There is a further provision in the Bill which has some merit, and that deals with keeping track of transfer transactions. In this connection the measure proposes that a

transfer register shall be kept, and shall be available to any person at any time on a reasonable request, and at a cost of one shilling. The person will be able to peruse the book, and draw his own conclusions. I think this offers a means of examination which is sometimes overlooked. Debenture holders naturally want to know what is taking place, and this provision will provide them with that opportunity.

A further amendment in the Bill deals with the new powers and functions of the board. A number of other matters are covered in the Bill, one of which also deals with the maximum number of licenses each person is permitted to hold. I think the Minister should give us more explanation on this. It is interesting to recall the lengthy debates that took place in this House in 1947. Those debates were mainly centred in the issuance of licenses, and the fear of creating monopoly control in the matter of treatment plants. It was a very live question at that time, and many members of this House took part in the debate. There were quite a number who had misgivings as to the intention of the Government in the matter of creating a monopoly.

When all this anxiety was engendered in 1947 the records at the 30th June, 1947, showed that 20 licenses had been issued. That was regarded as a reasonable number. The Minister gave his assurance that there was absolutely no question of a monopoly, and that, so far as he was concerned, the number of licenses at that time would be the number that would be maintained.

We now come to the present Bill; and I do not think we could read into it anything but the fact that the licenses in that period of time have been reduced to 10. There are actually 11; but with the explanation of the Minister we find that one of them will shortly go out of existence, because one of the firms will be amalgamating with another. This will bring all the business under one heading; and, accordingly, one of the licenses will disappear. Does this indicate that the Minister considers a monopoly should not be allowed to be created? With the evidence available in recent times, it is clear that it is not in the best interests of the industry that a monopoly should be allowed to emerge.

We are heading to the point where very few licenses will be held outside of one or two firms. It is possible that with the maximum number of four licenses that will be permitted under this legislation, two firms could each have the control of four licenses, and there are only 10 in existence; and another firm could have two licenses—and that is all there are. I do not think that is a healthy state of affairs for us to get into; and I do not think we should allow a monopoly of that kind to take place. I have no doubt there

are some people in other parts of Australia who could exploit to the full the issuance of another license or two to enable them to function and get going in the interests of the milk industry.

I would ask this question of the Minister: Are we going to be faced with the position of going below the 10 maximum at the present moment? We have seen the period of time when the number of licenses dropped from 20 to 10. It will be quite easy for the Minister in a little while to knock one or two licenses off; and we will find that before long the whole of the interests of the milk industry will be in one basket. That is an unhealthy position for this State to get into, particularly when we consider the increase in production that has taken place during the past 15 or 16 years. Because of that, one would think more licenses would be required.

We have never allowed this industry to function fully on its own. It has always been nurtured with money from the Commonwealth by way of a subsidy that has been paid for a number of years; and it is time this industry was given the opportunity to be free from strangulation, because that is what is taking place. I know the Minister could say to me, "You were a Minister controlling this department, what did you do about it?" I think he may have something there; but after a great deal of thought in connection with this matter I think we should alter our ways and go all out for greater production and provide more fields in which the industry can exploit itself.

The next matter with which I wish to deal is in connection with the fixing of prices for milk sold in bottles, in bulk, and in containers other than bottles. Up to the present time we have had to conform to the Act in so far as the fixing of the price of milk is concerned. Now we are entering an entirely new sphere. We are talking of enabling the Milk Board to fix the price of containers. Of course, there is only one thing which can happen in that connection and that is that the price of containers, irrespective of their category, will be passed on to the general public. Make no mistake about that; because the industry, right back as far as I can remember, and certainly during the period when I was in the position that the present Minister occupies, there were attempts to get a Bill introduced which would enable the increase to be passed on to consumers by virtue of the payment for containers.

If the Minister has fallen for that, I think it is time he had another look at it, because thousands of people will have to contribute to the cost of these containers. There is no mention made in the measure that if a deposit is placed on a container, it will be recoverable. There is no mention whatsoever of that; but the Minister will have it in his power, through the Milk

Board, to impose this cost on the people of this State. I think that is highly undesirable.

Mr. Graham: Doesn't that apply at the present time?

Mr. KELLY: No. The price of milk can be fixed by the board, but there is no mention of the containers.

Mr. Graham: No; but surely the cost of the containers would be one of the elements making up the price.

Mr. KELLY: That could be; but under this legislation—

Mr. Nalder: It is.

Mr. KELLY: —it could be a greatly increased price to consumers; and undoubtedly that will happen. After the attempts it has made over a period of years, I cannot see the milk industry not taking the opportunity of obtaining extra finance from the consumer by virtue of charging for the price of the containers. Representatives of Brownes came to me when I was Minister and made a plea that the only hygienic means of handling milk was in cardboard containers. They littered my office with all sorts of paraphernalia required to make these containers and represented that they had a machine valued at £60,000. That company said that if I were prepared to grant another 1½d. on the price of milk it would put milk into containers and the company would be in business. However, it did not get into business.

There are several other matters contained in this Bill. One will establish control over the transference of treatment licenses. I read through the Bill and I noticed that the Minister is prepared to prevent the transfer of licenses where the license to be transferred would make any one of the licensees the holder of more than four licenses. That would be essential in a Bill of this kind and would be a safeguard that is desirable.

A further section provides that costs in connection with the testing of dairy cattle will be paid out of the Dairy Cattle Compensation Fund. The only redeeming feature about that is that the compensation can be paid at any time of the year. Previously, this compensation was only paid annually, but I take it it will now be able to be paid several times a year if the same person sought compensation for diseased cattle, or cattle that had to be treated in any way.

What I am not happy about is that this proposed amendment will throw on to the producer an added impost. I understand that in the past few years the amount paid out through the Treasury, without reference to the fund, has been in the vicinity of £42,000.

Mr. Nalder: It has been paid out of the administration fund of the board, and this has been contributed to by the producer.

Mr. KELLY: It comes out of the administration fund of the board?

Mr. Nalder: The idea is to make it payable out of the compensation fund, which has been contributed to by the producer.

Mr. KELLY: The funds have been split?

Mr. Nalder: No; they want all of the costs to be paid out of the compensation fund and not the administration fund.

Mr. KELLY: It will not be an added impost on the producer?

Mr. Nalder: No.

Mr. KELLY: I am satisfied about that. The only other comment I desire to make in connection with that matter is that had the Minister not given me the explanation he did I would have reminded him that the cattle producers would have had to pay about £2,600 over and above what they were already paying.

With the reservations I have made in connection with these several points, I feel that the Bill has a lot to commend it; but before supporting it in full, I would like to know from the Minister what his intentions are regarding containers, and what his views are in connection with the granting of licenses. I would like to know why he has chosen 10 as the maximum; and, finally, I would like to know what he proposes to do in connection with new people wanting licenses—people who are legitimately entitled to start up in business as retailers or whatever they call themselves—firms manufacturing the various products.

MR. RUNCIMAN (Murray) [8.40 p.m.]: I have much pleasure in supporting this Bill. It is a very good one. First of all it sets out to give the Milk Board borrowing powers to enable it, if it so desires, to build its own premises, or to pay outright for premises, whichever it thinks is the better course. It also gives the board power to fix the price of bulk milk, and milk in bottles and containers. The board has that power now, but apparently there was some doubt about it, and this has been pointed out by the Crown Law Department. Perhaps it had in mind a case which occurred a few years ago in connection with a prosecution for under standard milk. The board considered that the action it took was quite legal, but the farmer concerned took the matter to the Supreme Court and won his case. Perhaps the Crown Law Department had that in mind and decided to make certain that there was no loophole in this matter.

Another point concerns the increasing of licenses to the milk treatment plants; and another deals with compensation payments for cattle with T.B. The milk industry in Western Australia is a major one and is of extreme importance to this State. Over the last 10 years the increase in milk production has been about 5,000,000 gallons. Last year was one of the best years experienced and 17,000,000 gallons of

milk were produced, worth approximately £6,000,000 to the industry. This industry also provides employment to many people.

It is a remarkable thing, but if a secondary industry in this State held the position that the milk industry holds, people would be amazed to think that it had to occupy the premises similar to those that the board has occupied since it was formed in 1933. During that time it has paid over £20,000 in rent; and last year it shifted from its St. George's Terrace buildings, for which it was paying £1,600 per year rent, to premises in Hay Street for which it is paying £1,400 per year for a period of four years.

This industry is so important that it seems ridiculous it has never had premises of its own, nor the funds with which to do many things for the development of the industry. Therefore, there is no doubt that giving it borrowing powers to enable it to do these things is something that is highly commendable. As I pointed out, the fixing of the price of bottled milk is one of the things that must be done.

In regard to licenses for milk treatment plants, at the present time three companies handle over 75 per cent. of the milk licenses and they cannot expand or go out into other areas. We have been fortunate in our three milk treatment plants because of the enterprise and initiative they have shown at all times; and they have expanded milk refrigeration plants and milk trucks throughout the State, to the extent that most of our big agricultural towns are supplied with bottled milk, which is preferable to the old method that existed in many country towns.

I think this legislation will give the treatment plants an opportunity to expand and plan for the future; a future which is, I think, very bright for the milk industry in this State. I am quite certain there will be steady expansion over the years. Over the last 10 years there has been an increase of 5,000,000 gallons, and I think that increase will be greatly accentuated over the next 10 years. At the same time there is a ready market for our surplus processed milk in south-east Asian countries. Firms are aware of that and they have carried out a considerable amount of research. They have shown initiative and enterprise in going to the various countries themselves and competing on that market, which is a highly competitive one. Also, it is bringing export income to Western Australia.

We recently opened a dam at Logue's Brook between Waroona and Harvey, which will be of great benefit. The water will be used for irrigation purposes, and the bulk of it will be used for the dairying industry. A start has been made on a new dam at Drakesbrook that will help to expand this area. Practically the whole of the water of that dam will be used for the whole-milk industry.

There must be great expansion of the industry in Western Australia, and treatment plants must have an opportunity of expanding. They are interested not only in milk but also in dairy by-products. Treatment plants have contributed greatly to the prosperity of those districts in which they are located.

I am quite certain that the Government is wise in introducing this measure. Very little can be said about the fund. At the moment, £42,000 has been paid out of the administration fund. It is much better that the money should be paid into the Dairy Cattle Compensation Fund. In the past the Minister has each year decided the amount of compensation to be paid. I think that is quite unnecessary and this method will not be continued under the new measure. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill.

MR. I. W. MANNING (Wellington) [8.48 p.m.]: I desire to make a few comments in connection with this measure. As indicated, the Bill contains four amendments to the Milk Act. The first amendment provides the board with borrowing powers; the intention being to put the board in the position of buying or building suitable premises to be used as its headquarters. It is a very wise move on the part of the Government to provide this opportunity for the Milk Board. There has been some insecurity of tenure for the board in the past. In fact, it has been pushed around a bit.

The industry is a big one, as the member for Murray indicated; and it is a growing one. The growth of the activities of the Milk Board are, to some extent, influenced by the consumption of whole milk. As the population increases and the consumption of milk increases, so the activities and responsibilities of the Milk Board are increased. I am hoping that suitable headquarters for the board will provide it with an opportunity of furthering research not only into the supervision of milk treatment and production, but also into milk marketing.

The question of milk in cartons has been touched on. I think all the problems that are facing the milk industry today with regard to milk bottles ought to suggest that some research might produce something far more satisfactory in the way of a milk container.

Mr. Davies: Are you prepared to let them charge extra for it?

Mr. I. W. MANNING: A lot would depend on what the additional cost is likely to be. I would suggest that the loss occasioned with milk bottles is not a very healthy sign for the industry, and some better type of milk container might be found without additional cost to the consumer.

There are some tidying-up provisions in the Bill concerning the fixing of prices associated with the industry. This is vital for an industry of this nature. We are dealing with a highly perishable commodity, which is dealt with on the contract and quota system; and it is important that we have a sufficiency of supply throughout the summer months of the year.

The member for Merredin-Yilgarn criticised the contract and quota system. But the system appears to me to be easily the best in Australia inasmuch as we have at all times of the year an adequate supply of whole milk for the consumers of this State, and there is never any question of an insufficient supply as has happened in one or two of the other States in difficult years.

The member for Merredin-Yilgarn also offered some criticism of the quota of 45 gallons issued to new producers. I would suggest, in view of the large number of waiting applications for dairymen's licenses under the Act, that if the Milk Board is restricting producers to a 45-gallon quota, then it has sound reasons for doing so. Once a producer is licensed and is able to increase his capacity to a higher quota, then he should have an opportunity of doing so; and this matter is receiving the attention of the board.

The amendment which deals with increasing the number of licenses for treatment plants has my support. Possibly the time has come when we could have removed this restriction and allowed greater freedom of movement on the part of milk companies. However, it has always seemed to be the desire of legislators to impose some limitation on the number of licenses available to treatment plants, and whilst this Bill seeks to increase that number it has my support.

In connection with the fourth and final amendment in the Bill—that of compensation payable under the T.B. compensation fund—I offer this suggestion: that the Minister may find it desirable, if the Beef Industry Compensation Fund becomes law, to repeal the provisions for T.B. compensation under the Milk Act. The Bill has my support.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Belmont) [8.54 p.m.]: I propose to say a few words in connection with the Bill, because I am the only member in this House who was present at the founding of the legislation in 1933. I can well remember the struggles which took place before the Act became law.

Mr. O'Connor: You are giving away your age.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: It does not matter about my age. The honourable member does not know my age. Anyway, I am better on the golf links, even though the honourable member is much younger.

Mr. Dunn: What has that to do with the Bill?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I do not like all these interjections. I represented an electorate which embraced practically one-third of the metropolitan area. The electorate was known as Middle Swan. I am speaking about the depression years, when producers were trying to sell their milk under all sorts of conditions. They were delivering the milk in cans, selling it at 2d. per pint, and taking it around on bicycles. There were morning and afternoon deliveries. Many doctors advised mothers to buy their milk from the afternoon deliveries. Dairy herds were milked twice a day, and because doctors considered that it would be better for the babies the mothers were encouraged to buy the milk which came from the last issue of the cow.

The legislation was founded in 1933. The then Minister for Agriculture was the late Mr. Ferguson who was a member of the Mitchell Government. The Bill, when it was introduced, was a cumbersome one, inasmuch as its provisions applied to quite a number of interests outside those of producers and consumers. Finally, with the assistance of the Labor Opposition, the legislation came under the control of the producers and consumers, with a chairman appointed by the Governor.

For the interest of those members who represent dairying interests. I would mention that the Labor Party was in power during the years from 1933; and the then Labor Government saw to it that the producers received a fair deal. We tried to ensure that they received a fair return for their labour.

The industry has developed until today it is an important one. The Milk Board now seeks a home of its own, and wishes to get away from paying exorbitant rents.

We should not fail to bear in mind at all times the needs of the consumer. Parliament agreed to the setting up of the board for the purpose of regulating the supply of milk; to see that producers got a fair price for their production; and to ensure that the prices paid by consumers were reasonable. Most important of all, we have tried to ensure that the milk is produced under hygienic conditions. The Dairy Compensation Fund was established to deal with what is known as T.B.; to try to eliminate tuberculosis from the herds in the dairying industry; and to ensure that a pure milk supply was available.

