

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 11th December, 1956.

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time during which certain assets would be free from death duties if such assets had previously borne duty said—

I have not had an opportunity of ascertaining whether a similar principle to this operates in the Commonwealth legislation or that of any other State.

I interjected and said—

Three years.

My observation was not correct. A three-year exemption does not prevail under the Commonwealth Act. I well remember making the observation, which is correctly reported by Hansard. I can only suggest that I had in mind the statutory period for gifts under the Commonwealth Act when the interjection was made.

To my mind, the comment had not much effect on the decision but, in the interests of accuracy, and as I would be expected to have more than a casual knowledge of the subject, I consider I should make this explanation. Like many more interjections made in the House, they do not appear very important at the time, but in the cold light of print they take on a greater significance than intended. It was when I read Hansard that I noticed the inaccuracy.

QUESTIONS.

SHIPPING STRIKE, DARWIN.

Effect on State Shipping Service.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister representing the Minister for Supply and Shipping:

Will he advise the House:

- (1) The reasons for the recent industrial trouble at Darwin which upset the State Shipping Service?
- (2) What State ships were affected, and in what manner?
- (3) What is the cost to the State Shipping Service, both in respect of increased operating costs (including air fares) and loss of fares and freight?
- (4) When and how does the State Shipping Service expect to catch up on the passenger and freight dislocation caused by the stoppage?
- (5) Will any orders for supply of goods from Western Australia to the Northern Territory be lost as a result of the dislocation of shipping?
- (6) What are the prospects of quicker turn-round at Darwin in future?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Disputes arose on the introduction of the amended award which came into operation with the opening of the new wharf.

Requests from the North Australian Workers' Union that the Stevedoring Industry Authority allocate some gangs to

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Belmont Branch Railway Discontinuance and Land Revestment.
- 2, Nurses Registration Act Amendment.
- 3, State Housing Act Amendment.
- 4, Rural and Industries Bank Act Amendment (No. 2).

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. Court and Incorrect Interjection.

Mr. COURT: I desire to make a personal explanation. During the debate on the Administration Act Amendment Bill, I made an interjection, which on reading Hansard No. 17, page 2539, I find could be misleading to the House. The Premier, in discussing an amendment to extend the

s.s. "Dulverton" from an overseas ship loading scrap iron. The union also asked for the rotation of gangs on obnoxious and freezer cargoes.

(2) M.v. "Koojarra" sailed on the 13th November instead of the 7th November; s.s. "Dulverton" remained in port from the 14th November to the 1st December and was only able to discharge 200 tons out of a cargo of 825 tons. M.v. "Koolinda" sailed on the 8th December instead of the 28th November and m.v. "Kabbarli" was held at Wyndham returning southward therefrom with 780 tons of Darwin cargo still on board. S.s. "Daylesford" arrived on the 23rd November and has not yet commenced discharging 1,500 tons of cargo.

(3) Approximate cost while ships were idle was £15,000. Additional expenditure, including air fares, £2,000. Estimated loss of earnings £12,000.

(4) In so far as North-West ports are concerned, it is anticipated that m.v. "Koolinda," s.s. "Dulverton" and m.v. "Kabbarli" will be despatched before the 31st December, and all cargo cleared, but the clearance of Darwin traffic will depend on conditions at Darwin.

(5) It is understood some orders for supplies have been transferred to the Eastern States.

(6) The turn-round of ships will depend upon priority of berths and allocation of labour by the local authority. Unless the local authority gives priority of berths and labour, no improvement can be foreseen.

CHAMBERLAIN INDUSTRIES LTD.

Visit by Sales Manager to Eastern States.

Mr. WILD asked the Premier:

(1) Is it correct that the sales manager for Australasia of Chamberlain Industries Ltd. is now on duty in the Eastern States for a period of three months?

(2) That his private secretary accompanied him, and that on arrival in Melbourne, was immediately given a salary rise?

(3) That he recently exchanged a Chamberlain tractor for a Jaguar car for his personal use?

(4) That a two-storey house has been taken over in Melbourne for his use at a rental of 16 guineas per week?

(5) That a flat has also been taken over for his use in Sydney?

(6) If correct, does he agree with this gross extravagance in view of the company's being in a parlous financial position with an overdraft at the Rural & Industries Bank approximating £3,000,000?

(7) Again, if correct, what action will he take in connection with the above?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) The Australasian sales manager is on duty in the Eastern States for five months to reorganise the sales branch in Victoria, following on the dismissal of the former branch manager for Victoria.

(2) The Australasian sales manager was not accompanied by his private secretary, but she was sent over, at her own expense, with the approval of the board of directors and was given a salary increase of £2 per week in Melbourne because of the long hours of duty, including work on week-ends. Her present rate of pay is consistent with that of stenographers in Melbourne.

(3) A secondhand Chamberlain tractor was exchanged on a Jaguar car. Transactions of this nature are not unusual in handling trade-ins. The car was not acquired for the personal use of the Australasian sales manager, although he has used it for a period, during which time his normal car allowance was suspended.

(4) The house in Melbourne was taken over at a rental of 15 guineas a week. It was found necessary to pay this amount as accommodation was scarce owing to the Olympic Games. Had a house not been provided, it would have been necessary to pay travelling expenses, at increased cost.

(5) No.

(6) and (7) The board of directors does not consider there has been gross extravagance, but further inquiries will be made.

WANDANA FLATS.

Cost and Revenue.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) What was the full capital cost of the Wandana flats project?

(2) What was the gross revenue therefrom for the year ended the 30th June, 1956?

(3) What was the net income therefrom for that year, giving details of the principal outgoings?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) £563,485 (expenditure to date).

(2) £14,080.

(3) (a) Net income—£9,409.

(b) Electricity and gas—£1,748;
rates—£1,277;

wages—£1,586;

insurance, maintenance, etc.—£58.

ART GALLERY.

(a) *Resignation of Director.*

Mr. COURT asked the Premier:

When does he anticipate being able to inform the House as to the result of the Government's examination of the position

at the Art Gallery arising from and associated with the resignation of the director?

The PREMIER replied:

In due course.

(b) Amplification of Answer.

Mr. COURT (without notice) asked the Premier:

In view of the public interest, and in the interests of both the director who has resigned and the trustees, when, approximately, will be "in due course"?

The PREMIER replied:

I am not able accurately to interpret the words "due course". The best I can offer is, "at a later date".

(c) Statement by Government.

Mr. COURT (without notice) asked the Premier:

Arising from those two answers, could he indicate whether the words "at a later date" mean that the Government will make a statement before the session ends?

The Minister for Labour: Are you trying to frame us?

The PREMIER replied:

The hon. member could interpret the answer that way; but that interpretation would be his own responsibility. This question as between the trustees and the director of the Art Gallery is an argument which I believe has arisen out of a number of small matters.

Obviously, as a result of the situation which has arisen, I should think it would be undesirable for the director of the Art Gallery to take up the position again, even if he were inclined to withdraw his resignation and even if the trustees were inclined to amend or alter the decision to accept the resignation. I feel that the situation between the trustees and the director has widened to such an extent as to make it very difficult to handle outside of the boundaries within which it is now contained.