A great deal has been done in this connection, and we should continue to make progress. There was provision for depots to be set up. Brownes Dairy, Masters Dairy, and Kielmans Dairy were the principal ones to be established. There had to be close and constant inspection by health inspectors to ensure that the milk was not adulterated. Members have heard what happened at Charles Street where an inspector found that milk had been adulterated. We also had the case of milk being contaminated at Masters Dairy. It

is important that close and constant supervision should take place at all times for the protection and well-being of the community.

The milk industry is an important one. It is growing, and members who represent the industry are interested primarily in ensuring that the producer gets a fair return for his labour. He is entitled to that. I support that aspect. Evidently, more producers are entering the industry, and therefore it is providing a living for many more people. Consequently they must be assured of a fair return for their labours, and the board must be particularly careful it does not increase the price of milk to the point where the consumer is not being fairly treated.

It has been an interesting struggle to try to obtain the high standards which pertain in the industry today. It is 33 years since the Act was first introduced by the late Mr. Ferguson. The Labor Party at that time took a very keen interest in the legislation; and, as a result of the long debates that have ensued over the years, this Bill has now appeared. Many attempts have been made to amend the Act to provide for distributor representation.

I can remember on one occasion when an amending Bill was before the House a distributor who lived in my street tried to blackmail me in an endeavour to have me vote for distributor representation. He asked me to sign a petition in favour of representation by distributors, but I told him that I would not sign such a petition because I was in favour of producer representation. Those were the kind of tactics that were adopted in the past in regard to this legislation.

Nowadays, the industry is supervised thoroughly in all sections. The producer is expected to keep healthy herds, and he contributes to a compensation fund to protect himself against any loss of his cows should they be destroyed after being found to be diseased. Also, a constant check is kept on the milk depots by health inspectors to ensure that the consumers of milk are afforded every protection. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

MR. TONKIN (Melville—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [9.2 p.m.]: The Act which this Bill proposes to amend is No. 27 of 1946. It is the Act which Parliament agreed to when the Wise Labor Government thought it necessary to make far-reaching amendments to the existing legislation. At that time it was my honour and privilege to pilot the Bill through the Legislative Assembly. I regret I cannot share the enthusiasm of the member for Murray towards this Bill, because it contains at least one very disquieting aspect; in fact, one major disquieting aspect. I refer to the provision which is tending towards monopoly.

One of the factors against which a Government must guard the people is the establishment of monopoly which may be handling a product in universal use. Such products are bread, meat, and milk. I saw many years ago the tendency which was developing in Western Australia, and I was responsible for getting Parliament to agree to put a limitation in the law so that at no time would the number of firms holding treatment licenses be reduced below four. I felt that if we could say that there would always be four different firms in operation we would have the advantage of competition and not the disadvantage of monopoly. The Parliament of the day saw the wisdom of that suggestion and agreed to it.

The Minister's proposal in this Bill will allow the number of firms holding treatment licenses to be reduced from four to three, and he intimated that, at some future time, it may be necessary to give further attention to that number. I suppose he meant that there was a possibility of reducing the number from three to two; and then, God help the consumer! Why is it necessary to allow this industry to tend in the direction of monopoly? I am surprised the Country Party members are falling for this, because it is just as much in their interests to ensure that there is keen competition—that is, in the interests of the dairymen—as it is to ensure that there is keen competition in the interests of the consumers.

Mr. Runciman: There is keen competition now.

Mr. TONKIN: It will not be as keen when there are only three, or when it gets down to two, or even one. It has been the tendency the world over for a large industry to buy out the smaller ones so that the industry is in the hands of only the big operators. So it will be in this industry when it falls into the hands of only one or two operators, and then instead of the Milk Board controlling the treatment plants, the treatment plants will be controlling the Milk Board.

If the number of treatment plants were finally reduced to two—and I am sure they will be reduced to this number if this Bill is agreed to—just imagine what would happen if the board wanted to discipline the two treatment plants! What hope would the Milk Board have? It could not cut off the supply of milk to the consumers. It would be forced to allow the treatment plants to continue, and so it would have no disciplinary power.

Mr. I. W. Manning: It could prosecute if it became necessary.

Mr. TONKIN: How much good would that be? The situation would be reached when the treatment plants would say, "You prosecute us and see what happens!" Monopolies become too powerful. That is why there is legislation in some parts of

the world to prevent their establishment; it is because of the power which they ultimately wield. Why is it that this tendency is developing? I saw it developing 15 or 16 years ago, and I told Parliament that inevitably these licenses would be concentrated among four operators; and because of that the Parliament of the day stated, "We will ensure that at no time will there be fewer than four treatment plants."

Mr. I. W. Manning: How do you keep alive the ones that are not allowed to continue?

Mr. TONKIN: The Government comes along and says, "We propose with this legislation to reduce the number of treatment plants to a possible three, and we are warning you that in the light of developments which may occur in the future we could come back and ask Parliament to reduce the number still further." That is a tendency which should not be encouraged. It is against the best interests of the consumers; against the best interests of the producers; and, further, against the best interests of the State.

Mr. Lewis: Whilst I admit the merit of some of your arguments, how could you always guarantee that there would be at least four?

Mr. TONKIN: By ensuring that there shall be only a certain number of licenses issued. If the number of licensees is reduced below four, additional licenses could be issued to bring the number up to four again.

Mr. Lewis: But you must have somebody apply for the license to keep the number up.

Mr. TONKIN: Would there be any difficulty about that?

Mr. Lewis: Yes; there could be, because it is a very expensive business.

Mr. TONKIN: I do not imagine that there would be any difficulty, because I feel sure it is a highly profitable enterprise; so much so that I know one organisation has spent about £50,000 in anticipation of milk being sold in cartons, and this Bill will permit that which some people have been seeking for years. It makes me smile to hear some members say that power already exists in the Act to allow these treatment depots to sell milk in cartons and charge an increased price for them. It does not allow anything of the sort, and that is why the treatment plants have not done anything about it.

Do members mean to tell me that a treatment plant which has already a machine at its disposal more or less lying idle would not have acted when it could have acted within the law by supplying milk in cartons and charging an increased price for them? I have always taken the view that the Act, quite definitely, does not allow the Milk Board to fix the price for

milk supplied in different containers. This is plainly expressed in section 26 of the Act, which reads as follows:—

(La) Fixing the maximum price or prices at which milk may be sold by retail in any dairy area:

Provided that a different maximum price or prices may be fixed—

(a) in respect of milk delivered or sold in different dairy areas or parts thereof, and—

That is plain enough and sensible enough. That, according to where the milk is to be sold, whether it involves great distance in transportation or not, the price may be varied. Continuing—

(b) according to differences in grade, quality, description or quantity.

It states nothing about the container in which the milk is sold. That has nothing to do with the milk. A carton or a bottle is foreign to milk.

Section 26 of the Act gives the Milk Board power to fix the price of milk according to its quality, according to its grade, according to its description or quantity, but not according to the container in which it is sold. So if one holds the legal view that the Milk Board has power already to fix the price of milk in cartons, one is easily satisfied. Of course, the truth of it is that on-one has tried to fix a varying price according to the containers in which milk is being sold, because those who wish to sell it in cartons could not get the Milk Board to agree to giving them an increased price for the carton. It is because of this that they have not attempted to retail milk in cartons.

I suggest to the Minister that before very long, following the passage of this legislation, up will go the price of milk in Western Australia. My views will be on record and the facts will prove whether I am right. The big boys in the milk industry will get their heads together and say, "The supply of milk in bottles is cumbersome and expensive. What about us selling milk only in cartons and nothing else?" If this comes about the public will be told, "You take your milk in cartons at an increased price." We will not have long to wait to see what happens!

Fortunately, this is an instance where one's views can be proved to be right or wrong in a very short time in accordance with developments.

Mr. Nalder: That has nothing to do with the Act or this amending Bill.

Mr. TONKIN: Oh, has it not?

Mr. Nalder: No; not at all.

Mr. TONKIN: Does the Minister think that under this legislation it will not happen?

Mr. Nalder: I am talking about the amending legislation.

Mr. TONKIN: I am talking about the amending legislation, too; the Minister's Bill!

Mr. Nalder: I think you are off the track.

Mr. TONKIN: This Bill is going to permit the Milk Board to fix the price for milk sold in cartons at a price at variance with that of milk sold in bottles.

Mr. Nalder: You did not read the legislation.

Mr. TONKIN: Oh yes I did! and, what is more, I read the Minister's speech.

Mr. Nalder: You read it again! I will read it to you when you sit down.

Mr. TONKIN: Will the price of milk be reduced when the number of milk treatment depots is reduced to four?

Mr. Nalder: You said it will fix the price of milk in cartons.

Mr. TONKIN: The Minister shows by his interjection that he does not understand the Bill.

Mr. Nalder: He certainly does, well and truly.

Mr. TONKIN: The Minister said there was some legal doubt as to the ability at the present time to fix the price of milk sold in cartons, and so on, and that the Bill was introduced for the purpose of removing that doubt.

Mr. Nalder: That is correct. There is no intention to increase the price as you suggest.

Mr. TONKIN: That will be the inevitable result.

Mr. Nalder: No.

Mr. TONKIN: The Minister says, "No"; but I say it will. We will not have to wait long to find out who is right.

Mr. Kelly: What then is the object of the provision being in the Bill at all?

Mr. TONKIN: We do not want members to vote under a misconception. At present the law does not permit the Milk Board to grant varying prices, according to the containers in which milk is sold. The Minister says there is some doubt about that, so he wants to remove the doubt; in other words, he wants to make it plain that the Milk Board can fix varying prices.

Mr. Lewis: He wants to make it plain the Milk Board cannot.

Mr. TONKIN: No. If the Minister for Education believes that and votes for that how can he vote for it when it provides the opposite? I make a bargain with the Minister: If it is shown the situation is as the Minister says, I shall vote for the Bill, on the condition that if it is proved to be the opposite of what he says, he will vote against the Bill.

Mr. Brand: No bargains are to be made.

Mr. Lewis: You will not be convinced anyway.

Mr. TONKIN: The interjection of the Minister worries me. If he, in Cabinet, did not have a full appreciation of what the legislation intends to achieve, how can we expect his followers to have a proper understanding? It is very clear that the purpose of this Bill is to put it beyond doubt that, if it so desires, the Milk Board has the power to fix varying prices for milk, according to the containers in which it is sold. This is the very thing for which some people have been clamouring for years. But the board has been able to resist, because the power is not there.

I give great credit to Mr. Stannard for the great development that has taken place in the milk industry. I know that a number of people do not like him, because he is too determined and strong-minded; but he certainly put the industry on its feet. He brought order to it, and he so ordered the production and marketing of milk that he was able to give a guaranteed income to a large number of producers who, prior to his work, were more or less struggling from hand to mouth.

Mr. Stannard was never keen to have this section of the Act altered, to permit the board to fix varying prices according to the containers in which the milk was sold. The Minister should be able to tell us whether Mr. Stannard ever recommended an amendment to the Act for that purpose. I do not think he has.

Mr. J. Hegney: He refused to do that.

Mr. TONKIN: That is one point which ought to make us careful about this proposal in the Bill. I know Mr. Stannard was always fearful that the supply of milk to the people of this State might ultimately repose in the hands of one or two big combines. Of course that would be highly dangerous to the consumers and producers, because these big firms could hold them both up to ransom.

I have not seen anything which suggests to me that these big firms are more concerned with the welfare of the consumers, than with the welfare of themselves. I can remember one of them quite recently pocketing a good deal of the sales tax remission which the Commonwealth Government has made available, and intended should be passed on, to consumers. The Minister knows what firm that is. The Commonwealth Government deliberately took off the sales tax, in order to ease the cost to the consumers, but this particular firm helped itself to a large proportion of the sales tax remission. That does not engender in me any great confidence in the sympathetic treatment such firms would give to consumers, if they were to get into a monopolistic situation. This legislation will enable them to get into such a situation.

I do not quarrel with the provision in the Bill which seeks to give the board the power to borrow, ostensibly, for the purpose of providing a home for itself. My

only fear is that we are clothing so many authorities with the power to borrow that soon there will be more borrowers than lenders, and the price of money will rise. That is the risk in this sort of proposal. In the past we limited the number, but now the Government is clothing every authority with the power to borrow. First there was the State Electricity Commission; then there were the Fremantle Harbour Trust, the Bunbury Harbour Board, the Albany Harbour Board, and the Metropolitan Water Supply Board; and now the Milk Board.

Mr. Brand: What is wrong with that? Money is now cheaper than it has been for years.

Mr. TONKIN: Some of it.

Mr. Brand: I am very sure of that.

Mr. TONKIN: I have only to look at the figures supplied to me by the Minister for Works relating to the amount which the Fremantle Harbour Trust paid for money.

Mr. Brand: It was the system you did not understand.

Mr. TONKIN: If there were cheap money about the trust must have been very foolish.

Mr. Brand: I quote the State Electricity Commission if you want to go on to this subject.

Mr. TONKIN: What did it pay for its borrowings?

Mr. Brand: I cannot say what the rate is at present, but it certainly does not pay any more than we do from the Treasury.

Mr. TONKIN: I know it is pretty cheap for Hawker Siddeley to borrow money from the Government.

Mr. Brand: I was not talking about Hawker Siddeley, but about the State Electricity Commission.

Mr. TONKIN: I know it is pretty cheap for Cockburn Cement to borrow money, because the Government lends it money at 4½ per cent. Make no mistake that the Milk Board will be borrowing at 4½ per cent.!

Mr. Brand: Why not?

Mr. TONKIN: When the Metropolitan Water Supply Department borrowed from the State Government Insurance Office it did not get the money at 4½ per cent., or anything like it. Do not run away with the idea that the Milk Board will come in for a lot of cheap money. Does anyone think that other borrowing instrumentalities will stand aside while the Milk Board snatches all the money up?

The Milk Board ought to have borrowing powers, because it should have the power to raise the necessary money to enable it to establish a permanent place for carrying on its business; it should not be placed under the threat of being thrown out at the whim of the landlord, which occurred

on one occasion. It is desirable that a board which has the responsibility for looking after the production and marketing of a commodity like milk should have some permanency in regard to its location. If that is the only way it can obtain the money then I have no objection to power being given to the board for that purpose. I only wish to point out that we cannot go on allowing such instrumentalities to borrow all the money that is about, because if they do then inevitably the competition for money will force the price up. A lot of the cheap money which the Treasury talks about is short-term money, for periods of one to three months. There is a good deal of that money about.

Mr. Brand: There is a good deal of longer-term money about.

Mr. TONKIN: Not at the cheap rate.

Mr. Brand: And just as cheap.

Mr. TONKIN: I repeat that I cannot possibly share the enthusiasm of the member for Murray for this Bill, because of the points I mentioned. I am distinctly worried about the trend towards monopoly, which I foresaw years ago, and which I was successful in getting Parliament to prevent by inserting into the Act a limiting factor. The Government proposes to push that aside with this Bill, to make it possible for a greater concentration of this business into the hands of fewer people. Inevitably the next step will be fewer still, until there are one or two firms left, and they will be in a position to hold the State to ransom. I would never be a party to that type of action. I am surprised that Country Party members lend themselves to this, because there is a real danger to producers as well as consumers.