It is very debatable whether the Government should come in and take sides either on behalf of the trustees or on behalf of the director. The director has submitted his resignation to the trustees and they have accepted it. However, as I indicated earlier, I am making further inquiries for the purpose of trying to ascertain all the arguments for and against, and as soon as I am in a position to do so, I will make available to the House any additional information which comes into my possession.

TRANSPORT BOARD.

Relief to Bus Operators.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Has a decision been made as to the amount of relief to be granted from the Transport Board funds to bus operators to offset the increased licensing fees?

(2) If so, what is the nature of the relief?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

WEATHER FORECASTS.

Responsibility and Sources of Information.

Mr. CROMMELIN asked the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

(1) Who is responsible for issuing daily weather forecasts for the metropolitan area and the State?

(2) From what sources, apart from the use of instruments, is information obtained to assist in the making of weather forecasts?

(3) Are these sources of information substantially the same as they were in 1940, 1945 and 1950?

(4) Are the meteorological instruments in use at the Perth Observatory the same as were in use in 1945?

(5) If so, does the Government Astronomer consider the instruments are all that are required for making accurate forecasts?

(6) If not, does the Government Astronomer consider that still more modern instruments are needed to assist him in making his weather forecasts?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied:

In the early days of the Observatory, weather forecasting was the responsibility of the Government Astronomer, but in 1907 the Commonwealth Government took over all meteorological services in all States. The State, therefore, has no jurisdiction in this matter. The information should be obtained through the Deputy Director of Meteorological Services in this State.

TRANSPORT.

Swanbourne-Perth services.

Mr. CROMMELIN asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) What is the total cost, per mile, of running trolley-buses from Claremont fire station to St. George's Terrace?

(2) What is the present weekly average of passengers carried on this route?

(3) What is the total cost, per mile, of running one man motor-buses over the same route?

(4) What is the present weekly average of passengers carried on this route?

(5) What is the total cost, per mile, of running diesel coaches from Swanbourne station to Perth?

(6) What is the present weekly average of passengers carried over this section of the line by diesels?

(7) How many—

(a) trolley-bus;

(b) one man motor-bus;

return trips are made each week over the route?

(8) How many diesel trips are made on the quoted line per week?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 66.87 pence.

(2) For week ending the 1st December, 1956—30,179 passengers.

(3) 37.64 pence.

(4) 8,131.

(5) The estimated cost for a single unit is 4s. per mile.

(6) Both steam trains and diesel railcars are used on the suburban area, totals of passengers travelling are not recorded separately.

For statistical purposes, Swanbourne-Perth is not treated as a separate section and any information relating thereto would entail a great deal of extra work in extracting the required information.

(7) (a) 511.

(b) 294.

(8) 483 single trips.

BETTING.

Tax on S.P. Bookmakers.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY (without notice) asked the Treasurer:

(1) Are the proposed increased taxes on s.p. betting applicable only after the passing of the appropriate legislation?

(2) If so, does this mean that s.p. bookmakers are saving considerable money because of the delay by the Legislative Assembly in considering the Legislative Council's amendments?

The TREASURER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) S.p. bookmakers would be saving a sum of money. Most of the obstruction and delay caused in connection with this matter, as you well know, Mr. Speaker, has been caused by the attitude of the Legislative Council. In fact the Legislative Council initially moved amendments which would not only have prevented the application of the higher tax, had the Government accepted them, but would have wiped out the existing tax also.

The item in question is No. 8 on today's notice paper and therefore this House should today deal with the Legislative Council's latest message. I wish to thank

the Leader of the Opposition for having made a copy of these questions available to me before the House met.

PARLIAMENTARY SESSION.

Closing Date.

Mr. BOVELL (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) Is there any Parliament in Australia, other than in Western Australia, in session at present?

(2) If so, when?

(3) Is it intended to carry this session through the Christmas holiday period or is the session to terminate before Christmas day?

(4) If so, when?

(5) If not, will the session be carried on in the new year, and when in the new year?

The PREMIER replied:

I am not in a position to offer the hon. member my grateful thanks for having submitted a copy of the question.

Mr. Bovell: I have just arrived from Busselton.

The PREMIER: As regards Question No. 1, I have no knowledge of the point. It may be that no other Parliament in Australia is working as conscientiously and zealously in the interests of the people as is the Parliament of Western Australia.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: And you might add, "with so much confusion."

The PREMIER: I am not responsible for the Leader of the Opposition's condition of mind.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You are responsible for Parliament.

The PREMIER: The answer to the other nine or 10 questions asked by the hon. member is that the session should certainly end before Christmas; the likely date of the ending is a matter to which I can only reply by saying, approximately, the 21st December.

BILL—FIRE BRIGADES ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

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

First Reading.

Introduced by the Minister for Works and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. T. Tonkin—Melville) [4.51] in moving the second reading said: This is a comparatively small piece of legislation. It is not new to this Chamber; it has been introduced to Parliament on several previous occasions so that most members will

be familiar, without much study, with the contents of the Bill. I regret it was not brought here earlier; if the delay could have been avoided I would have endeavoured to do that, but, unfortunately, I have no alternative but to introduce it now. The fact that it has been before the House on so many occasions should enable us to give it very early consideration and make up our minds about it.

The first amendment in the Bill is in the nature of a machinery provision to enable the abolition of a fire district, and the removal from the Second Schedule of the Act of the name of the abolished district. When the previous Act was consolidated in 1942, all local authority districts which had been created fire districts were shown as such in the Second Schedule. While Section 5 of the principal Act authorises the creation and the cancellation of further fire districts, there is no provision for the cancellation of these fire districts which appear in the Second Schedule.

An example is that of Wiluna which is no longer required as a fire district; but it cannot be cancelled as such because there is no provision in the law for this cancellation. The first amendment will put provision into the law for the cancellation of a fire district which is shown in the Second Schedule. The next amendment proposes that the Fire Brigades Board shall be enlarged to include a representative of the permanent firemen. The W.A. Fire Brigade Employees' Union is of the opinion that many of its members' aims in regard to such matters as administration, working conditions, passive time, interpretation of regulations, allocation of relief duty, etc., could be given improved consideration if on the board there was a representative of the men who was au fait with these conditions and items.

It is felt that the administration would be thereby improved by giving the men representation. The idea is not new. The men have a representative on the board of commissioners in New South Wales; and they also have a representative in Victoria. It is the view of the Government that it would be beneficial to give the men representation on the board here. At present the board consists of 10 members. Two of these—one of whom is president—are appointed by the Government; three are elected by the insurance companies; one by the Perth City Council; one each by the other metropolitan local authorities, Goldfields and rural local authorities, and one by volunteer fire brigades.

The situation is, therefore, that whilst the volunteer firemen have a representative on the board, the permanent firemen have not; and one of the amendments in this measure is to remedy that position and give the permanent firemen representation. A further amendment—and this has been recommended by the Chief

Electoral Officer—makes provision for appeals to be made to a magistrate should any question or dispute arise in regard to the regularity or the validity of an election or voting at an election of a member of the board. A query of this nature arose some little time ago, and it is considered that there should be a right of appeal in such a case. The Bill seeks to implement the recommendation of the Chief Electoral Officer in this regard.