The other proposal is in connection with the utilisation of machinery already here to produce cartons, and to allow milk to be sold in cartons, and so command a higher price. It seems to me that it will not be very long before a combination of interests will result in bottles being pushed right out, and cartons being used universally with a resultant increase in the price of milk. As the Act stands, that cannot take place. If this amendment is put through, not only can that take place, but it will take place before long. Having pointed out, as is my duty to do so, the weaknesses which I see in this legislation, I do not propose at this stage to say any more.

MR. GRAHAM (Balcatta) [9.29 p.m.]: I share the concern of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition at the prospect of the number of milk treatment plants falling below the statutory requirement which exists at the present time. That is a trend which should be avoided. Instead of the Government assisting that trend, with the amendment in the Bill, it should be seeking to take steps to move in the opposite direction, if anything.

It is in connection with the second point, which has aroused the greatest volume of debate this evening, that I desire to make some comments. I am astounded that apparently both the Minister for Agriculture and the Minister for Education have not an understanding of the existing Act, or of the effect the amendment will have. Section 26 of the Act reads as follows:—

(1) Subject to this Act, and in particular to subsection (2) of this section, the Board is hereby charged with the following matters:—

(La) Fixing the maximum price or prices at which milk may be sold by retail in any dairy area:

Provided that a different maximum price or prices may be fixed—

(a) in respect of milk delivered or sold in different dairy areas, or parts thereof,—

In other words, a maximum price can be fixed in area A, and a different maximum price in area B. To continue—

and (b) according to differences in grade, quality, description or quantity.

There is no mention whatever that there shall be regard for, or that the Milk Board is empowered to take into account, the sort of container or the cost of the container. However, as my Deputy Leader quite rightly points out, under the amendment we are considering the board will be able to fix the maximum price according to whether the milk is sold in bulk, in bottles, or in any container other than bottles. In other words, the board, if this becomes law, will be empowered to establish a separate price for each one of the three denominations I mentioned. In my view, that is as plain as a pikestaff, and that is where I have expressed more than a little surprise that two Ministers, albeit two Country Party Ministers, of this Government, are endeavouring to make out that such would not be the case.

So far so good. But I find from that premise onwards, that my views, rightly or wrongly, diverge somewhat from those expressed by my colleagues. In my view it is inevitable that where we legislate in respect of health and hygiene there is, perhaps unfortunately, an increase in cost. We know that so far as meat is concerned, there are rigid checks and inspections; that certain meats are branded; that standards of hygiene are necessary in slaughtering and treatment operations; and, because of that, the additional burden finds itself in the ultimate price.

In respect of bread, in addition to those requirements of hygiene, in the amendment made to the Bread Act some years

ago it is now necessary for a baker, to be on the safe side, to weigh the dough of each individual loaf. It is not the weight of the ultimate product, but the weight of the dough in each loaf that is important. This process, of course, means an additional cost, and so becomes one of perhaps a hundred and one items which ultimately decide whether the price of bread is to be increased to the consumer.

So with regard to milk, there has been the trend from the old system of the milk can where the milkman dived with his container into the can, and it only needs one's imagination to take a little license to appreciate how unhygienic that system was.

Mr. Rowberry: And is.

Mr. GRAHAM: Yes, is, where the practice is still in operation. It has been a process of evolution that we moved from that system to the pasteurisation of milk, and at present we have the sealed bottles. This change from one system to the other has involved the consumer in some extra cost; but I feel it would be turning back the hands of time and progress if, in the interests of saving a little on the retail price of the milk, we were to revert to that old-fashioned method of dispensing milk by the retailer to the consumer.

My thought, therefore, is that we have reached the stage where we must give serious consideration to a further step in the interests of the public, and it is unfortunate that it will bring with it an increased price. When we bear in mind the fact that milk is an essential food, by and large, for all of us, but a basic food for babies and invalids, then I suggest that we cannot be too careful in ensuring that the milk is as pure as it is possible for humans to allow it to be, and I think therefore that these Tetra packs, or whatever they are called, are the answer.

It occurs to me that for milk to be supplied to, shall we say, a substandard family, where there are flies and perhaps disease, and where the bottles find themselves in the rubbish tip, ultimately to be resurrected, and then go through admittedly what is supposed to be a perfect system of sterilisation or as near perfect as man can make it, does not measure up, because we are aware that from time to time foreign bodies do find their way into the milk, undoubtedly because of human error in the attendant watching the bottles as they pass before a light to see if there is any object or the remains of something that had been in the bottles previously. I think, therefore, that it is somewhat prehistoric that in a food so easily contaminated, we should still adhere to the system of containers passing backwards and forwards, going to perhaps half a dozen different families.

I am as conscious as anyone of the costs that are being passed on; and, of course, that happens in regard to any product

or service, but particularly its impact will be felt on the families in the lower income bracket. However, this is a trend which is inevitable. We insist, because we have done this either by deliberate decision or by default in allowing regulations to pass unchallenged, that every town and hamlet in Western Australia must install septic systems instead of the old pan system. Of course, additional cost is thrown upon the people, whether they be struggling basic wage earners, pensioners, or anyone else. But that is done in the interests of those people themselves, and the community in general.

Whilst we might regret the fact that these Tetra packs might turn out in the ultimate to be more expensive than the glass bottles, we must acknowledge it. I make a passing reference here that I would have been a little more enthusiastic if it had not been for a certain most controversial Bill which spent several weeks going through this Parliament. It has been the procedure of the Arbitration Court over many years, to make automatic adjustments to the basic wage, reflecting increases in prices of basic goods. However, under the new set-up we can only guess what the procedure will be. Had the old Arbitration Court remained we would have been assured that had the cost of living increased 2s. or 1s. a week because of the new method of packaging milk—if I might use that term—there would be compensation paid to those on the lower rungs of the economic ladder. But we can only hope and trust that the new set-up which has been evolved by this Government will act on the basis of justice and equity and will ensure that a real disservice and injustice is not done to the people in the category I have mentioned.

I have already indicated what we did in regard to the installation of septic systems. Even if the cost is far greater, we do that on the basis of health. We all recall that in comparatively recent years there was a distinct limitation placed on the purposes to which newspapers could be put in regard to the wrapping of food-stuffs. Only a few years ago newspapers could be used for just about anything, even if they were making direct contact with food. But again, at additional cost, clean white paper must now be used.

Mr. Hawke: Sometimes.

Mr. GRAHAM: Under the law it must be used in the wrapping of certain foods. Because of the increased cost of the paper, inevitably the cost has been passed on to the public.

Without giving additional instances, in every direction we look we find that the burden on the individual is secondary, or that the economic welfare, if we like—that is, in terms of pounds, shillings, and pence—is subjugated to the welfare of the general public. Accordingly this has to be the trend, and I venture to suggest that even apart from what the wholesale milk

people might do, the trend is in the direction of these individualised packages—in other words, the Tetra packs, or cardboard cartons, or whatever they are called—even if it means some additional cost.

In the ultimate, I wonder whether it will be so tremendously expensive, because recently we have heard and read a great deal about the huge loss of bottles. I do not know the exact cost, but I would estimate it at 1s. a unit. I suppose that a single milk bottle would be used a certain number of times. If we make it six times, then no doubt, in the retail price to the consumer, that factor of 2d.—I am using it by way of example—is taken into account, and accordingly finds its way on to the retail price of the commodity which, in this case, is milk.

Therefore I think the question answers itself. It is one of those things which are part and parcel of a new development, seeking to give a purer essential food product to the people, and we must accordingly acknowledge it.

Mr. Rowberry interjected.

Mr. GRAHAM: I think there has been an indication to me to let someone else, if he should feel disposed, to make a contribution.

Mr. Davies: Keep going. I support you.

Mr. GRAHAM: Thank you. My final remark is to emphasise what I have said before. Certainly all members on this side of the House would deplore anything which has the effect of increasing the price of an essential foodstuff to the people. Perhaps in the final analysis the most important thing is the health of the people. If they have to pay an additional levy—if I might express it that way—in order to achieve that result, perhaps it is not so bad after all.

MR. ROWBERRY (Warren) [9.46 p.m.]: I am forced to enter this debate because of the contributions made by the member for Murray and the member for Wellington. They appear to assume that the milk industry should be centred in places like Pinjarra and Harvey. Judging by their remarks, all extensions to the irrigation scheme; all treatment plants; all supplies for Perth and overseas, should come from their particular districts.

Mr. I. W. Manning: You misconstrued our remarks, I am afraid.

Mr. Graham: Those remarks are reserved for the public gallery.

Mr. ROWBERRY: That will appear in *Hansard*. I want to point out to the two members I referred to that there is quite a thriving dairy industry in and around the district that I represent—the Warren electorate. It could quite easily be developed into a whole-milk industry. The farmers from this area have a great desire to enter this lucrative industry. Although

the problems associated with the supplying of dairy fat, or butterfat, to treatment plants involves more responsibility and greater problems, it is still a lucrative industry.

So I would remind the Minister and the Government that the member for Murray represents only the people around Pinjarra, who are already in on the ground floor. There are also other districts in this great State of ours which could easily develop a whole-milk industry. If an export market is to be developed I hope my electorate will have a chance of taking part in it.

I was interested to know, too, that the members on the Government side appeared not to have read—or not understood certain provisions in the Bill over which they skated. As has already been pointed out by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and the member for Balcatta—who obligingly sat down to allow me to speak—there is provision in the Bill, undoubtedly, when the provisions are superimposed on the Act, to determine the price of milk according to whether it is sold in bulk, in bottles, or in containers other than bottles.

Mr. Hawke: Don't get all bottled up.

Mr. ROWBERRY: Clause 5 of the Bill amends section 26 of the principal Act. This section gives the power to fix the maximum price or prices which may be charged by milk vendors to other milk vendors. The amendment in the Bill will add a new subparagraph and the Act will then read as follows:—

Provided that a different maximum price or prices may be fixed—

- (a) in respect of milk sold in different dairy areas or parts thereof; and
- (b) according to differences in grade, quality, description or quantity or place of delivery;
- (c) according to whether the milk is sold in bulk, or in bottles, or in containers other than bottles.

If that part of the clause is not inserted to give power to charge extra for containers, why not leave the Act as it is? The power is not in the Act at the moment, and I am convinced that the reason for this insertion is to give the Milk Board the necessary power to alter the price of milk according to the type of container used in the retail trade. If that is not the case, then why not leave the Act as it is? The amendment is not to keep the *status quo*, so why not leave out the provisions relating to the sale of milk in bottles or containers?

I am afraid I cannot agree with the member for Balcatta that milk sold in cartons is safer because the cartons cannot be reused. With glass containers it is possible to get almost complete sterility.

It is achieved in other walks of life, in hospitals, and in breweries. In the case of beer the containers are used over and over again because proper methods of cleaning are used. I submit that unless there is proper hygiene and proper sanitation then contamination will take place no matter what type of container is used for the milk.

Most contamination takes place in the dairies and milking sheds, and that is where complete sterility should be striven for, if not achieved. Milk is one of the best breeding grounds for bacteria that could be devised; and because of this, every effort should be made to keep the milk to a certain standard.

I have suspicions that this provision in the Bill to allow for a charge according to the type of container, is put there to allow the Milk Board to raise the price of milk.

The Government also skated over the provision in the Bill which, if the draftsman had tried to make it more involved, he could not have accomplished it. This section reads as follows:—

in lines four and five of subsection (4A), the passage, "treatment licenses exceeding four in number, or the whole number equal to or nearest to but not exceeding forty per centum of the total treatment licenses issued or to be issued, whichever of those numbers is the greater";

And, if you take away the number you first thought of, you get the answer.

Mr. J. Hegney: That is pretty clear.

Mr. ROWBERRY: I wonder if the member for Murray and the member for Wellington gave any thought to this provision. I wonder if they really know what it means. I do not know but I will make a guess. It means the whole number equal to, or nearest to but not exceeding 40 per centum of the total treatment licenses, which means that $2\frac{1}{2}$ people could hold all treatment licenses that could be issued. One licensee could hold up to 40 per cent. of the licenses. So $2\frac{1}{2}$ persons could hold all the licenses—that is, if we could find a half person nearest to, but not exceeding, 40 per cent.

I agree with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that this could really lead to monopolies, which the suppliers of milk want to avoid. If the purchasers of their products have a monopoly then the farmers are completely dominated by those purchasers.

I am not in opposition to the board being allowed to borrow money in any way it can be borrowed and repaid, but I do think the two provisions I have mentioned require some more serious thought by Government supporters. I also think that the Minister for Education has definitely let himself in to vote with this side of the House.

MR. FLETCHER (Fremantle) [9.55 p.m.]: I only wish to speak for five minutes on this Bill and to point out what could happen as a consequence of a monopoly in regard to one commodity. I also speak in an endeavour to protect the consuming public from what could be the creation of such a monopoly. Reducing the number of treatment plants to four does bring closer such an inevitable result.

It was only recently mentioned in this House how a firm called Kraft—a big overseas monopoly, had acquired Kraft industries in Australia. This firm continued to produce the products which had previously been produced by the Australian firm, but the profits that are now made by this overseas firm go to overseas shareholders in the main. As I see it, the reduction of treatment plants to four brings closer the prospect of monopolies, and I think members will agree that Kraft could ultimately acquire all the treatment plants and bring about the same result in producing cheese and other by-products from milk, and the benefit from this industry could conceivably go to overseas shareholders.

Mr. Nalder: If the honourable member ate local cheese and encouraged his friends to eat local cheese that position would not occur.

Mr. FLETCHER: However, Kraft had acquired the local industry, and overseas shareholders do benefit as a consequence. At the moment farmers can choose to whom they sell and any reduction in that position should be a concern to the community, and particularly the farmers. Competition has a greater prospect of survival with a greater number of treatment plants. I think the farmers' representatives who are listening know better than to accept such a position. I repeat: Competition has a greater prospect of survival with a greater number of treatment plants, and less prospect of collusion regarding prices offered for milk. Is it not a reasonable assumption that it is easier for three firms to get together and indulge in collusive trading than it is for a greater number?

The Country Party should oppose any reduction of the plants. If this is to affect milk commodities today it makes me wonder what other primary product is likely to be next; and we will arrive at a situation where farmers will be told what they will receive for the produce they sell.

I have risen on this issue on behalf of the public and farmers simply because I know many in the industry, including my own relatives. The way things are going, milk producers will finish up selling to a monopoly, whether they like it or not. Let me give an example. This happened in the crayfishing industry at Geraldton.

In the early days of the crayfishing industry, buyers stood on the wharf and told fishermen what they would pay them for

their catch. The buyers did not ask the fishermen what price they wanted for their catch; no, they told the fishermen what they would pay for it. The fishermen were told that they had to take the buyers' price, or leave it. In other words, they could sell at the buyers' price or they could take the catch back to sea and dump it.

The fishermen set up their own co-operative, and they handled and treated their own produce and sold direct to overseas buyers. Instead of receiving the pence they were offered by the buyers they received shillings per pound. Had the fishermen accepted the buyers' price they would have gone out of existence; and I mention this by way of an illustration, **Mr. Speaker**. The milk producers could meet a similar fate.