A further amendment to the measure is consequential on the proposal to appoint to the board a representative of the permanent firemen. At present the parent Act provides that members of the board shall enter upon their duties on the first day of January following their appointment or election. This would mean that if the appointment of a representative of the permanent firemen were agreed to, and he was not appointed on or before the 31st December this year, he could not take up his duties until the 1st January, 1958. That would be absurd and unreasonable. The amendment therefore is proposed to overcome that position; so that if Parliament agrees that the permanent firemen shall have a representative, then he shall be appointed on a date determined by the Minister, and he shall hold office until the 31st December, 1957. After that date the member will hold office for two years as do the present members of the board.

Another amendment deals with the remuneration of the members of the board. At present the Act provides that the aggregate fees paid to the 10 members of the board shall not exceed £850 in any one year. This maximum has existed since 1949 and it is therefore somewhat out of date and not in keeping with the changed value of money. In view of the reduced purchasing power of money, and the proposal to increase the board's membership by one, the Bill seeks to increase the maximum amount to £1,250.

Section 35 of the Act gives the Governor power to make regulations for prescribing various apparatus and appliances for saving life and property to be kept and maintained in all premises, excluding private dwellings, which dwellings shall not include flats. Under this authority, a regulation was gazetted requiring every owner and occupier of premises, other than private dwellings, to provide and maintain such apparatus and appliances as the chief officer orders in writing. A right of appeal to a magistrate within seven days of receiving such order is provided in the regulation. An appeal by the Adelphi Hotel was upheld in the police court on the ground that the regulation was void because of uncertainty.

A situation like that obviously must be remedied and the proposal in the Bill is to effect that remedy. The Crown Law Department considers it doubtful whether the regulation is a proper exercise of the

power conferred by the Act. The Bill seeks to amend the regulation, and to provide power in the Act to overcome this difficulty.

Section 46, Subsection (2), of the Act, permits the board, with the Governor's consent, to issue debentures for the amount of money borrowed under the provisions of Subsection (1) of that section with an interest rate not exceeding 6½ per cent. The Fire Brigades Board has requested that the limit of 6½ per cent. be removed as such a limit could hinder the board from raising loans if the improved borrowing rate were increased above that rate. The Under Treasurer supports the board's request and the Bill seeks in the place of a maximum 6½ per cent. to provide that the interest on debentures shall be at a rate approved by the Governor.

Subsection (1) of Section 65 of the Act as it stands renders the owner of an uninsured premises or property on which a fire occurs, liable to pay certain charges to the board for the attendance at the fire of any brigade under the board's control. In recovery proceedings against the owner of an uninsured vacant block of land on which a grass fire occurred, which was attended by a brigade, it was successfully contended by the defendant that as the property on which the fire occurred was not an "insurable interest," the provision of the subsection did not affect it. The board seeks to clarify the position by making the owner or occupier of uninsured premises or property, whether it is insurable or not, liable for the board's charges for a brigade's attendance at a fire on the premises or property, and the Bill contains an amendment to this effect.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Will they fix the amount to be paid?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. I have outlined the whole of the amendments contained in the Bill. Members will see that, as I said at the outset, it is not a big Bill and they will be familiar with most of its contents, or, at least, most members will. The new members in this Parliament will not have seen this before, but other members will have done so and it should not take very long to become completely familiar with what is intended. I think the amendments are perfectly reasonable and logical and should find favour with this House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Roberts, debate adjourned.

BILL—STATISTICS ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Council and read a first time.

BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR (Hon. W. Hegney—Mt. Hawthorn) [5.4] in moving the second reading said: This is the third occasion, as the short title of the Bill indicates, that a measure to amend the Factories and Shops Act has been introduced this session. The two previous Bills have been defeated either in this or the other Chamber. One, of course, was introduced by myself as a Government measure, and the other by the member for Cottesloe.

This one deals with the subject of trading hours for petrol stations and there is no other matter contained in the Bill. Members have had circulated to them some time ago the report of the Royal Commission on the retailing of motor spirits and accessories, and it will be observed from reading this Bill that as far as trading hours are concerned—they are dealt with in Part VI, Section 2, of the report, to which I have referred—the recommendations of the Royal Commission have been embodied in this measure.

The only departure is that the Royal Commission expressed the opinion that for emergency supplies, the aid of the Chief Inspector or the Commissioner of Police or the obtaining of a certificate from a police constable, should be requested when obtaining petrol outside prescribed trading hours. We have departed from that recommendation and have embodied in this Bill what we consider a more practicable proposition. The Bill seeks to grant to garage proprietors reasonable leisure hours whilst at the same time guaranteeing that the motoring public are adequately protected where emergency supplies are needed.

It provides that garage proprietors having any requisites for sale—by the term "requisite" in the Bill is meant fuel in any form, lubricant in any form, tyres, tubes, batteries, parts and accessories—shall keep the garage closed and shall not allow any sale of any requisite except during ordinary trading hours unless authorised to do so outside these ordinary hours as provided in the Bill. Consideration was given to having emergency supplies available to the motoring public, and the question arose as to what was the most reasonable and practicable approach to the problem.

I might say here that this Bill seeks to repeal Section 100 of the Factories and Shops Act. The trading hours of petrol stations are set out in that section and in the provisos to Section 100, which enable the motoring public to obtain petrol at any period of the day. For trading outside the normal hours provision is made in the Bill for a representative body of

garage proprietors, known as the Automobile Chamber of Commerce, which is a corporate body, or if that body becomes defunct such body as the Governor appoints in its place, to make a recommendation—and the definition of "recommendation" is in the Bill—to the Minister who shall submit a recommendation to the Governor for the dividing of the State into zones, in each of which one or perhaps two garages, depending on the size of the zone and the distance of the garages apart, shall remain open when all other garages are shut. If no recommendation is made by the representative body to which I have referred, the Minister himself will be empowered to make the requisite recommendation to the Governor.

There is a clause in the Bill dealing with the prescribing of regulations and, where a zone is prescribed, this will enable provision to be made for the times when the garage shall be open and, to indicate what necessary or emergency requisites or class of requisite can be sold by the garage proprietor or proprietors during the extraordinary trading hours. There is also provision that garages which are closed outside of the ordinary trading hours shall indicate which garages are open so that a stranded motorist will have direction to the garage where he can obtain fuel or other necessary supplies to help him on his journey and this notification must be displayed in a conspicuous place facing the street in which the shop is situated and give definite information so that the motorist will receive every assistance.

It will be observed by those who have closely studied the recommendations of the Royal Commission, that a number of garage proprietors are obliged, or have been obliged, to keep their garages open to the extent of 114 hours per week—sometimes I suppose by the signing of a lease between the oil company and a person—and the Bill provides as a safeguard that where there is an agreement made prior to the coming into operation of the conditions contained in this measure, the agreement shall be deemed to include this particular provision. If any party to the agreement claims that, because of the provisions of the Bill, any of the terms of the agreement should be reviewed or adjusted, and the parties cannot agree in regard to any necessary adjustment, their differences may be settled under the provisions of the Arbitration Act, 1895. That is not the Industrial Arbitration Act.

All that I need add is that serious consideration was given by the Government to the recommendations of the Royal Commission with regard to closing hours and other items, too, and it was felt that some measure should be introduced to modify trading hours, and yet, at the same time, to ensure that the motoring public

should have the opportunity of obtaining what is generally termed "emergency supplies," that is, outside the ordinary trading hours. I believe that this Bill will be treated on its merits and will not be looked upon as a party issue.