Mr. I. W. Manning: No. Two of the plants are farmers' co-operatives.

Mr. FLETCHER: I would prefer to see the farmers handle their own products rather than depots with overseas shareholders. The higher dividends paid to shareholders of monopolies could be at the public expense, and at the farmers' expense. I suggest that the number of treatment licenses issued should be up to the limit the industry can carry, including the co-operatives and any other treatment firms that care to start up in the industry. If that were done the farmer would be offered the competition in which this Government alleges it believes. As a consequence, I think the public would be benefited in that people would not be paying monopoly prices for the commodity they purchased—in this case, milk.

Therefore, I am opposed to that particular clause in the Bill, and I hope that when the measure reaches the Committee stage exception will be taken to it.

MR. BRADY (Swan) [10.3 p.m.]: I want to speak briefly to this Bill because I can see certain trends developing which, in my view, are undesirable; and they appear to me to be along the lines that if the amendments in the Bill are passed the public can expect an increase in the price of milk because milk is likely to be delivered in some container other than a bottle. If that does come about it will be a grave injustice to many family men, because most of them realise the value of milk and they buy it in fairly substantial quantities.

What should be of benefit to the primary producer could ultimately be a detriment to him. I first remember this industry when the primary producers were trying to get some semblance of justice and order in it. There was a strike, and the organiser directed the wholesalers to tip their milk out at one of the south-west railway stations. That action focused a lot of attention on the disabilities of the producers in those days.

Earlier this evening the member for Wellington said he thought more research should be made into the industry than has been the case up to date. I go along with him all the way in that thinking, and I will also be with him in trying to see that the producers get a fair return for their product.

However, I was disappointed to read in the *Daily News* of the 1st November that approximately 6,000,000 milk bottles are missing, and the cost involved is about £163,000. That indicates to me a lack of business acumen on the part of somebody who is associated with the industry. It is quite wrong that 6,000,000 bottles can go astray because one can see them all over the metropolitan area. They are stacked up in two, three, four, five, or six dozen heaps, all over the place. It looks to me as though somebody could not care less about what is happening to the bottles.

Tonight the member for Balcatta was advocating the use of Tetra packs. He even went so far as to say that this might necessitate an increase in the price of milk. I hope that never comes about, whether milk is delivered in Tetra packs or in bottles. If a decision is to be made as to whether the milk should be delivered in bottles or in Tetra packs I hope that the decision will be in favour of bottles; because, as someone said—I think it was the member for Balcatta—bottles can be used five or six times, just as beer bottles are used in the breweries.

If that is going to make for economy in the handling and retailing of milk, I think it should be encouraged. I cannot see how Tetra packs could be produced at a price which would enable milk to be retailed at the same price as if bottles were used, because bottles can be used five or six times, and even more often.

As a Parliament we should do everything possible for the economy of the State and the economics of the industry; we should encourage the return of milk bottles as quickly as possible, and they should be handled as many times as possible. I hope the industry will have a look at that angle to see whether there can be some better organisation. I heard a retailer say once that he feared to sell his business because he had heard that he was in debt to the tune of something over £3,000 with a wholesale milk supplier for bottles that had not been returned. I do not know how many retailers are in the same position, but it is a shocking thing that bottles can lie around the metropolitan area in their thousands and nobody seems to be interested in collecting them. They cause all sorts of damage to vehicles; they cut children's feet; and people use them for all sorts of purposes other than that for which they were originally intended.

As regards research, I can remember an occasion two or three years ago when the Milk Board put on a most impressive dis-

play at the Labour Day Procession. It was a display showing what the milk industry meant to the State. But strangely enough in the city that day one could hardly buy a pint of milk in any of the shops around town. In my opinion, had there been proper research in the industry some arrangement would have been made to flood the town with milk so that young children and their mothers, and even some of the fathers who prefer milk to soft drink, would have been able to buy it. I would encourage primary producers and the Milk Board to cater for the general public more along those lines.

I think the Milk Board had a golden opportunity, when the question of fluoridation was in the air, to advocate that people could get their fluoride tablets through the Milk Board, or their fluoride through drinking milk. Most children in the schools and in the homes have milk supplied to them, and fluoride tablets could have been put into the milk supplies, and the children who wanted fluoride could have got it in that form if they so desired.

It upsets me at times to see young children buying icy poles which are made of lolly water and the like, when they should be made of milk. Therefore I think the member for Wellington was on the right track tonight when he said there should be more research into the production and marketing of milk so that we could get the best out of it. I would like to see the primary producers build up their industry and get a fair price for their product. At the moment I do not think they are getting the full benefit of the market.

I referred to the early days when the primary producers were not in the same favourable position that they are in today. With the member for Belmont, I can remember milk retailers doing a morning and afternoon delivery. I remember on one occasion my mother-in-law spoke to the milkman and told him that the milk was blue; in other words, he appeared to be doctoring the milk and supplying water rather than milk. On another occasion I can recall a retailer who was supplying milk in the Midland area and his clothes used to be in a filthy condition. It was most unhygienic to have milk supplied by such a person. On the whole the Milk Board has got over those difficulties, and people now have a reasonable supply of milk.

However, the Milk Board itself is not without its faults, because it appears that it allows depots to be set up in the city and those depots could not care less about the noise they make at two, three, or four o'clock in the morning. People in the city areas are complaining about the noise made by retailers.

Mr. Nalder: What has that got to do with the amending Bill?

Mr. BRADY: It has a lot to do with the buying and selling of milk, and this Bill gives us an opportunity to discuss

these things. In Midland milk is normally delivered at about one o'clock in the morning, but the other morning it had not been supplied by eight o'clock.

Mr. Nalder: Probably because of the stoppage.

Mr. BRADY: We do not want to see that sort of thing happen, and we do not want to see the retailers pricing the producers out of the market. That is exactly what will happen if the retailers are given the right to charge for cartons rather than for bottles.

Mr. Nalder: They are the happiest section of them all.

Mr. BRADY: As the Minister for Agriculture is the Minister responsible he will get it in the neck both from the producers and from the people who buy the milk if that happens. I suggest to the Minister that he should not be too critical of the member who is trying to help him, and to help the industry; because the average working man today is facing a position where he may have to make economies both in regard to the supply of bread and the supply of milk. He will be forced to do so if the price of milk is increased, as has been done recently with the price of bread.

As 6,000,000 bottles are missing, and the cost of these bottles is £163,000, and there are trends in the industry which will lose markets for the producers, I feel that the Minister should recommend to the people who are handling the wholesale and retailing side of the milk industry that they have a look at some of the complaints that are being made here tonight to ensure that whole milk is supplied to the public at a reasonable price, and the best results are obtained from the industry on the sales side. The Minister should make sure that the board, when it undertakes sales promotion, as it did at the Labour Day procession some two years ago, has ample supplies, or the retailers have ample supplies of milk so that the public can buy it in reasonable quantities and at reasonable prices.

I support the Bill because it will give the industry the right to have its own premises. But I do not support that part of the Bill which will enable retailers of milk to sell their milk in cartons, as against bottles. If, however, there is a fair balance, and a choice is given to buyers as to whether they buy bottles of milk at 2d. a pint, or a half pint, cheaper than is the case with packs, I would support that part of the measure.

I am not happy about seeing in the Bill a provision which the Minister earlier denied was there. So that the Minister will not be under any misapprehension I will read what the amendment says. It states—

according to whether the milk is sold in bulk, or in bottles, or in containers other than bottles.

If that does not give the right to charge a different price in each case, I do not know what does. I support the Bill in the hope that some reasonable approach will be made to the buyers by the retailers, and that we will not have to buy packs at higher prices when we can get milk in bottles, when the bottles are taken by the people who use them.

MR. GUTHRIE (Subiaco) [10.16 p.m.]: I wish to turn my attention to one point raised in this debate. It was touched on by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and the member for Swan. Some reference has been made to the fact that this amendment is designed to bring in Tetra packs. But my understanding of the matter is that the Crown Law Department has already advised the Milk Board that what it is doing at the moment is beyond its powers. I have here the 1963 report of the Milk Board which discloses that the maximum price to be charged to consumers is 6s. 8d. a gallon. The next item shows that the maximum price to be charged to consumers for milk delivered in bottles or other containers is 7s.

But there is nothing in the present Milk Act that gives the board any power to differentiate in the manner in which the milk is supplied. There is power to differentiate between the dairy areas. There is power to differentiate between the quality; but there is no power to differentiate between the manner in which it is supplied. That has been the position since 1960; and I gather that the Milk Board has now been advised that what it is doing is beyond its powers, and, consequently, it becomes necessary for this Parliament to do something to give it the power which it does not possess at the moment.

I cannot accept the situation that the board has power to fix the price of anything but milk. It has the power to fix the price of milk, but it is not given any power to fix the price of the container, or any component part of the container. Consequently, as it is already stated in its schedules that there could be a different price for bulk milk, other than milk supplied in bottles or other containers, it seems fairly obvious that it is necessary for Parliament to clothe the board with power it does not possess.

MR. NALDER (Katanning—Minister for Agriculture) [10.19 p.m.]: I thank the member for Subiaco for replying to the situation brought up by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Tonkin: He completely misunderstood it.

Mr. NALDER: The position is exactly as I stated it. Section 26 of the Act states that the board has certain powers. The Crown Law Department has advised the Milk Board that it is not absolutely certain of the power it has under the Act, and this Bill is to give the board the power it requires to fix the price, which it is already doing.

Mr. Tonkin: It does not give it power.

Mr. NALDER: This Bill is only to make the position quite clear, and to clothe the board with the power it requires.

Mr. Tonkin: The power it has not got.

Mr. NALDER: The Crown Law Department has told the Milk Board that it should amend the Act to ensure that what it is already doing is legal.

Mr. Tonkin: The member for Subiaco said it has not got the power. I agree with him.

Mr. Guthrie: The point you were taking was about Tetra packs, as against bottles. You said the board had this power.

Mr. Tonkin: I said it did not have the power.

Mr. NALDER: The debate has been interesting. Several speakers have supported the legislation, and have given reasons for doing so. The member for Albany was quite right. As a matter of fact, part of this amending legislation is designed as everybody knows, to help the situation in which the public of Albany finds itself. There had been a request, and a license was issued, for a milk treatment plant to be erected at Albany, to provide Albany and the adjoining districts with milk. This cannot be done under the present Act.

Accordingly, the idea of this amending Bill is to allow those firms which already have three licenses, the opportunity to apply for the license required to allow a milk treatment plant to be erected in Albany. According to the remarks of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, he is opposed to this proposition. He does not want the Government to do anything. He does not want Parliament to legislate for the production of the commodity, which exists in the metropolitan area and country districts, to apply to Albany.

Mr. Tonkin: I did not say that, and you know it.

Mr. NALDER: What is the reason for the honourable member's opposition?

Mr. Tonkin: I do not want a monopoly. I do not want this to get into the hands of two people.

Mr. NALDER: Neither does the Government.

Mr. Tonkin: Oh yes it does!

Mr. NALDER: That is why we are restricting this to one extra license. I might add that the Government considered the debate which took place in this House previously. This was referred to by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition: and it is because of the tenor of that debate that the Government recommended that this be restricted to one extra license.

Mr. Kelly: Why are there only 10 licenses now as against 20 at that time?

Mr. Tonkin: Because they are buying them all up.

Mr. NALDER: The last license that went out was one issued at Bullsbrook. It is not functioning. Nobody bought it up: it just went out of existence. There is one license at Collie, another at Kalgoorlie, and there are three licenses held at the present time by three other companies.

This amending Bill would not be before the House tonight had it not been for the member for Albany, and the member in the Legislative Council for the same area, requesting that something be done to allow this to happen. That is the only reason why the Bill is here. It is to allow an industry to be set up in Albany, to enable the people of Albany to be provided with facilities similar to those that exist here. The member for Albany mentioned his own area a number of times; and, as he said, this would improve the dairy products, and dairy production generally in the Albany district.

I do not think it is necessary for me to spend any more time on the borrowing powers of the board. I did give some information as to what the experience of the board has been.

I do think it is fair and reasonable that the board should have its own home. It should be proud of the responsibility reposed in it. I know that members of the Milk Board have gone to other States and have met members of other Milk Boards; and it is likely, in the near future, that an interstate conference of Milk Boards will be held in Perth. No doubt the Milk Board has some pride in its position, and if it feels it is desirable, it would like to set up its own building, so as to have a permanent place in which to carry out its activities.

I do not think the member for Albany need have any doubt that when this matter is brought before the board every aspect in relation to licenses will be considered. I have every confidence in the board, and I am sure it will not treat this matter lightly; and that it will see that licenses will be issued in the best interests of all concerned.

The member for Balcatta mentioned Tetra packs. As a matter of fact he appeared to be espousing a cause rather different from other members of the Opposition. He thought that if it were necessary to have cardboard cartons or containers to supply milk it should be done; and if it were considered necessary by the board to increase the price, then that should be agreed to. The board is very conscious of its responsibilities, and in considering every aspect it will ensure that prices will be kept down. Its endeavours will be so directed. The board does not want the price charged to consumers to be any more than a reasonable price. It also feels that the producer should have a fair and reasonable price for his work, and for the commodity he produces.

The members for Fremantle, Swan, and Warren, also mentioned the position with regard to the fixing of prices, but I do not think it is necessary for me to go over that ground again. The industry is an important one. I think members realise the responsibility that has been placed on Parliament to provide an Act whereby the board may carry out its obligations.

The member for Murray mentioned that the industry was worth £6,000,000 to the State last year. When one considers that an amount of £6,000,000 is tied up in the industry so far as production is concerned, and also as it relates to farms, machinery, stock, and plant, together with the amount of money tied up in treatment plants—which incidentally are doing a wonderful job in sending their managers overseas to keep in touch with world trends—I feel sure we can be satisfied, and proud of all that is being done.

I must also mention the distributors; those who distribute the milk and deliver it to the householders. They are doing an excellent job; and, although on occasions there has been some criticism, so far as my own household is concerned, since I have been living in Perth I have nothing but admiration for them. The service has been excellent and we have never had any criticism to make in connection with the delivery of milk to us.

Mr. Hawke: Have you any praise for the cows?

Mr. NALDER: I will leave that to the Leader of the Opposition. I commend the legislation to the House. I believe it is necessary and that it will be in the best interests of the industry. As I mentioned previously, the amendment to increase the percentages is designed only to assist the position in the Albany district.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mr. Crommelin) in the Chair; Mr. Nalder (Minister for Agriculture) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4 put and passed.

Clause 5: Section 26 amended—

Mr. TONKIN: One of the reasons why I rise now is to put the record straight. I just cannot understand why some members make the remarks they do. Anybody listening to what I said about this particular clause in the Bill would know very well that I got a copy of the Act and read it. I said I held the view that there is no power in the existing legislation for the Milk Board to fix varying prices in accordance with the containers in which milk is delivered. Yet I had to sit here and hear the member for Subiaco say I said the opposite; and the Minister agreed with him.