Mr. Court: Does this Bill take the place of the private member's Bill before the House?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: This Bill does not take the place of anything. All this Bill does—and it should not be treated as a party issue—is to amend the Factories and Shops Act. I think, when the Royal Commissioners' report had just been available—I had not studied it closely, and I am speaking from memory—I gave an undertaking that the only reason why the Government was altering certain trading hours set out in Section 100 of the parent Act was to change 1 p.m. to 12 noon on Saturday and I think 6 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. on week days for the express purpose of bringing garages into line with the provisions of the Act.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Can you tell us the difference between Saturday and Friday?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I have been asked about the rates of payment under an award when Good Friday falls on a Saturday!

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Look at paragraphs (b) and (c) on page 2.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: That may be a trap to see if members are reading the Bill! I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Court, debate adjourned.

BILL—LIQUID PETROLEUM GAS.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. T. Tonkin—Melville) [5.15] in moving the second reading said: For some months liquid petroleum gas has been produced as a by-product at the Kwinana oil refinery. This gas is now being distributed throughout Western Australia by an arrangement between the British Petroleum Refinery Kwinana Ltd., the Commonwealth Oil Refineries Ltd. and Westralian Farmers Co-operative Ltd. Before the actual distribution of the gas in accordance with this arrangement took place, the companies realised that there was in existence in Western Australia legislation which affected gas.

One of these Acts is known as the Gas Standards Act, 1947, and this affects the standard of gas; and the other was intended to control the companies who were distributing town gas and had a monopoly for that purpose. That Act is the Gas Undertakings Act, 1947-1956. In the Acts I have mentioned, gas is not defined. But

those Acts were intended to cover town gas and not liquid petroleum gas, because the production of the latter was not envisaged at the time the legislation was passed.

The companies concerned wrote a joint letter to the Premier asking for an amendment of the Acts I have mentioned for the purpose of exempting them from the provisions of those Acts. Because of the essential differences existing between town gas and liquid petroleum gas, the Government considered it was not unreasonable to grant this exemption. But although the Government is prepared to exempt the companies from the provisions of the Gas Standards Act, it considers that the purchasers of gas should be entitled to a guaranteed gas standard.

Standards have been laid down in England and America for liquid petroleum gas, and the Bill provides that the State Electricity Commission, which administers the two Acts referred to, is to have the power to declare the standards for gas and, having declared those standards, the power to police them. It is understood that those standards will be in accordance with the recognised overseas standards and will deal both with the quality and the safety of liquid petroleum gas.

The State Electricity Commission, under the old Act—known as the Perth Gas Company's Act—has the right to distribute town gas within a certain distance of the centre of the City of Perth. The Fremantle Gas and Coke Company Ltd., under its own Act, has a similar right of distribution within five miles of the centre of Fremantle. The Bill makes provision that liquid petroleum gas shall not be sold in those areas without the consent of the Minister in charge of the Act.

Finally, this Bill—which, I repeat, was drawn up at the express request of the various companies which wanted exemption—has been shown to the companies with a view to ascertaining whether they are in agreement with the proposals. They have no objection to the controls the Government desires to impose and have expressed themselves as being thoroughly satisfied.

Liquid petroleum gas has a much higher calorific value than town gas. As a result, appliances which use town gas cannot be used for liquid petroleum gas unless they are modified. The companies I have mentioned propose to market liquid petroleum gas in containers. It is probably because the price of the product is non-competitive with that of town gas that the biggest market for liquid petroleum gas will, for some considerable time, be in the country areas, where it will provide a much-needed amenity to country homes.

It is particularly suitable for use in caravans and launches, and there are also some industrial uses for which it can be employed with advantage. I see nothing against facilitating the sale of this gas,

which I think has a lot to commend it. There is no reason why we should make it difficult, because of the requirements of the existing Acts, for these companies to dispose of their product.

So the purpose of the Bill is to remove the restrictions, which are undoubtedly there, and at the same time provide for a measure of control over quality in the interests of the purchaser, and over safety. That is all the Bill does. I suggest it should receive a speedy passage so that it can be given consideration in another place before the session ends. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Hearman, debate adjourned.

BILL—PUBLIC WORKS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. T. Tonkin—Melville) [5.25] in moving the second reading said: Members will recall that the Public Works Act was amended last session in order particularly to bring the legislation up to date in connection with resumptions of land. Complaints had been made from time to time that the legislation imposed onerous conditions and was not sufficiently generous to land-owners. It was considered that they should have more protection and that cases of land resumption should be dealt with with greater facility.

A comprehensive list of amendments was put through and appeared to be giving very general satisfaction. They were designed to protect property-owners in the main, and to ensure that they received fair compensation as well as giving them the right to voice an objection against intended resumptions. In the 12 months which has elapsed since the passing of the amendments, the department has had evidence of the undoubted advantages which the legislation has conferred upon property-owners. The absence of the grizzles we were prone to hear previously confirms that view, and it is now only on odd occasions that one hears of any complaint in connection with resumptions or the compensation paid.

But some minor problems have arisen which require legislative correction. It is felt that we should have a further 12 months' experience of the working of the Act before attempting any further major amendments. So this amending Bill does not propose any major amendments or any great alterations of the existing legislation. However, there is one matter that requires early correction; and if it were not for this, I would not bring an amending Bill here this session at all. I would prefer to wait until we have further experience of the legislation and then introduce a number of amendments that might be found

to be necessary. Quite a number have been suggested already; but I repeat that I desire to have a further 12 months' experience of the working of the Act before I ask Parliament to amend it again to any extent.

In this connection, however, it is necessary that something should be done. Members will recall that a principle behind the amendments last year was that if the Government found it necessary at any time to resume land compulsorily, and subsequently did not use the land for the purpose for which it was resumed, the right thing to do was to offer it back to the person from whom it was taken, at the price at which it was taken, the idea behind that being that the Government is not justified in resuming land unless it really requires it for a specific purpose. If circumstances alter subsequently and the land is not used for that specific purpose, the Government is not justified in using it for some other purpose and under those circumstances the land ought to be returned to the original owner. That was the principle behind the amending legislation passed last session, but it was intended only to apply to land compulsorily acquired.

It was never intended to apply to land obtained by negotiation and ready sale. If the Government acquired a block of land by negotiation with the owner and paid a price which was satisfactory to the owner, there was no justification subsequently, if the Government changed its ideas as to the use to which the land should be put, for its being obliged to offer the land back to the person from whom it was purchased.

Some local authorities have found themselves in difficulties because the amendment covers not only land compulsorily resumed but also land acquired by negotiation. The purpose of this amending measure is to limit that obligation to return the land to the original owner to those cases in which the land was compulsorily acquired. In all other instances where land was obtained, there will be no obligation to offer it back to the original owner.