How far can one get when one is dealing with arguments of that kind? The purpose of the Minister's Bill is to give the board power which I say it does not possess at the present time. One of the reasons advanced was that the Crown Law Department said there was some doubt about it. In view of some of the other opinions Crown Law has given I am not surprised it is in doubt. I am in no doubt; and I said that the proof the power does not exist is in the fact that some companies are already geared to go, and have the machinery here. If they have not started in a wholesale way to supply milk in cartons it is because they know they would not get the authority to charge an additional price. If it were challenged they would be in trouble, because the Milk Board has not the power at the present time to say to anybody who is supplying milk, "If you supply it in cartons the price will be so much additional."

It is because the board does not have that power that the Minister will give it that power in this amending Bill. So if this Bill is passed the Milk Board will be able to fix a higher price, if it so desires, for milk supplied in cartons, than if it is supplied in bulk, or if it is supplied in bottles—a power that it does not possess at the present time.

I have to sit here and listen to the member for Subiaco say that I said the Milk Board already had that power. I do not mind accepting responsibility for what I say. I will never shirk that; but I am not going to accept the responsibility for having said the opposite of what I said, no matter who endeavours to pin it upon me, whether he be a lawyer or a Minister. There is room for a difference of opinion as to whether people feel milk ought to be supplied in cartons or bottles, but they do not supply beer in cartons because bottles are unhygienic; nor do they supply soft drinks in cartons because bottles are unhygienic.

Mr. O'Neill: They have to put it in bottles because of its gas.

Mr. TONKIN: This will mean an extra profit to those who use cartons. They will get a percentage increase on the price. The same percentage on an increased price will mean increased profit—and that is what they are concerned about. The Government is going to assist them to achieve it. This has been on for years. It is not something that has developed overnight. It goes back four, five, and possibly six years—may be longer—that pressure has been on the Milk Board to give an increased price for milk supplied in cartons so that one company—its name is known to me, but I will not mention it—can go ahead and reap this extra profit. It is inevitable that the trend will then be to force all into supplying milk in cartons, and it will not be possible to get it in any other way.

Instead of milk costing 10½d. as it does now, it will probably go up in price to 1s. For those who take—as some families do—five and six pints each morning, that will represent quite an item; and I am not prepared to agree to that additional impost. I am not in any doubt whatever as to what the law says at present, and I thought I made that perfectly clear. But it seems it is impossible to penetrate the understanding of some people.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 6: Section 30 amended—

Mr. TONKIN: I know it is an old political trick when one is replying to a debate to try to create the impression that the reason for one's opposition is entirely different from what it really is. So the Minister endeavoured to create the impression that I did not want to encourage the establishment of a treatment plant in Albany.

Mr. Bovell: It sounded like it.

Mr. TONKIN: The Minister knows that is not true. Since I fathered the Milk Act in 1946, is it likely I would be one who would want to deprive the people and consumers of this facility?

Mr. Nalder: That is the only reason why this amendment is before this Chamber.

Mr. TONKIN: The Minister should have found another way of doing it, because if the price of giving this facility to one town or another is to be the ultimate monopoly control of milk, I am not prepared to pay the price. I have had long discussions with men in the industry over this, and I have watched the development in other countries in the world. That is why 16 years ago I foreshadowed this very thing and took steps to prevent it. At the same time I convinced Parliament it was wise to prevent it—that the control of the milk supply of the metropolis and the livelihood of hundreds of dairy farmers in the country should not be at the mercy of a combine that could become more powerful than the Milk Board itself.

Parliament agreed, on my recommendation, that there should not at any time be less than four concerns that had the licenses for treatment. We made a start with 20; before long that number was down to 18, 16, 12, then 11, all because of the development of buying other people out and concentrating the industry in a few hands. While the Act stands as it is, and it is being properly observed, it is not possible to have less than four separate licensees, but now we are going to reduce the number to three; and the Minister, in his speech, foreshadowed that it might be necessary later on for him to come back to Parliament to reduce the number still further. Less than three reduces the number to two. It will not then have to go far before the control is in the hands of a monopoly and everybody is held to ransom.

Mr. Nalder: There are five licenses now.

Mr. TONKIN: But the provision makes it possible to reduce it to three.

Mr. Nalder: No; the idea is to allow one of the three to have a fourth license.

Mr. TONKIN: No it is not, because the Bill provides that so long as a person or licensee does not have more than 40 per cent. of the licenses it is all right. So there can be two with 40 per cent. and that leaves room for one more. In practice we have to have either two or three licensees. The Minister's amendment will make it possible for licenses to be concentrated in the hands of not less than three; whereas the present law says it should not be less than four. Four is a much better protection than three; because three is too close to two, and if we get down to two we have a situation similar to what we would have if we had one.

Mr. Nalder: If you can suggest a way out of the present position, then I am sure the Government would be prepared to consider it.

Mr. TONKIN: I am interested in that. I am not opposed to more places receiving licenses. We have to encourage them. I would like to see treatment plants being established wherever they are prepared to go. The more individual persons who establish them, the more I would like it. I am concerned about the concentration of this trade in the hands of fewer and fewer people. I have watched the situation over the years. I have watched one firm buying out another.

Inevitably we experience what has been experienced in other countries; namely, the big combines take control of a commodity like milk. To speak about fining these companies is only a matter for laughter. They put up the price another fraction per gallon and their fine is paid over and over again. They can only be controlled by legislation. This is a problem which is not new to Australia.

I could see that the situation was detrimental in other parts of the world, and I convinced the Parliament of the day that it was detrimental and that it should restrict the number; that it should put in a provision that made it impossible for this control to be in the hands of just one or two licensees.

This Bill is assisting that situation. We have not the numbers on this side of the House to stop this provision. I deplore the provision, and I say that the Minister will rue the day.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: From the producers' point of view it is desirable that there should be as much competition on the wholesale side of this industry as possible. I believe that we must look facts squarely in the face. One of the previous four companies found that for some reason known to itself it did not wish to continue in the industry. Its action brought

the field down to three. To enable the industry to expand the Act has to be amended to adjust the number of licenses allowed any one licensee. The Act gives the Milk Board sufficient power to control the industry and to prevent it from reaching the stage suggested by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. This Bill gives the board power to fix prices for the various stages of the handling of the milk. That in itself allows for protection from monopolies. The three existing big companies are strong companies. Two of them are backed by farmers' co-operatives and the third is also a strong company. I do not think that the field will be narrowed down from the existing three strong companies.

I believe the clause is one which we could support. I am sure that many of the fears expressed by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition will not eventuate. I cannot see that the measure will be to the detriment of consumers. They are protected by the price-fixing range of the Milk Board; and the narrowing of the field makes the companies more efficient because they have a volume of turnover which keeps prices down. It is a long time since the price of milk was increased, compared with the number of times that the basic wage has been increased.

Mr. FLETCHER: I cannot see why this clause is necessary to make it possible to establish a branch in Albany of one of the existing firms. Why is it necessary to grant another license for a branch of an existing firm? Surely Sunny West or Brownes dairy, or whoever it is, would have a license for this industry irrespective of where a branch was to be established. The clause should not be necessary to create a branch. The clause makes it possible to reduce or limit the number of licenses. The industry should carry all the licenses that it is possible to carry. The company that left the industry might have had some business arrangement with another company. I do not think the clause is in the Bill for the purpose stated by the Minister. I believe it is there for another purpose. A firm which holds an existing license could, under this legislation, set up another branch.

Mr. Nalder: It is apparent that the member for Fremantle does not understand the situation. A company must have a license before it can establish a treatment plant in Albany. That is why the amendment is in the Bill.

Mr. TONKIN: The companies to which I have already referred, not satisfied with what they have, want to acquire the businesses of other people. By buying them out they reduce the number of licenses. They then find themselves up against the restrictive provision in the Act which says that no person shall hold more than 25 per cent. of the licenses. If there were 20 licenses, one person could hold five;

but if the number of licenses is reduced to 12, no person could hold more than three. If one of these firms holds three licenses and wishes to start up in business somewhere else, he cannot do so, under the Act, because that would give the company four licenses.

So the Minister is prepared to allow one of the existing treatment plants to launch out into another district and have a license to trade in that district. If a further absorption takes place we will have a reduction in the number of licensees. We might then find ourselves up against the same restriction in the Act, with the result that the matter will have to come before Parliament if a treatment plant is to be established in some other district, and the restriction will have to be removed once more. In the end, one or two companies will control the whole of the business. They will hold not only the producers up to ransom, but consumers as well.

It has been necessary for some countries to introduce special legislation to guard against the establishment of monopolies. In some instances monopolies are bad for a country because they become too powerful. They are always after profits and they will pursue those profits so long as there is nothing to restrict them.

Why does the Minister think that the Federal Government has had to give some thought to restrictive trade practices although it is against its policy to do so? It is because of the harmful results which flow from restrictive trade practices or from monopolies, and they will eventually force any Government to take preventive action.

I saw this happen years ago, and nothing has happened since to alter my opinion. On the contrary, what has happened has strengthened my view. The Minister knows that this situation is likely to occur; because, in his second reading speech, he said this measure would meet the position for the time being but that it might be necessary to come back to Parliament in the future. He therefore foresees the possibility of absorption among these firms, resulting in a disproportionate number of licenses being held by any one of them.

I am not against a treatment plant for Albany. I am all for it; but I do not want to see all these licenses concentrated in the hands of a few. That has been the trend over the years. I could give the Minister the names of a number of people who were in the milk business a few years ago. Where are they today? Various reasons have forced them out of the industry. They have either had attractive offers to sell or competition has forced them out.

So the process goes on; and I do not think we ought to assist that process by legislation. I want to see the restriction remain so that there will always be at

least four firms in competition with each other. There is some safety in that. I would like to see even more than that. It is better to have a fewer number which are highly efficient because of their large capital resources, and purchase the latest machinery and so on, than to have the whole industry spread over two or three dozen people who do not possess the capital resources to bring their treatment plants up to date.

However, there is a happy medium; and after a great deal of consideration and discussion with others, I came to the conclusion that if we said, "There shall not be less than four" the business would be big enough to make it possible for four companies to do fairly well in this line of business. I am still of that opinion. Of course, with a certain growth in Western Australia in years to come, and with the increase in population, the field will be even more lucrative when we are going to have more business and four people handling the treatment plants. Ultimately we will have this business concentrated into the hands of two or three operators and then both the producer and the consumer can look out.

Clause put and a division taken.

Remarks During Division

Mr. Bovell: How can the member for Albany get the milk treatment plant at Albany if this clause is defeated?

Mr. Nalder: This is all the appreciation one gets from the Opposition for introducing a Bill of this nature.

Mr. Tonkin: That's all right!

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Crommelin): Order!

Result of Division

Division resulted as follows:—

Ayes—23

Mr. Bovell	Mr. Lewis
Mr. Brand	Mr. I. W. Manning
Mr. Burt	Mr. W. A. Manning
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Court	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Craig	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Dunn	Mr. O'Connor
Mr. Gayfer	Mr. Runciman
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Wild
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Williams
Mr. Hart	Mr. O'Neill
Dr. Henn	

(Teller)

Noes—22

Mr. Bickerton	Mr. Kelly
Mr. Brady	Mr. D. G. May
Mr. Davies	Mr. Moir
Mr. Evans	Mr. Norton
Mr. Fletcher	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Graham	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Hall	Mr. Rowberry
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Sewell
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Toms
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. H. May

(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Curran
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Heal

Majority for—1.

Clause thus passed.

Clauses 7 to 9 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr. Nalder (Minister for Agriculture), and transmitted to the Council.

BILLS (9): RETURNED

- | | |
|--|------|
| 1. Criminal Code Amendment Bill (No. 2). | Bill |
| 2. Licensing Act Amendment Bill (No. 4). | Bill |
| 3. Evidence Act Amendment Bill. | |
| 4. Mining Act Amendment Bill (No. 2). | |
| 5. Firearms and Guns Act Amendment Bill (No. 2). | |
| 6. Stamp Act Amendment Bill (No. 3). | |
| 7. Reserves Bill (No. 2). | |
| 8. Road Closure Bill. | |
| Bills returned from the Council without amendment. | |
| 9. Native Welfare Bill. | |
| Bill returned from the Council with an amendment. | |

ALUMINA REFINERY AGREEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed, from the 29th November, on the following motion by Mr. Court (Minister for Industrial Development):—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. HAWKE (Northam—Leader of the Opposition) [11.12 p.m.]: This Bill proposes to amend the existing Alumina Refinery Agreement Act in certain directions. The amendments are comparatively minor in character, and are brought forward to remove some legal doubts which have come into existence since Parliament approved of the original agreement.

Firstly, I would like to say that all members of the House must have been pleased to hear from the Minister of the progress made by the company in establishing the treatment plant on a date earlier than was originally anticipated and, further, in establishing it on a larger basis than was originally proposed.

At the invitation of the management, I had the opportunity to inspect the plant at Naval Base a few weeks ago. One cannot possibly inspect the plant itself without being greatly impressed with the efficiency of the company. I read recently in the Press of the proposed establishment of a large-scale industry in Queensland for the processing of bauxite ore into

alumina; and, subsequently, for its manufacture into aluminium. When this plant is completed in Queensland, I think there will be two large-scale plants producing aluminium in Queensland, and one in Western Australia, together with its counterpart in Geelong, Victoria; making, in all, three industries within Australia engaged in the production of aluminium. For all I know, there may be more than those three.

Presumably, the market for aluminium is still very much under-supplied; otherwise the establishment of these additional plants within Australia with great total maximum production capacity could create a situation in which production would outrun demand, and consequently bring about a situation for all, or some, of the producing industries in Australia, which would be difficult to handle. If the Minister has in his possession any information on world demand for the product of aluminium, I would be pleased if, in any reply which he might make, he would give us the benefit of the information he possesses.

The amendments in the Bill deal with three main subjects, the first being the disposal of effluent; the second, the temporary reserves under the control of the industry; and the third, the definition of the expression "Crown land" as set down in the original agreement. I saw the methods being adopted by the industry for the disposal of effluent down at the works. There is no doubt the company is going to a great deal of expense, and is testing out some very interesting methods to try to bring about an efficient method of disposal. I hope every success will attend upon the efforts it is making.

The safeguard which residents in the locality, and the community generally, have in relation to the experiments being carried out by the industry covering the disposal of effluent is to be found in a proposal in the Bill before us which provides that the industry shall comply with and observe at all times the provisions of the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Act.

There are adequate powers within that Act to ensure that the operations of the company covering the disposal of effluent, and the efforts of the company to find the most efficient and effective means, will be carried out; therefore we can rest assured there will be adequate protection against the company doing anything which might constitute a menace—not that the company would willingly do anything along those lines. That is all I need to say, and all I can profitably say at this stage in relation to the Bill, which, as I mentioned, has my support.

MR. COURT (Nedlands—Minister for Industrial Development) [11.17 p.m.]: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his

support of the Bill, and for his comments. There are two particular matters I would like to comment on: one is in reference to the demand for aluminium, and the other is the disposal of effluent.

I cannot offhand give any figures which will be sufficiently reliable regarding the worldwide demand for aluminium. Suffice to say that the great aluminium producing companies of the world—in spite of the comments which almost amount to criticism by the financial Press of the world—are proceeding to expand their plants in many countries, particularly in stable countries like Australia, and others with similar forms of Government. I think I would back the judgment of the knowledgeable aluminium companies, such as Alcoa and Alcan, and others which are leaders in this field.

I understand that the planned production capacity of aluminium for Australia is in excess of the Australian demand, as at this point of time; but the companies, through their promotional efforts to popularise the use of aluminium in a number of ways that were not current previously, expect to take up the slack; and by the time the plants are in full operation they will have developed a market. It is significant that companies with such worldwide experience as Alcan, Comalco, and Pechiney are now entering into such large-scale alumina production in Queensland. The plant to be installed in Gladstone is designed to have a capacity of 600,000 tons per annum. The second feature is that the Queensland alumina will go to New Zealand for processing, apart from the proportion of the production that goes to Bell Bay.

New Zealand was able to offer the aluminium industry a very attractive proposition so far as power was concerned—something which could be measured at 0.3 pence per unit in Australian currency. I think it has undertaken to provide 670 megawatts of power during this decade to process alumina into aluminium. There will be two aluminium smelters in Australia—one at Bell Bay and the other at Geelong. Western Australia will be the source of supply for the Geelong plant.

It is also confidently expected that Alcoa, through the Kwinana plant, will be exporting alumina to other countries, and this will ensure the expansion of the plant in this State. If the Leader of the Opposition so desires I can obtain the world figures on alumina production, and send them to him privately, because they are very spectacular and are rising fast.

I was pleased to hear his comments on effluent from the works, because the company has gone, and still is going to a lot of trouble to handle the effluent, which is a mixture of oxide and silicate. It is having very satisfactory results, and he may have noticed it at the effluent basin.

The effluent is coming out in a much better form than originally expected. It is beaching; in other words, the silica is coming out in good relationship to the oxide at the point of discharge. I think the company will finish up with a very effective method of dealing with the effluent in the basin.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr. Court (Minister for Industrial Development), and transmitted to the Council.

MINING ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 3)

Second Reading

Debate resumed, from the 29th November, on the following motion by Mr. Wild (Minister for Labour):—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. H. MAY (Collie) [11.25 p.m.]: I regard this Bill as being one of the nasty smells created by the abolition of the Arbitration Court in this State. If ever I was unwilling to support a Bill it could be on this occasion.

Under the existing Act provision is still made for the decisions of the Coal Industry Tribunal to be reviewed by the Arbitration Court, on leave granted by the President. Under the Bill which has just been passed by Parliament, the Arbitration Court will be abolished, and it will mean that any appeal of the Coal Industry Tribunal will, in future, have to be heard by the industrial commission; if that is the correct name, and if it is possible to have a correct name for it.

The Bill contains seven clauses, and without exception the amendments are of a consequential nature. Clause 3 seeks to amend section 313 of the Act as follows:—

Section three hundred and thirteen of the principal Act is amended by substituting for the interpretation, "Court" the following interpretation—

"Commission" means the Commission in Court Session constituted under the Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912;

The next amendment in the Bill seeks to amend section 317 as follows:—

Section three hundred and seventeen of the principal Act is amended—

(a) by deleting the subsection designation (1) in line one; and

(b) by substituting for the words, "of the Court" in line two of paragraph (b), the passage, "made under the Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912".

The next amendment seeks to amend section 319 of the Act as follows:—

Section three hundred and nineteen of the principal Act is amended—

(a) by substituting for the words, "Clerk of the Court" in line five of subsection (4) the passage, "Registrar of Industrial Unions appointed under the Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912"; and

(b) by substituting for the words, "of the Court" in line eleven of subsection (4), the passage, "made under the Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912".

Clause 6 seeks to amend section 323 of the principal act by substituting the commission for the president; while clause 7 seeks to amend section 325 by adding the words, "of Arbitration constituted under the Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912, the Commission".

Those are the consequential amendments which affect the Mining Act, as a result of the coming into operation of the new industrial arbitration legislation. Instead of the decisions of the Coal Industry Tribunal being reviewed by the President of the Arbitration Court, they will in future be reviewed by the commission in court session, on leave granted by the Chief Industrial Commissioner.

There will be one other change. The awards of the Coal Industry Tribunal will be filed in the office of the Industrial Registrar, instead of the office of the clerk of the court. Those are the amendments in the Bill, and I most unwillingly bring myself to support the measure, which must be adopted in relation to the arbitration set-up which will come into force in this State.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr. Wild (Minister for Labour), and transmitted to the Council.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR. WILD (Dale—Minister for Labour) [11.35 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

In this amending Bill an endeavour has been made to raise the limits for medical and hospital expenses and to clarify certain other provisions in the Act.

The proviso for medical expenses at present is up to a maximum of £150 with hospital expenses up to a maximum of £250. In practice it is found that these limits are adequate in the vast majority of workers' compensation claims, but it is realised that in a marginal number of claims the limits are exceeded. Unfortunately, these few cases are those of the worst injured workers, and it is intended to relieve the distress of such workers in cases where there is an excess of expenses over allowances. It is proposed to increase the amount of medical allowance to £200 and to increase the limit of hospital expenses to £325.

A proviso in the existing Act contains the majority of the allowances provided under the Act, such as hospital, medical, and so forth. Among other allowances the provision of appliances or artificial limbs is mentioned. Unfortunately, the proviso first deals with "wheeled chairs for workers who have lost or been paralysed in both legs" and then goes on to say "if a worker has been disabled by reason of any such accident or accidents" he should be entitled to the supply of artificial limbs, etc.

In interpretation, an inference arises that there can only be entitlement to artificial limbs subject to the qualification that a worker has lost or been paralysed in both legs. The consequence is that on a strict application of the Act there is no provision for a prosthesis for a worker requiring one leg only or one or both hands. It is felt that this was not the true intention of the House when the original provision was made; and even if it were, then the position should be altered to provide for artificial limbs whenever they are required.

In subsection (16) of section 8 there appears reference to "Commonwealth Health Laboratory". This service was, for many years conducted by the Commonwealth for the purpose of X-raying and examining miners for silicosis and tuberculosis. It has now been taken over by our State Department of Health and is now known as the "State X-ray Laboratory". The purpose of the amendment is to substitute the present name for the former one.

A further subsection provides that every employer shall, when one of his workers is injured by accident within the meaning of the Act, forthwith notify the Registrar of the Workers' Compensation Board giving the name and address of the worker and considerable other detail. This provision has been in the Act for very many years

and before the formation of the Workers' Compensation Board, and has never been carried out or enforced in any way. The Workers' Compensation Board has now completed a comprehensive statistical coverage of industrial accidents, which is carried out without the aid of this subsection. The subsection is consequently of no use whatsoever, and its deletion is sought.

Provisions of the first schedule to the Act purport to deal comprehensively with the rates of weekly payments to be made to different categories of workers—that is, male and female, junior and adult—and where the earnings are above or below the basic wage. Unfortunately, the provisions appear to exclude the case of junior workers who earn not less than the basic wage. It is suggested that if the word "adult" in the first lines of each of the above is deleted, the position will be rectified.

Mr. Davies: It took two years for you to work that out!

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. W. Hegney.

ADMINISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed, from the 16th October, on the following motion by Mr. Evans:—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. COURT (Nedlands—Minister for Industrial Development) [11.39 p.m.]: This Bill was introduced by the member for Kalgoorlie as a private member's Bill to amend the Administration Act. I do not propose to offer any opposition to the second reading. However, I intend to submit an amendment when the Bill is in Committee, and I have discussed this with the honourable member. I intend to move that subclause (2) of clause 2 of the Bill be deleted, and I will explain my reasons for this later.

My colleague, the Minister for Justice, has no objection to the proposal to raise from £1,500 to £2,500 the maximum amount in gross value of an estate in respect of which application for probate or administration may be made direct to the Master of the Supreme Court, or to a district agent for the master.

As explained by the member for Kalgoorlie when introducing this measure, the gross value prescribed in 1903 was £500. That amount was increased to £1,500 in 1950, and has remained unaltered in the subsequent 13 years, during which time there has been a substantial change in the value of money and it would not be unreasonable now to increase the maximum to £2,500 as provided for in this Bill.

From the figures supplied to the member for Kalgoorlie in reply to his question No. 4 of the 3rd September, 1963, there has been a progressive reduction in the number of applications made direct to the master and the district agents from 206 in 1951 to 105 in 1962. This was due, no doubt, to the fact that there are now many more estates which exceed £1,500 in gross value.

If the gross value is increased to £2,500 it would, no doubt, result in the number of applications made direct to the master being increased to some extent, but it is not expected that the increase would be such as to necessitate an increase in the staff of the probate office of the Supreme Court, at least not for the present.

It is of interest to note that from the reply to the question asked by the member for Kalgoorlie on the 10th October, the maximum amounts fixed in other States are: in South Australia and New South Wales £1,000, and in Victoria £1,200. Already we are in advance of those States. As already mentioned, the proposal to increase the maximum to £2,500 is supported.

I now turn to subsection (2) of proposed new section 55. At first sight this also would appear to be a reasonable proposition, and as explained by the member for Kalgoorlie, it would overcome the anomalous position at present existing in respect of a dwelling which is mortgaged, on the one hand; and a dwelling which is under contract of sale, on the other. In the first case, the amount of the mortgage is not deductible for the purpose of assessing the value of an estate, but in the latter case only the value of the interest in the property as purchaser under a contract of sale is taken into account.

So far there is no apparent objection and since the surviving spouse is, in many instances, the main beneficiary, the proposed amendment would have the effect of bringing more estates within the limit of £2,500 thus enabling more widows and other beneficiaries to benefit by way of the inexpensive and speedy process of direct application to the master.

However, all sorts of anomalies could arise out of this proposal, if enacted. One of those anomalies was referred to by the member for Subiaco at the conclusion of the second reading, when he said by way of interjection, "I suggest you have another look at clause 2, because it will achieve what you do not want to achieve. A farm worth £20,000 with a mortgage of £17,600 would come under it."

The member for Kalgoorlie said, "I shall have a look at that point" and I observe that he has given notice of an amendment, which would have the effect of restricting the provision to dwellings which are erected on land not exceeding half an acre in area.

No doubt the proposed amendment is intended to overcome the anomaly referred to by the member for Subiaco. However, there are other anomalies which occur to me. They are—

- (a) The dwelling could be erected on an extensive farm or pastoral property, but the portion of the land on which it is erected could be half an acre or less and be the subject of a separate title. In such case, the situation as mentioned by the member for Subiaco would still apply; that is, if all the property were heavily mortgaged.
- (b) A dwelling could be part of a business establishment and the area of the land on which the establishment is erected might not exceed half an acre.
- (c) A deceased owner of a block of flats might have used one of the flats as a dwelling prior to his death. The land on which the flats are erected might not exceed half an acre and, if the flats were heavily mortgaged, the value of the estate might not exceed £2,500, or the estate might be bankrupt. An application to the master would be in order although the block of flats might be valued at £50,000.
- (d) There are many properties of one, two, or three acres having a dwelling, a few fruit trees, and a garden. The amendment which the honourable member proposes to move in Committee would have the effect of excluding these from the benefits intended by the proposals.

I have mentioned some anomalies which could, possibly, be encountered. No doubt there are others which do not readily occur to me. It appears to me that it is by reason of the anomalies which could arise that the legislation has always been interpreted as meaning gross value. The only safe course to follow would be to leave the question of value as it is at present. It is considered that an increase in the value from £1,500 to £2,500 is as far as the matter should be taken at present. I support the second reading with the reservation I have made, and which I have discussed with the honourable member.

MR. EVANS (Kalgoorlie) [11.46 p.m.]: I thank the Minister for his comments and I appreciate his difficulty in dealing with the second clause in the Bill. I am quite prepared and happy to accept his amendment and support for the major reform proposed.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mr. Crommelin) in the Chair; Mr. Evans in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1 put and passed.

Clause 2: Section 55 repealed and re-enacted—

Mr. COURT: I move an amendment—

Page 2, lines 13 to 20—Delete proposed new subsection (2).

When the Bill was in the second reading stage I foreshadowed this amendment, which has been on the notice paper for some time. I also explained at some length the anomalies that it is the considered opinion of the Minister for Justice and his advisers would occur, and that is the reason for the amendment. It does mean, however, that the principal objective, as I understood it from the member for Kalgoorlie when he introduced the Bill, will still be achieved.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 3 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, with an amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr. Evans, and transmitted to the Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1963-1964*In Committee of Supply*

Resumed from the 29th November, the Chairman of Committees (Mr. I. W. Manning) in the Chair.

Vote: Legislative Council, £16,371—

MR. JAMIESON (Beeloo) [11.51 p.m.]: This is a debate on which comments on various aspects associated with finance and other matters can be put forward by each individual member. Firstly, I would like to touch upon a few matters associated with the Commonwealth Grants Commission. As the Chairman of the Commission sought to be critical of certain matters, I intend to be rather critical of that gentleman.

Members will recall that when the Grants Commission sat in Perth the Chairman, Mr. P. D. Phillips, had quite a lot to say about the extra expenditure being indulged in by this State in regard to agricultural research. I do not know where Mr. Phillips is going to with his comments on such matters in regard to a State such as ours, because we rely to such a great extent on rural production, probably more than any other State in the Commonwealth. I think by his comments he has

branded himself as a very unsuitable person to be the Chairman of the Grants Commission.

After all, it is his job to assist the States that need financial grants from the Commonwealth Government, and I feel we would be well rid of such a person as the chairman. I think the Premier should suggest to the Federal authorities that if this is the attitude that Mr. Phillips intends to adopt on such matters he should be replaced by some other person as the principal spokesman for the Grants Commission. Perhaps Professor Wilfrid Prest would be a better Chairman of the Grants Commission, because he appears to have more balanced views than Mr. Phillips on the subject of economics. Surely it is more desirable to have balanced views than it is to have legal training when conducting an inquiry such as is required of the Grants Commission under the Federal Act.

It is interesting to note for the record just what Mr. Phillips had to say, and I intend to quote from an article which appeared in *The West Australian* of the 1st March, 1963. With reference to Mr. Phillips the article went on to state—

He contrasted the Agriculture Department's expenditure, which is not subject to comparison by the commission with the standard States, with that of the Education Department, which is.

Mr. Phillips said it was significant that the department's rate of increased expenditure was conspicuously higher than that in education.

"Here is a department where we do not penalise you for excessive expenditure because people say you cannot compare it with the standard States," he said.

That being so, one looks with a good deal of suspicion on a rate of increased expenditure out of line with a department you can control.

This State has been faced with a problem for some time in regard to the investigation of new methods of agriculture in particular areas. Two instances of recent years are the development of the Esperance Plains and, subsequently, the development of the district surrounding the Ord River. Of necessity, this must be given special attention, including the special research establishments associated with these areas. It is useless for Mr. Phillips to lecture the State because it is spending in excess of the money which, in his opinion, is the amount that is required for this purpose.

What he said about educational matters is true, and I will deal with that subject later. This State is no doubt lagging behind with its expenditure on education, and it should be able to increase the education vote without being penalised by the Grants Commission. His condemnation of the State on this issue alone leaves

Mr. Phillips himself open to condemnation through not having a clearer understanding of his true position on the Grants Commission. It is not his prerogative to lecture the State on any increased expenditure it makes, but to give consideration to the State's wants and needs where the requirements and the grants are justified to keep the State in financial balance with the other States of the Commonwealth.