The local authorities, to which I have referred, have pointed out that where they purchased land on the open market with a specific purpose in view and then subsequently changed that purpose, they should not be under any obligation to seek out the original owner of the land and offer it back to him. The Government agrees that the obligation should not attach to a transaction of that nature.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Would not that operate only if the owner wanted the land back?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. As the Act stands at present it is obligatory on the local authority or the Government to offer back to the original owner land obtained no matter how and no matter

whether the original owner wants it or not. There are few owners who would refuse to take back land under those conditions because prices have risen steadily in the meantime, in most cases, and if land can be bought back after a period at the price for which it was obtained in the first instance, it can be sold subsequently at an enhanced value. While the obligation is there to offer it back to the original owner, one can be almost sure that such an owner will not neglect to take advantage of the offer. It is considered unreasonable that the obligation should continue with regard to land acquired other than compulsorily.

Apart altogether from the local authorities, the Government also has acquired land at different times by purchase on the open market, having certain long term policies or purposes in view and has subsequently decided to use the land so acquired for some other purpose. Under the Act at present the Government would, in such circumstances, be obliged to offer the land back to the original owner, and that is not reasonable and was never intended when the measure was brought before the House last session, the intention being that the obligation should apply only where land was compulsorily taken.

The other clauses in the Bill are complementary to the provision I have outlined. Members will see that this is a simple Bill which seeks to correct something which was never intended to apply but which is proving very onerous to local authorities and to the Government. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. W. A. Manning, debate adjourned.

BILL—FREEMASONS' PROPERTY.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [5.39] in moving the second reading said: This Bill seeks to enable the trustees of certain bodies of freemasons to acquire, hold, dispose of and deal in property as corporate bodies. Under the law at present these trustees operate only during their lifetime or during such time as they might be available to act.

In other words, there is no perpetual operation of the organisation to which they belong and should any one of such trustees die or go to some other State or country, it is necessary to go through a considerable amount of procedure in order to have the situation remedied and have the necessary transfers made so that the new body of trustees as set up will be in a position to deal with the property of that particular grand lodge or constituent lodge.

Under the Bill, where a lodge passes a resolution adopting this legislation, the trustees of the lodge concerned will become a body corporate, having perpetual succession, and there will also be a common seal for their use. They will be given the power in the corporate name applied to them to acquire property and hold it or dispose of property and otherwise deal with any such property in such a manner as they shall be authorised.

The Bill aims to give to such bodies corporate power not only in respect of land which might come under their jurisdiction after the passing of the measure but also in respect of any land which has been acquired by the particular grand lodge or constituent lodge prior to the coming into operation of this law. Provision is made for any land vested in the body corporate to be recorded in the normal legal way.

There is also provision for the master and the secretary of a grand lodge or of a constituent lodge to operate under certificates so that the power which will be given to any body corporate set up under the proposed law, will be capable of being used in a proper and legal manner. In view of what I have said, I think members will realise that this is largely a Bill of convenience and to save what would otherwise be a considerable amount of trouble and expense.

Instead of having trustees die or go to some other part of Australia or of the world and thereby set up complications in regard to the management of the property and the affairs of the organisations concerned, the Bill, when it becomes law, will offer to those organisations the opportunity of carrying a motion in appropriate form and becoming bodies corporate. When that event takes place, they will be able to acquire property and deal in property without any risk or danger in regard to the trustees being individual trustees. They will then be able to proceed the same as any other body corporate and the administration of such organisations will be much more convenient and sensible and less expensive in future, should the Bill become law, than has been the case in the past and up to the present. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. ACKLAND (Moore) [5.44]: Before coming into this Chamber this afternoon, I had the opportunity of knowing some of the contents of the measure and I have discussed it with one member of Cabinet. I believe it would be a good thing if the Bill were dealt with straight away. The position as outlined to the House by the Premier meets the desire of the organisation concerned and I believe it is a commonsense approach.

I remember that for some years in a district where I lived, two of the trustees of the agricultural society died and for

a long time the third trustee held up any advancement of the society because he was completely out of step with the committee and the other members of the organisation. Had there been legislation such as this to deal with a case such as that, the agricultural society would have made tremendous advances as it has done during the last two or three years instead of being held back for 20 years previous to that because of the law relating to trustees.

If a master or a secretary of a masonic lodge—as is mentioned in the Bill—had the right, when occupying their respective or joint offices, to deal with matters that are referred to in this measure, it would save a great deal of expense and time. I have no intention of making a long speech on this legislation because the Premier has clearly explained the position and I think the essence of the Bill is set out in Subclause (3) of Clause 3 on page 4. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—BUILDERS' REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 4th December.

MR. COURT (Nedlands) [5.50]: In the unfortunate absence of the member for Dale, who is indisposed due to an eye operation, I desire to make a few comments on this Bill to amend the Builders' Registration Act. The object of my speaking now is to expedite the business of the House in view of the stage the sitting has reached. As I understand the situation, the objective of the 1953 amending Act was directed at stimulating the home-building programme, and I believe that some positive result was achieved.

It is quite apparent however, from the figures given by the Minister when introducing the Bill, that a much wider field was opened up for conditionally registered builders than was anticipated by Parliament when it was considering the 1953 amending Bill. The figures quoted by the Minister show that the number of conditionally registered builders is now something in excess of 1,300. It will be interesting to know where the greatest pressure is coming from in regard to this measure. As I understand the position, some of the trade unions were concerned at the trend that had taken place following the 1953 amendments.

In his speech the Minister did say that there had been representation at some time or another from all three parties; the master builders, the Builders' Guild and the trade union movement, and that indicates that there has been some concern in all those quarters as regards the present situation surrounding conditionally registered builders. Furthermore, I understand that some of these gentlemen who were encouraged to become conditionally registered builders, found that, when the home building boom burst, they could not get work as easily as they were able to do before, and various problems arose.

It is generally acknowledged in the city today that the highest proportion of financial failures in recent months has been in the building trade. It is a natural consequence of people entering a trade for which they are not equipped either in experience or in regard to finance. From my reading of the Bill, the provisions put forward by the Government are not unreasonable. One could question various minor points, but I think the principles at which the amendments aim are fairly sound.

The clauses are not unreasonable in that they give a conditionally registered builder, in certain circumstances, the right to retain his registration. I feel, however, that the Bill is lacking in that it does not give protection to the bona fide registered builder who, for reasons beyond his control, cannot fulfil the requirements in respect to carrying out £5,000 worth of building work during a given year. There are various reasons that I can foreshadow where a man who, quite genuinely, could not qualify or conform to that condition but who, nevertheless, would be a reasonable subject to continue as a registered builder.

As far as I can see, the Government has followed the traditional British procedure in that direction, namely, it is protecting a man's livelihood. It has long been established in British countries that if a law is introduced for the first time in respect to any profession, trade or calling, the people who are concerned in it at that time are protected, provided they conform to the law of the land. For instance, if we provided, for the first time, to have registration of opticians, it would be a prerequisite that all those bona fide people carrying on that occupation at the time the law was introduced, would be brought within the ambit of its provisions. From then on, the conditions set out in the Act would sort out the qualified from the unqualified.

Unless I misread this measure, it provides that all conditionally registered builders will be entitled to come within the definition of a "B" class builder and shall retain that qualification as long as they conform to the provisions contained in the Bill. When he replies to the debate, I would like the Minister's assurance

that those builders who are fully registered at the moment—that is, "A" class—will not be affected by the clause which sets down that they must perform a minimum of £5,000 worth of building operations per annum.