If Mr. Phillips is going to compare all aspects of the State's expenditure, surely he must take into consideration some features which are also outside the ambit of the Grants Commission when giving consideration to the extra money allocated to the States. It is of great interest to note that Western Australia comes out well in front of South Australia, which is not now a claimant State, on the value of exports. Against that, of course, we have a balance of less than 50 per cent. In our export value which, in 1962-1963, was rated at £124,000,000, as against our import values of £56,400,000.

By comparison with some of the other States, it is noted that New South Wales had an export value, in 1962-63 of £311,200,000, and an import value of £477,000,000. No comparison can be made with the value of our primary products in this State, and associated commitments, with the value of primary products in some of the other States, which is used as a method of deciding whether our financial position shall be improved by a grant, or whether we shall be penalised for overspending in certain directions.

Mr. Phillips did mention the expenditure on schools in this State. Our low rate of expenditure on education is rather alarming when we examine similar figures in Tasmania. The cost of transporting a child to school is very high, but it is even higher in Tasmania. I am now referring to secondary school education. The cost of educating each child who attends a secondary school in Tasmania is £116, as compared with £93 in Western Australia. So it would appear that, in those circumstances, we are falling behind in our expenditure on education extremely badly. In New South Wales and Victoria no doubt the large masses of people make it possible to use some of the more expensive methods of teaching at cheaper cost than in the smaller-populated States.

Mr. Brand: What did Mr. Phillips say about our expenditure on primary schools?

Mr. JAMIESON: I will get back to that. In the average States, the average cost of educating a scholar in secondary schools, including the cost of transportation, was £96.8. In reverting to primary education, the figures are extremely interesting. This report states that we are spending more money on primary education than Tasmania, if that is what the Treasurer is driving at.

Mr. Brand: Yes; I am.

Mr. JAMIESON: By comparison, we are still not spending as much on education as the average of New South Wales and Victoria. The expenditure per scholar on transportation in those States is lower, being £5.17; whereas in Western Australia it is £8.67. However, overall, the expenditure on primary education is less in Western Australia, the figure being £67.46, as against the average of £69.57 for Victoria and New South Wales. This would indicate that we are not spending as much as we should on primary education. A great deal of money has to be spent to bring our education up to the financial standard enjoyed by Victoria and New South Wales.

Mr. Lewis: We have been getting grants on a *per capita* basis.

Mr. JAMIESON: But the Minister would not be penalised if the State showed a deficit in education expenditure and if the figures given by Mr. Phillips are taken into consideration. In view of his remarks he could not possibly take any action if a deficit were created. As a matter of fact, I think in this article he states that he makes an allowance because we have not spent as much as we should have. That reference was made in a certain section. In effect, he stated that extra money is available to certain States because of insufficient expenditure in this field. We have to spend as much as we can in an expanding State such as ours if we are to achieve the development we need.

The comments of Mr. Phillips appearing in clause 168 of the report are also of great concern to me. That clause reads as follows:—

In addition, unfavourable adjustments of £86,000 for Western Australia and £55,000 for Tasmania were made in respect of the impact on the financial results of State business undertakings of differences in State basic-wage policies, and service or industry grants in connection with the operation of the railway systems.

I do not know what business undertakings Tasmania has, but it is interesting to note in the details of the estimates of the revenue and expenditure of our State Trading Concerns for the year ended the 30th June, 1963, that we have four undertakings which we could class as business undertakings in contradistinction to what the Minister for Industrial Development refers to as services. Those are the West Australian Meat Export Works, which last year showed an actual profit paid to the Consolidated Revenue Fund of £1,183; the Wyndham Freezing, Canning and Meat Export Works which paid a net profit into Consolidated Revenue Fund, in reduction of arrears of interest, of £29,205; and the State Engineering Works, which continued to show a good profit of £61,999, which was paid to the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Of course, as against that there was a considerable net loss to be recouped from

the Consolidated Revenue Fund amounting to £1,129,942, which loss was made by the State Shipping Service. However, the State Shipping Service was the subject of another consideration, and actually was not dealt with when applying this particular formula, where there was an unfavourable adjustment of £86,000 imposed upon this State.

It is also interesting to find that the Premier very often brings down a Bill for an increase in some charge which is referred to as non-income taxation. In clause 162 of this statement we find the following:—

The Commission's calculations show that, in 1961-62, if the claimant States had levied taxes at the average rates and with the average exemptions applied in the standard States, Western Australia would have raised £106,000 less and Tasmania £194,000 less than they actually raised.

So it would seem that we are raising money far in excess of the standard States under what is referred to as non-income taxation. Incidentally that was before the Premier introduced all this legislation this year, when he said that we were required to be brought up to the standard States. I do not know how he balances his arguments with the statements made by the Grants Commission.

Further reference is made to the fact that Western Australia had brought up a greater level in motor taxation; that some regard was had for that matter, and it was more or less raised for a special purpose in the State, and was applied for that purpose. Accordingly, it received little or no consideration by the Grants Commission.

There were many matters with which we could deal. One could spend a whole hour delving into various aspects of the Grants Commission's report without getting very far. Suffice it to say that while it has done a reasonable job over the years—though of course we have not been given as much money as we would have liked—I would hesitate to say the Grants Commission is a desirable feature to be maintained for all time. I would remind the Treasurer that it is only a few years since South Australia asked to be released from the position of a mendicant State. South Australia is not all that far ahead of us in population; and while we know there are developments in the north which do not come under the Grants Commission, but under the Commonwealth, which supplies special grants for the development of Queensland, and for the development of the Snowy River project, it is interesting to note that South Australia was a mendicant State a few short years ago.

In looking at the figures of the State finances for 1961-1962, we find that New South Wales showed a deficit of £3,133,000; Victoria a surplus of £11,000; Queensland

a surplus of £110,000—it should have spent some of that on its unemployment problem—South Australia showed a surplus of £507,000; Western Australia a deficit of £964,000, and Tasmania showed a deficit of £358,000.

The figures for 1962-63 show that New South Wales went from its terrific deficit, to a surplus of £157,000. Victoria did a good job of balancing its Budget, and had a surplus of £1,000; Queensland dropped its amount of surplus to £27,000; South Australia dropped its excess to £290,000; Western Australia dropped its deficit to £753,000; and Tasmania increased its deficit to £491,000.

That would seem to indicate to me that it would be better if we could get away from the Grants Commission, and live without the aid of individual funds for specific purposes; and without the Grants Commission criticising us because of certain developmental works, while trying to determine what the States are doing as compared to Victoria. We would be far better off if we could achieve this object. We are hamstrung, because of a certain line of action which, because of our geographical set-up, may not be desirable.

For instance, in this State, motor vehicle licenses are much less costly than they are in Victoria, or other more condensed States like New South Wales or Tasmania. The Grants Commission should not have the right to order a State, whose people need a motor vehicle to gain access to remote areas, to pay the same as the more closely condensed States. However, it is apparently not able, under its charter, to consider that aspect. Apparently that is where the system fails; and we will be no better off until we can get away from the Grants Commission, and obtain our money through other financial avenues. It is one of the problems that has arisen because of our having to get the Commonwealth to find money for development purposes.

South Australia also had that problem for many years, but it is now beyond that difficulty; and it finds it can actually meet all its requirements without having to resort to the Grants Commission. If we outbid Sir Thomas Playford, and ensure that a particular industry comes to this State, rather than have it go to the Eastern States, it is logical that the Grants Commission should penalise this State for doing just that. If we reach that stage we will get nothing out of the Grants Commission, and it will be of very little use to us.

I would like now to pass to the question of the development of this State, and deal with a matter which concerns the Minister for Industrial Development, who seems to be very quick, and caustic in his criticism of anybody who dares to criticise. Over the past few years the principle seems to have been established, that not only can the Queen do no wrong,

but that the Queen's courtiers can also do no wrong. For instance, we had a reasonably thoughtful book produced in this State on rural development by Schapper and Parker; and we found that the Minister for Industrial Development raced to the Press, and told them they did not know what they were talking about.

Mr. Court: I was not the only one either.

Mr. JAMIESON: The Minister was the principal one. After all, these fellows did quite a good job, and made a considered study of the position, and they are entitled to some consideration as to whether or not their ideas are based on a sound premise. I consider that economically they are. I shall deal with that later.

After the Schapper and Parker incident we heard another concerning E. J. Underwood, Director of the Institute of Agriculture in the University of Western Australia, who also got run over by the Minister, in his eager desire to stifle completely the comments of this person, and to put him in the cupboard. Criticism is the basis of prosperity. If the Minister for Industrial Development is not prepared to accept criticism he will not get the prosperity which he is looking for.

We might all agree that the Ord River scheme is a good project, and I do not decry it, but to make out that it will be a great finance-producing scheme within the foreseeable future, as the Minister is inclined to do, is to be hypocritical.

Mr. Brand: The Minister's main point about this scheme was that we should be very careful about undermining the confidence of the people engaged under projects of this nature.

Mr. JAMIESON: Is it more desirable to undermine the confidence of the people by telling them the true facts, or to allow them to go broke under the scheme?

Mr. Court: We want the people concerned to know the facts, but the persons mentioned should have a sense of responsibility. They are only headline seekers.

Mr. JAMIESON: If the Minister showed a sense of responsibility he would realise that those persons, who have made a study of these matters, do not run into print in the Press, merely to stick their necks out. They examine such projects analytically. The project in the north will in the next 150 years be very big and will pay handsomely, but if the Minister expects that in the foreseeable future it will be payable, he will kill the scheme.

Mr. Court: I am sure you will inspire confidence among the farmers up there!

Mr. JAMIESON: For a long time we will have to subsidise and encourage those farmers. We should be practical; and we should not encourage people to go there on the expectation of making a million, as happened in recent times. If the settlers should become disappointed after taking up land there, the scheme would be

killed at the outset. They should be encouraged, but the scheme should be examined in the proper perspective. It certainly will not prosper, if it is examined by accountants, as the Minister is inclined to do, on a pound, shillings, and pence basis. Many developments in this State are examined on that basis, and it takes a long while to overcome that obstacle and to convince those who are used to thinking along those lines that they should adopt another attitude. If we used the pound, shillings, and pence basis for the development of the north originally we would not have developed the north.

Mr. Brand: Is not the Schapper and Parker report made on the pound, shillings, and pence basis?

Mr. JAMIESON: In effect it is, but they balance the industrial development of this State against the agricultural development as short-term projects. We have had a Minister for Industrial Development who wants to develop the secondary industries, but it is high time he had a spell from this portfolio. We should appoint a Minister for Agriculture to take over industrial development so that a balance could be retained. We do not have sufficient balance in this State. As was mentioned in the report of the Grants Commission dealing with the exports from Western Australia, compared with the imports, we could get a far better return on a short-term basis from agricultural production.

Mr. Court: You are not denying the fact that our agricultural development is going ahead at a faster rate than ever?

Mr. JAMIESON: It is not fast enough.

Mr. Court: I would be amazed to learn that you were decrying the industrial development programme of the State. We need it more than any other State.

Mr. JAMIESON: I am not. As soon as anybody criticises any feature of industrial development, the Minister races in and declares, irrespective of what degree of knowledge those making the criticism have on the subject, that they do not know what they are talking about.

Mr. Court: That is not the position at all.

Mr. JAMIESON: That is exactly the position. Every time criticism is made he races in and puts forward an argument based on pounds, shillings, and pence which, on his reckoning, will bring a few extra thousands to some area of the State, where it is not possible.

Mr. Court: You come out and declare you do not want this State to develop industrially.

Mr. JAMIESON: I shall not say anything of the kind. I shall not use the words which the Minister is trying to put into my mouth.

Mr. Court: They were saying we should slow down in our industrial drive, and get down to agricultural development.

Mr. JAMIESON: If the Minister is prepared to offer special inducements to agricultural development, as he is to industrial development, we will get a very much quicker return for the State's investment. One has to be balanced with the other.

Mr. Court: I think you had better get the Minister for Agriculture to tell you about the agricultural development of this State.

Mr. JAMIESON: Although the Minister does not want to hear it, I am trying to clear up the point raised by the Chairman of the Grants Commission who criticised this Government when he said it was spending too much on agricultural research and development. I say we are not. We should spend more, because the income to be derived from that source is more than that from industrial development, on a short-term basis.

Mr. Nalder: The State is spending double the amount it spent five years ago on agricultural development.

Mr. JAMIESON: It might be. If the money is available, why stop at that amount? Why let the Minister for Industrial Development take the money available to the Minister for Agriculture?

Mr. Nalder: The development has to be balanced.

Mr. Cornell: Be careful! We do not agree with you.

Mr. JAMIESON: But it is not. Over the past few weeks I have asked a series of questions of the Premier. One was—

In view of the recent issue of instructions to Federal Government departments that inquiries from State members of Parliament must be answered by the department through the Federal member of the particular division concerned, will he issue similar instructions to State Government departments as to matters referred to those departments by Federal members being replied to through Assembly members for the district concerned to avoid many duplications of inquiry?

After protracted questioning the Premier said he would inquire from the Commonwealth Government, and today I received the following reply from him:—

I am informed that no recent instructions have been issued to Federal Government departments on this matter, the last instructions being in 1943.

This matter was brought up to cover simple cases which required the construction of some public utility in a district, such as a telephone booth or a mail box. For years the member representing the electorate has written to the Commonwealth department concerned to point out the necessity for the provision of such facilities, and replies were given.

About two months ago a reply was received from the Postmaster-General's Department that under recent instructions from the Commonwealth Government his department was no longer permitted to give a reply to the member of the State Parliament representing the district, and that the reply would go direct to the Federal member for the district.

Mr. J. Hegney: That has been going on ever since Mr. Gregory was the member for Swan.

Mr. JAMIESON: That might have been so. The honourable member knows the conditions which applied until recently, particularly in the case of the P.M.G. department, when replies were given. Of course, it duplicates matters, because what occurs now is that when a member gets something like that, naturally he does not go to his local member of the House of Representatives if that member is not of the same political faith; he goes to a senator and gets the answer.

Mr. Brand: I do not think you should be expected to. I think a State member is entitled to deal direct with a Commonwealth department.

Mr. JAMIESON: I agree. But I ask the Premier if they are going to insist on this, why is there not some reciprocity? Repeatedly I make inquiries at the State Housing Commission for some person or other and I find that the same inquiry has been represented by the Federal member for the district which, of course, is something that I knew nothing about. This clutters up the department, because two people are delving into the one inquiry. I think it is high time the position was sorted out. Naturally, in regard to large issues, one accepts the requirements of the Commonwealth. If someone wants a post office built in another area, that is the job of the Federal member; but if someone wants a telephone facility or some simple thing, the local member should be able to make inquiries.

I am sure that many councils in local government would write direct if they considered something needed correcting in a State Government department, rather than go to the State member. Individuals do it, and they have every right to. When the Government answers along these lines I think it is carrying things too far and that some pressure has been brought to bear—wrong though it may be—that these matters have to be put through the Federal member for the district.

Mr. Brand: My inquiries in the main were to check on your word "recent". I was in contact with the appropriate department and it said it hadn't had an order since 1943. It was probably honoured in the breach.