A query has been raised in several places and to quote a particular instance relating to it, I would refer to those registered builders who are engaged by certain of the financial organisations, including the Commonwealth Bank. It was a prerequisite of the appointment of some of those gentlemen to their present positions of building supervisors that they must be registered builders and must retain their registrations if they were to continue in their employment as supervisors. Obviously, they would cease to be useful in their present positions if they were not fully qualified registered builders.

I cannot see that there is any grave danger there, but I would like the Minister's assurance that there is no intention to impose the £5,000 per annum restriction on "A" class registered builders.

The Minister for Works: It applies only to conditionally registered builders.

Mr. COURT: Very well. With that qualification, I support the second reading of the Bill.

MR. LAPHAM (North Perth) [5.56]: I view this Bill with mixed feelings. Although I consider it is a step in the right direction, unfortunately it does not go far enough. The Bill makes provision for the elimination of the conditionally registered builder as we know him today and to substitute two different types, namely, the class "A" and the class "B" builder. Up to the present, a conditionally registered builder has been allowed to contract to build up to the value of £4,000, but this measure provides that a class "B" builder shall be permitted to enter upon any building operations costing up to £5,000 in one year.

While I admit that is an increase upon the previous figure, I feel it is not sufficient because should a class "B" builder construct a home costing a little over £4,000 in value and his client then asks him to turn it into a duplex home—that is, adding another home to it—he is not allowed to do so because his building operations would exceed £5,000 in value. To overcome that difficulty, I propose to increase the £5,000 maximum to £8,000. In my opinion, if a builder is capable of building one house worth £4,000, surely he is capable of building two of the same value side by side! Consequently, I have given notice of an amendment which is set out on the notice paper and which I will move when the Bill goes into Committee.

When making provision for two classes of builders, I feel that the Government had in mind that the class "A" builder should be the man who builds our cathedrals, our G.P.O.'s, our banks and all our other major structures and that the class "B" builder

should be the one who is restricted in his operations to building only residences, small shops and the like. However, it may so happen that seven or eight shops may have to be built all in a row and side by side and therefore, a class "B" builder should not have his operations restricted to the building of only two shops because this would mean that he would have to cease work. I can see no objection to his completing another one or even the remainder in that row of shops.

The Bill also provides for the holding of an examination for candidates who wish to become class "B" builders, but before a candidate can sit for such an examination he must have had five years' experience in building work. I am at a loss to understand what that provision means. If it had said, "had been in the employ of a builder for five years" or "if as an employee, had worked with an employer for five years to gain knowledge of the industry," I would have followed its meaning much easier.

The term "in the work of a builder" is puzzling. If we look at the definition of "builder" in the parent Act we will find that it says "a person trading as a builder." How can a person work for five years in the work of a builder when he is not registered as such? The position becomes completely impracticable owing to the definition of "builder." That is why I have substituted for that term, the phrase "in the building industry." This would overcome the difficulty.

Another clause in the Bill makes the changeover from conditional registration to class "B" registration automatic. I feel that is a good provision. The existing conditional builder will not have to do anything to become a class "B" builder. It is to be an automatic arrangement. There is one bad feature in another clause which deals with the amount of work that a class "B" builder must execute in order to retain his registration, and the amount stipulated is £5,000 per year. As most of the class "B" builders do a considerable amount of the work themselves, there is every possibility that through accident, injury or some other reason, they could be prevented from carrying out £5,000 of building work per annum. As a consequence of that, the board will have no discretion but will have to refuse registration.

I do not think that is right. I propose to move an amendment to give the board discretionary power where it is satisfied that a class "B" builder, through no fault of his own, fails to carry out £5,000 worth of work in a year. There is an amendment in my name to reduce this amount of £5,000 to £2,000. In depression times it might be very difficult for a class "B" builder to obtain £5,000 worth of contracts in a year.

In my opinion, if such a person were able to do £2,000 worth of work in a year, he would at least be indicating that he was following the building industry. I feel that is all that is needed to give the board an indication that that person is following the industry and is not merely a self-help builder, making use of this registration to secure cheaper materials for himself through trade discounts. With those reservations, I support the second reading.

MR. JAMIESON (Beeloo) [6.31]: In the main, this Bill is an improvement on the Builders' Registration Act as it now stands. However, I believe that eventually we will have to pass a measure to straighten the position with regard to registration of builders, so far as the academic side is concerned. The present situation where an applicant for registration must pass a certain examination set down by the Builders' Registration Board, is unsatisfactory. Even though such a person may pass, there is no guarantee that he will be able to obtain registration. That is, in the main, given at the whim and fancy of the board. No reason or indication is given by the board of any subjects that an applicant fails to pass. This gives an indication that there is a very close clique in control. If the qualification for registration is to be an academic one, the position would be far more satisfactory to all concerned.

With regard to the intention of the Bill, which provides that "B" class registration is to be retained on the basis of £5,000 worth of work per year, like the member for North Perth, I consider that exceptions should be made. For instance, such a builder could construct one home within the metropolitan area and then obtain a contract to build two more in Mandurah. He would still be following the industry, but owing to the fact that he had to build two houses at Mandurah in a year, which is outside the metropolitan area, he would not be able to retain his registration. Three houses would be as many as the ordinary "B" class builder would construct in a year. This would appear to be a rather harsh condition for the retention of registration.

For those at present engaged in the industry, some protection should be afforded. In respect of other qualifications required, as envisaged under the Bill, I feel they are desirable both for the protection of the trade and the persons engaged in the trade as building employees. I understand that the Carpenters' Union has been forced to take action on many occasions against provisional registered builders who fail to pay wages due. Those builders had got into financial difficulties.

It is true that the same thing could happen to registered builders, but it seems to be more frequent in the case of conditional registered builders who generally

do not know as much about the industry and who let themselves in for commitments which they cannot meet. As a protection to the industry, so as to keep the names of registered builders above reproach in regard to their finances, the measure is well timed. I sincerely hope it receives the support of this House. With the passing of the amendments envisaged by the member for North Perth, the present position could be improved a great deal.

MR. TOMS (Maylands) [6.8]: In supporting the Bill which contains amendments to the Builders' Registration Act, I do so not because I believe it is a cure-all for the existing position with regard to builders registration. Many years ago I was of the opinion, and I still am, that it should not be necessary for a person to be able to build an edifice like the Commonwealth Bank or the General Post Office to obtain a certificate to build a cottage. That was the degree of marksmanship which one had to reach under the old form of builders' registration. That was the view I maintained when I spoke to certain people about this matter.

But I did not envisage the farcical situation that arose as a result of the amendments to the Act which enable any person to become registered conditionally by the mere production of two character references. I believe that further consideration will have to be given to this problem because there are people who have the necessary qualifications to build up to £20,000 worth of work but who do not come under the provisions of the Bill before us.

I had this vividly brought to my notice recently in the case of a person who came to Australia from another country. I had the pleasure of naturalising him. He was in charge of a housing scheme in his native country, but when he came here, through language difficulties and other problems, he had to be registered as a conditional builder. This person has done fine work, yet the limit to which he can build is laid down under the amount applying to conditional registered builders.

He has no chance whatever of passing the examination to become fully registered. This person carried out a job of work in Midland Junction, and the owner was so satisfied with the quality of work done that he wanted that person to build a block of four shops. The limitations to which this conditional registered builder was subject precluded him from undertaking that work.

I shall strive during the next session of Parliament to introduce further amendments to the Act because I consider that the situation is unsatisfactory. Many of the conditional registered builders obtained registration through the production of two character references in order to get discounts on materials which they desired to purchase for owner-building. No doubt

they will fall by the wayside. I do not wish to delay the passage of this Bill. The amendments envisaged in the Bill will improve the Act, but I still do not believe that it will be the cure-all.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. T. Tonkin—Melville—in reply) [6.12]: I thank members for the way in which they have received this Bill. It would be preferable to deal with the points raised in the Committee stage. I give the member for Nedlands the assurance that the provision in the Bill regarding the £5,000 worth of work which is required to be done in order to retain registration, has application to conditional registered builders only and to no others. The person who is a registered builder and has obtained registration under the Act will continue to retain that registration, but it is only the conditional registered builder who has been admitted without any examinations or experience, who will have to demonstrate that he is carrying on his work in the industry.

Mr. Court: I take it from your comment that the class "B" registered builder who qualifies by examination will not require to have the qualification of £5,000 worth of work per annum?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is so. If such a builder drops out of the industry by virtue of the fact that he was a conditional registered builder and did not execute sufficient work in a year to retain registration, but subsequently comes back into the industry by passing the examination for "B" class registration he would be on precisely the same basis of registration as those under class "A," and he would retain his registration.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Progress reported.

BILL—CITY OF PERTH PARKING FACILITIES.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 7th December.

MR. O'BRIEN (Murchison) [7.34]: The Bill proposes to confer upon the Perth City Council certain powers in regard to parking, including the power to install parking meters. As one who had the experience of driving trams through the streets of Perth in the busy days of 1942—during the war period—I must say that the introduction of the Bill is eminently desirable; this is especially so as far as the motorists are concerned.

The Minister in charge of metropolitan transport must be congratulated upon the way that the traffic is at present controlled. I note a big improvement as regards the standing rank where the trams at present are obliged to remain; instead of at the intersections. This is a big improvement and will, I feel sure, prevent many accidents.

The Bill will give power to the Perth City Council to install parking meters and do such other things as are necessary to control parking—that is, the measure authorises the council to borrow certain moneys for the cost of installing meters and for other purposes related to parking. Although I am not completely in accord with the council having such powers, because I can see that in the not far distant future there will, perhaps, be no parking permitted in the city streets, I shall support the Bill. The proposition that there will be no parking in the city streets will meet with strong opposition from the business centres.

If power is given to the Perth City Council to install parking meters, I would like to see some agreement reached with the State Government so that should it be necessary, at some future date, to have these meters removed, the Government will have the power to enforce their removal. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill, and I shall have more to say when it reaches the Committee stage.

MR. COURT (Nedlands) [7.39]: The Bill proposes sweeping changes in respect of parking in the city. I could summarise the measure by saying it amounts to throwing a hot potato into the lap of the Perth City Council, but keeping the string of ministerial approval on the hot potato. The Perth City Council appears to show no reluctance to accept the responsibility, subject to certain conditions.

The Minister for Transport: On the contrary.

Mr. COURT: I would like to suggest that the Perth City Council is not jumping for joy at accepting this responsibility. There seems to be an impression abroad that it is literally bursting to take on this worry, but my impression is the contrary. It has shown no great reluctance to shirk the responsibility, but I think we should correct any suggestion that it is, in fact, chasing the worry.

Mr. Lapham: It has advocated for years that it can control traffic.

Mr. COURT: It has advocated that it should have this responsibility, not so much because it is chasing worry, but in order to catch up with a problem that it has in its midst and about which it wants to do something.

Mr. Lapham: It still wants it.

Mr. COURT: It will accept the responsibility, but I do not know that it is actually chasing it. The Bill amounts to creating a monopoly of parking, for all practical purposes, in the name of the City of Perth in respect of the City of Perth area, because if any private interests want to install parking facilities of a major nature, they must first consult with the city authorities.

Mr. Lapham: Do you think they would get the right?

Mr. COURT: I am very doubtful because the City of Perth, having accepted this responsibility and having entered into the parking field, with its parking meters and other parking facilities as defined by the legislation, would be rather reluctant to see competition enter the field. At a later stage, I propose to comment on the aspect of competition from private facilities.

My main criticism of the project, although I make it clear at this stage that I am supporting the Bill, is that it does virtually amount to a further tax on the motorist. As has been said in the House, the motorist is probably the most heavily taxed individual in the community. He catches it through petrol tax, vehicle licence, insurance, including third party insurance, and in several other ways. Motoring is certainly not an inexpensive business today. There is an ever-increasing demand for motoring, and one can only assume that it is a reflection of the state of general well-being and prosperity that more and more people are going into private transport and deserting public transport. This, in itself, is creating an ever-increasing problem.

Another point of criticism of the scheme is the fact that in the submission of the Bill, the Government did not put forward a very comprehensive plan so far as the City of Perth facilities are concerned. I cannot for a moment imagine that the City of Perth is going into this scheme without a well conceived plan for the next five or ten years. It is insufficient for it to say, "Give us the rights and we will work it out from there," because the project is far too hazardous for any city council, no matter how large it might be, to go into on the off-chance.

I am a little fearful of some piecemeal treatment of our traffic problem, because after all we must accept the fact that parking is only one phase of it. In fact, parking is one phase of traffic and traffic, in turn, is a phase of the overall problem of town planning. On the Bill dealing with the Town Planning Act, we will have more to say about that aspect; suffice to say at this stage that the measure before us does not provide much insight into the overall plan of the City of Perth.

This municipality will be going into a venture which will involve a fairly quick outlay of possibly £500,000, and the Government inherits a responsibility, as I see

it, under the Bill, in connection with that investment. Therefore it is too dangerous for us to allow a venture of this kind without some background information. As I see it at the moment, the original plans will be developed around several flat pieces of ground to be converted into parking areas.

It has been explained that the intention is to beautify those areas and remove as much of the ugly aspect of a parking area as is possible, but I suggest that it will not be very long, at the rate we are going, before all the areas envisaged for parking on the flat strips of ground will be utilised. It is amazing how few vehicles can park in a comparatively large piece of flat ground.

That brings us to the next point as to whether the city council has any plans in the foreseeable future for multi-storey parking. The Minister touched on one or two aspects of underground parking at a later date, and multi-storey parking; but there was no comprehensive plan which could take place over the next five or 10 years in respect of this parking problem. I cannot imagine, at this stage, that the City of Perth has not formulated some plan to deal with this situation. On the question of multi-storey parking and the rights of the City of Perth to withhold approval, subject to some appeal to the Minister, I feel that private enterprise, to a certain extent, has been a bit slow off the mark.

Some members might recall that during the Address-in-reply, or some similar debate last session, I drew attention to the scope open to private industry to get into this field of parking within the city area. There is a conflict of opinion throughout the world, and even in America, as to whether parking should be handled by the civic authorities or by private industry. So throughout America we find examples of the two systems functioning side by side in neighbouring towns. It has been fairly well established that enterprising merchants, particularly retailers, can acquire sites appropriately located and develop them with profit to themselves both in respect of the direct investment in the parking area and with an indirect and more substantial benefit to their businesses.

The Minister for Transport: I think you used the right expression when you said, "appropriately located." That is all that is intended in the Bill.