Mr. JAMIESON: When I received a reply to this effect from the local Director of Posts and Telegraphs I wrote to him and he said, "It is a recent order and we are not allowed any more to communicate

direct with you," I said, "You scrub the inquiry and I will get the information elsewhere."

Mr. J. Hegney: He advises the Federal member and the Federal member advises you.

Mr. Rowberry: That has happened to me, too.

Mr. JAMIESON: I raised a matter earlier in the year with the Minister for Labour and I think this case deserves airing in Parliament to show what goes on with some of the organisations that are around town under the guise of employment agencies. As far as I know they do not come within the ambit of the Act and they are working with little regard for the earnings of individuals, but with plenty of regard for getting good fees from placing those people in employment. I have a letter here from a lady who writes as follows:—

In regard to the telephone discussion we had about the firm hiring clerical staff and then re-hiring them to business firms, I now outline the details. I waited for your return from the East and until the Royal Visit was over as I felt you would have no time to deal with the matter until now.

This case is that of Service Plus, 36 Barrack Street, and its dealings with Mrs. J. Townsend.

Mrs. Townsend saw their advertisement in the "West" for stenographers with wages to £20 and registered with them. They eventually sent her to A.R.C. Engineering Co. (W.A.) Ltd. of Welshpool Road, Welshpool.

She had to visit the office of Service Plus each Saturday morning to receive her salary which amounted to £12 19s. 10d. net. This trip cost her 2s. 2d. leaving her £12 17s. 8d. net. Service Plus billed A.R.C. Engineering for £19 18s. 6d. per week. This position continued for ten weeks in a relieving capacity and then Mrs Townsend was asked by the Accountant of A.R.C. if she would stay on the temporary-permanent staff until June, which she agreed to do. Service Plus was notified and sent a bill of £2 to Mrs. Townsend and a similar one to A.R.C. Engineering for finding the permanent position.

This was after receiving the difference between the amount of £12 19s. 10d. and the amount of £19 18s. 6d. which A.R.C. Engineering was paying to the agency. To continue—

During the week of the Australia Day holiday in January Service Plus paid Mrs. Townsend the usual weekly rate but charged the employing firm casual rates of £4 5s. per day, which amounted to £17 for the four days.

I feel that girls and women are being grossly exploited by this firm and hope you can find some way of protecting them. I would like to add that the Accountant of the A.R.C. is also of that opinion and suggested to Mrs. Townsend that if ever she required part-time or relieving work to by-pass Service Plus and go direct to him.

This is the case as fully outlined as possible. I have given you the full names of the people concerned for you to use as you think fit.

In my reply to the Minister I sent a covering letter and he wrote to me on the 3rd May as follows:—

Investigation has been made of the matter raised in your letter of 15th April regarding the dealings of the Service Plus organisation.

The proprietress of the organisation, Mrs. Michell, is a registered Employment Broker and is conducting this side of the business fully in accordance with the provisions of the Employment Brokers Act. This Act prescribes that any fee for procuring engagements payable to the broker must be charged equally to the employee and employer. In the case cited the charge was £2 to each, which is very much less than the usual charge made by most brokers of half the first week's wages.

It was not half the first week's wages; the agency continued charging the difference in salary. Continuing—

The provision of relieving staff by the Service Plus agency is a commercial activity quite outside that covered by the Employment Brokers Act. As in the case of Mrs. Townsend, stenographers are employed by the agency under Award conditions and are supplied to firms requiring relief for short periods. An hourly, daily or weekly charge is made for this service, and this is a matter between the firm and Service Plus. There was nothing to prevent the A.R.C. Engineering Co. (W.A.) Pty. Ltd. advertising for a stenographer, selecting her and engaging her, but apparently the firm preferred, for the purpose of filling in a short term requirement, to avail itself of the services offered by Service Plus.

On the surface it might appear that stenographers are being exploited—

That is putting it mildly.

—but Service Plus engages them on Award conditions and pays their wages, and clients are quite prepared to avail themselves of services offered which include selection of a person for the work to be done and the supply of relief for short periods which

would not normally attract a stenographer looking for work. In many cases, as in that of Mrs Townsend, relieving work under the auspices of Service Plus leads to long term or permanent employment.

When it did it still charged for finding her the permanent job. Continuing—

The agency has been established for some years and is apparently fulfilling a need in commercial circles. The type of service it provides is widely used in the Eastern States and still more widely in the United States of America.

Yours faithfully,
Minister for Labour.

The matter I wish to bring to light is that all forms of employment brokerage, whether for a day or a week, should be brought under the control of the Employment Brokers Act. Obviously the firms must go somewhere, and if the short-term jobs are put into the hands of such organisations, surely the person doing the work for the money should not be imposed upon to the extent this person has been imposed upon by working for unreasonable fees for Service Plus. I believe all firms are entitled to reasonable fees, but this is just beyond the pale. The Government should have a look at this matter with a view to introducing amendments to the Employment Brokers Act next year to make sure that improvements are effected.

Mr. J. Hegney: It is plunder, that's all.

Mr. JAMIESON: That is about all it is.

Mr. Graham: Did the person engaged receive the award rate?

Mr. JAMIESON: The amount paid by the firm was £19 8s. 6d. a week, but the person concerned was paid £12 19s. 10d. net, less 2s. 2d. for the fare necessary to collect the money. The balance was taken by Service Plus.

Mr. Graham: But was the amount she received the award rate?

Mr. JAMIESON: It could have been, but it does not look as if it was. There would be the difficulty, of course, of proving where the money went because she was being hired through an agent and the firm was paying the agent, on her behalf, this amount which would probably be in excess of award rates.

Earlier in the year I dealt with the various traffic signs. The department of the Minister for Police seems to be one of the few departments which regularly read *Hansard* because it answered all the points submitted on that occasion. However, in answering them, it stuck its neck out a little. The answers indicated that the department needs to bring its ideas into line with modern thinking.

One of my complaints at the time was the rather haphazard use of end of speed limit signs in the metropolitan area and, in particular, in my own electorate. There

is, for instance, a sign indicating the end of the speed limit. However, that road ends, and in order to continue one's journey one must turn a corner where, immediately, the speed limit is reimposed. Therefore, the end of speed-limit sign is useless. It is interesting to note that the Minister said—

It is also advised that the boundary of the Metropolitan Traffic Area as legally defined in the first Schedule of the Police Traffic Regulations 1954 and Amendments is not set at a uniform distance from the central city of Perth and accordingly the boundary cuts the various roads at different distances from Perth.

It has just become too stupid and it is no wonder that there is confusion. There are pages of these. Rather than refer to roadways and positions of roadways, they are cutting across areas where, at the time this was introduced, no roads existed at all. In one place it brings the no-speed limit to within approximately seven miles of the G.P.O., while on many of the highways it takes it out to about 20 miles. Therefore it is high time the metropolitan area, as defined for the purposes of the traffic regulations of speed, was more clearly defined.

Getting back to a system of radius from the G.P.O. would be a much more desirable system than cutting into the metropolitan area within seven miles of the G.P.O. and then driving out another way about 20-odd miles. This is very confusing and should be altered. As a matter of fact, it is time all the regulations associated with traffic control were completely reviewed. It is no use the Minister trying to submit reasons for the existence of the signs when they serve no useful purpose.

I referred during the course of the Road Closure Bill to lanes and rights-of-way. I would again raise this issue because it is most important. Since I asked questions on this matter in the House, I have received numerous inquiries from landowners who are concerned at the inability of anyone and everyone to control these rights-of-way. I feel that the Government would be well advised to set aside appropriation, if necessary by Government action, for the re-fencing of the rights-of-way on a new alignment. The rights-of-way should be divided evenly with the adjacent property owners.

This would cost, probably, in the vicinity of £100,000, but it would be money well spent if it got rid of these hazards associated with them. These rights-of-way are no longer required and merely harbour rubbish. They do not do anything to beautify the city and its surrounds. If people had these areas within the precincts of their own fence alignment they would accept responsibility for them and would make sure that the present hazards were eliminated, particularly the fire hazard.

On this question of fire hazards, it is interesting to note that in answer to a series of questions I asked in regard to the ownership of land at the corner of Albany Highway and Alday Street, I ascertained that it is owned by the Education Department. This land is in a fairly heavily built-up area and yet it is a most dangerous fire hazard. There is a considerable amount of accumulated grass and especially dry veldt grass which should be attended to. If the Government is going to retain land in central positions, and retain it in an unkempt state, it cannot expect landowners in near vicinities to keep their property in a reasonable condition. I think it is only fair that the department should be made to do something to ensure that the area is cleaned up and made presentable and, more particularly, to ensure that the fire hazard is eliminated. At the moment it is causing considerable worry to the adjacent property owners.

While on the subject of property, I would like to deal a little with a matter which, I agree, is under departmental review at present. However, it has received some Press publicity. I am referring to the site for the proposed high school in the Kewdale area. There is available in that particular region a considerable amount of vacant land. For some reason or other the Government saw fit to put up resumption notices on many properties—20 properties, in fact, including eight houses. This has caused considerable stress. Recently, one of the houses was featured in the South Suburban Supplement of *The West Australian*. It is quite a large brick residence. These property owners feel they are being unjustly prevailed upon to give up their properties, when within a quarter of a mile of them—or less in many instances—there is a considerable amount of vacant space. I feel that the Government should have another look at this matter.

There are something like 44 acres being held by the Metropolitan Region Planning Authority alongside the proposed site. It would appear to me that the land could possibly be on the edge of local government authority land, and somebody might be trying to get a rake-off from the development of industrial sites, and so forth, which might arise. Further consideration should be given to this matter so that these people would not have to move. Some of them have poultry farms. They are renting the land, and they are concerned with the possible loss of their livelihood.

I turn now to the matter of police traffic control. The police are faced with the problem of policing the many regulations. I draw the Minister's attention to the fact that many owners of Holden and Falcon cars are breaching the regulations because their cars are fitted with the normal trailer type attachment;

and the ball attachment, which is invariably left on when the trailer is not in use, obscures part of the number plate. The regulations are pretty useless unless the police are prepared to take the matter up with the suppliers of these standard fittings. Probably half of the people who attend the schools for erring drivers are there because of a breach of this particular regulation. It is a foolish situation when the Minister knows that a standard fitting is being used in this State which does not meet the requirements. The Minister said that if the ball were removed, the regulations would not be contravened.

Finally, I would like to turn to a matter touched upon by the Grants Commission. Sir Alex Reid complained that the State Government produces pretty brochures. I have a number of them with me. Whilst I consider it is desirable to maintain the standard of brochures, I would advise the Government that it should adopt the procedure that is adopted by the Commonwealth Government when printing various statistical reports. I suggest that the Government should write to those people who would normally receive these reports and ask them whether they wish to remain on the mailing list.

The report of the Forests Department is only a small one. It would cost about 5s. each to produce, and the department produces 770 of them. Some of the reports might be sent to other parts of the world, but a report is not necessary for each member of the House. If a few were made available to the Assembly, that would be sufficient. The department does not really know how many copies it requires. At the beginning of each parliamentary session the department should find out how many copies are needed by parliamentary members.

Until a few years ago each member had these reports placed on his table; and by the end of a session we could hardly see over the table. That situation has been improved and the reports are kept in stock and supplied to those members who require them.

I have here a more colourful brochure. A thousand of these are produced. It is produced for the Tourist Development Authority; but the matters contained in this report are not of general interest. The report is prepared mainly for parliamentarians and departmental officers and deals with the operations of the authority over the year. I would not know why a thousand copies are needed. Each copy would cost about 3s. to produce, and 500 copies would be ample.

The Metropolitan Water Supply Department produces 480 copies of its report. It contains lithos, colour charts, and many photo plates. All this would bring the cost of each copy in the vicinity of 10s.

We want to maintain the standard of production, but we should also effect saving wherever possible. The Mines Department produces a bigger report. It seems to be a £4 4s. job, because of the number of lithos in it. The department produces 500 copies, which amounts to a lot of money. The member for Boulder-Eyre, and possibly two or three other members, would require a copy in order to have a detailed report, but most other members would not require a copy. The Mines Department or the Government Printer would not know this unless they had detailed information of the mailing list. Here is a matter of indulging in excess.

Sir Alex Reid complained about the quality of the paper, but I do not think his complaint stands any test. These reports certainly do not look like rubbish; they have not been roneed, with a paper binding on the front and back. I would point out to the Government that there would be a considerable saving in cost if it could find out who really required these reports. Those people who did not require them should not receive them. I am quite sure that a large number of copies would not be required. I hope the points I have raised will be considered by the Ministers concerned, and that we will hear of some improvements.

Progress

Progress reported and leave given to sit again, on motion by Mr. Davies.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

MR. BRAND (Greenough—Premier)
[12.55 a.m.]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 2.15 p.m. today.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 12.56 a.m.
(Wednesday)*

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 4th December, 1963

CONTENTS

	Page
ASSENT TO BILLS	3574
BILLS—	
Abattoirs Act Amendment Bill—	
2r.	3596
Com.	3598
Report ; 3r.	3601
Administration Act Amendment Bill—	
Receipt ; 1r.	3574
Alumina Refinery Agreement Act Amendment Bill—	
Receipt ; 1r.	3564
2r.	3575
Beef Cattle Industry Compensation Bill—	
2r.	3588
Com. ; Report	3590
3r.	3591

Page	
Constitution Act Amendment Bill—Assent	3574
Constitution Acts Amendment and Revision Bill—Assent	3574
Constitution Acts Amendment Bill (No. 2)—	
Intro. ; 1r. ; 2r.	3585
Convicted Inebriates' Rehabilitation Bill—	
2r.	3585
Com.	3587
Report ; 3r.	3589
Factories and Shops Bill—Assent	3574
Licensing Act Amendment Bill (No. 3)—	
Returned	3617
Midland Railway Company of Western Australia Limited Acquisition Agreement Bill—	
2r.	3601
Com. ; Report ; 3r.	3604
Milk Act Amendment Bill—	
2r.	3605
Com.	3614
Report ; 3r.	3617
Mining Act Amendment Bill (No. 3)—	
Receipt ; 1r.	3584
2r.	3618
Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act Amendment Bill (No. 2)—	
2r.	3569
Com. ; Report ; 3r.	3569
Native Welfare Bill—Assembly's Message	3618
Public Service Act Amendment Bill—	
2r.	3604
Com. ; Report ; 3r.	3605
Railways (Standard Gauge) Construction Act Amendment Bill—	
2r.	3577
Com. ; Report ; 3r.	3585
Stamp Act Amendment Bill (No. 4)—	
2r.	3591
Com. ; Report ; 3r.	3591
Superannuation and Family Benefits Act Amendment Bill—Assent	3574
Wheat Industry Stabilisation Bill—	
2r.	3569
Com.	3571
Report ; 3r.	3574

FISHING INDUSTRY SELECT COMMITTEE—

Withdrawal of Member : Personal	
Explanation	3562
Appointment to Vacancy	3562

MOTIONS—

Alsatian Dog Act—Disallowance of Regulations	3591
Parliament House—Resetting of Foundation Stone	3562
Prospecting Industry—Inquiry by Select Committee	3564

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE—

Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill (No. 2)—Tabling of Papers Relevant to Preparation	3562
---	------

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver) took the Chair at 11 a.m., and read prayers.