Mr. COURT: To my mind, the location of these sites is most important and why I stress the point is this: When the matter is in the hands of a civic authority, it must of necessity come under a certain amount of pressure—whether it is a Government or local authority, there are always pressure groups abroad. There will be arguments as to where these multi-storey parking locations will be. So far as fringe parking is concerned, that more

or less resolves itself because of the geographical arrangement and the availability of suitable spaces and so on. But when it comes to the inner group or multi-storey places, the problem becomes much more contentious. I think the example I used last year was the well-known stores of Moores, Aherns, Boans and Bairs—all that group of retailers in the Murray-st.-Wellington-st. area.

It was my view that had they acted quickly—and I do not think it is too late now—they could have acquired freehold land in the vicinity of those places which would have served all of those stores. I do not suggest that we must have multi-storey parking spaces for each of those stores because in that case they would form a traffic hazard in themselves by cars going in and coming out. But one decent-sized place in that general area could have serviced the lot.

The American experience is that a well-conducted parking site of the multi-storey type can be an attractive building and show a return of approximately 7 per cent. on the funds employed. I would suggest that a suitable site in that general locality would cost about £400,000—that is to be fully equipped and including the acquisition of freehold land and a building suitably located in a place where it has easy ingress and egress. To have two parking areas in the same general area would merely upset the traffic and I think one would defeat the object of the other.

Well located places of that type can service a substantial number of big stores and enable those firms to keep alive their main shopping areas. They must be worried at present about the drift to the suburbs and it is up to them to take some definite action. No doubt the city council will try to assist in that regard both by outer fringe parking, with feeder buses, and some parking closer in to the city. The installation of parking meters will do no more than rationalise the space; they will not create any more space and will only improve the turn-round of space and stop a certain amount of selfishness that is rampant where there is no control over the traffic. Properly located multi-storey buildings to service a substantial number of retail stores, like those I have mentioned, would have been the answer not to the whole problem but to a large part of the problem confronting city stores.

I understand from reading about these matters that the multi-storey car parks, if properly conducted and giving a good service, attract two types of customers—those who want to park for a long time throughout the day and who wish to have all their servicing done at that particular place, and those who want to use the parking facilities for half an hour or an hour, as the case may be, for the express purpose of doing their shopping. For that

reason, they serve the permanent employees in that location and at the same time service the passing trade.

There is another advantage to municipalities in having private interests running these multi-storey car parks and handling the parking facilities, inasmuch as they remain ratable properties. Once the City of Perth sets up these installations within the city block, they will not be ratable properties and that portion of the land will be dependent on the general revenue of the municipality except, of course, that the council may make a profit out of the parking facilities.

There are two specific provisions in the Bill to which I am opposed and one is the proposal to give trading rights to the City of Perth. Personally, I would not object to its having the right to lease those trading rights in these parking locations, but I do not like the City of Perth becoming involved in general trading within its area, such as the sale of petrol, servicing and the like. It is entirely different when it gets involved in the sale of petrol, oils, tyres, batteries and the like as distinct from providing a service for parking. I think the council would probably find it more economic and desirable to sublease a lot of its parking privileges.

The other provision which I do not like is the tow away provision. I cannot recall the Minister's having said so in this House, but, according to the Press reports, he has agreed to abandon this particular provision.

The Minister for Transport: As usual, the Press made it up.

Mr. COURT: Then I take it the Minister has not agreed to abandon the tow away provision. Personally, I am opposed to it because I think we have enough of these harsh laws. I know it is annoying to have somebody who will leave his vehicle in a dangerous place or for an unreasonable period, but after all we are still a British community and we have our courts; we can punish these people who persist in doing this sort of thing by dealing with them in the ordinary way. There is nothing wrong with the laws we have; it is the enforcement of the law itself that is the trouble, and I feel it is quite unnecessary to put this arbitrary power into the hands of people.

It could cause a lot of feeling in the community. It is true that the first person who had his car taken away would probably feature on the front page of the Press morning, noon and night. That would probably have a salutary effect, and no doubt the person concerned would suffer from a certain amount of derision when he had to go to rescue his vehicle from the pound. But surely there is some way we can overcome this difficulty without going to that extreme. I have read of it in other parts of the world.

Mr. I. W. Manning: It is very unpopular in other parts of the world where it is in operation.

Mr. COURT: It has been very unpopular, but in some parts, of course, they seem to use it as a threat—as something having a moral effect rather than something in constant use.

The Minister for Transport: I would not say it is an extreme case. Would the hon. member be surprised to learn that it has been indulged in in the City of Perth on hundreds of occasions?

Mr. COURT: That really amazes me because hundreds of occasions means a lot of times.

The Minister for Transport: I am assured of that by the police.

Mr. COURT: Does the Minister mean that the police have actually taken the cars away?

The Minister for Transport: That is so, or have engaged a tow away service to take the cars away. As a matter of fact, it was done to me.

Mr. COURT: I can imagine that happening in the case of a person who was arrested.

The Minister for Transport: I was not arrested, I can assure you of that.

Mr. COURT: Or in the case of a person who was taken ill and could not drive his car away; or in the case of a person who collapsed or even died.

The Minister for Transport: I did not come under any of those categories, either.

Mr. COURT: I suggest that the police should not tow vehicles away in the ordinary circumstances. If a person has parked his car in the wrong place, annoying as it may be, in such instances I feel we should still use the ordinary processes of the law and not resort to direct action.

The Minister for Transport: Strangely enough, it is the ordinary process of the law now.

Mr. COURT: That surprises me.

The Minister for Transport: It is a fact and not something that has been super-high-lighted in the Press.

Mr. COURT: We are making a specific provision for it on this occasion. At the moment, it is just a question of carting a man's car away, and that is not the beginning and end of the earth. But the fact is that before long we will have some similar provision in some other legislation, and direct action will be wanted in that case.

The Minister for Transport: We will deal with that in due course, when it arises.

Mr. COURT: But we move by precedent here; and when another Bill is brought down with a similar power, the Minister will be able to quote the provision in this

Bill and he will be able to say, "We agreed to it on parking, why do you object to it now?" I think we must object to this direct action power being vested in the City of Perth. I support the Bill with those qualifications.

MR. JOHNSON (Leederville) [7.58]: I would like to congratulate the Minister responsible for bringing this measure forward: I want to congratulate him on his courage in tackling a problem that has been avoided by so many others. It is a difficult question and it takes courage to tackle these things which other people have left. However, that does not mean I will support the Bill—because I will not. I am going to vote against it on the second reading because I think that some of the principles on which it is constructed are wrong and ones which, if we adopt them, we will regret having agreed to in the not too distant future.

The Bill is one which will give to the City of Perth certain powers to deal with traffic or stationary vehicles. The City of Perth is not the only local governing body that has some degree of interest in streets and in vehicles standing thereon. In other words, every city council, municipal council and country road board has an interest in parking. There is no doubt that in every place where there is business, there is a traffic problem and that problem is accentuated by parking. It is of no use being able to get a vehicle to a place where one wants to transact business unless one is able to get out of it and do one's business. That applies just as much in Shark Bay as it does in the City of Perth.

I can remember, not so long ago, some complaints from the town of Denham in relation to parking because in their limited stretch of road certain people with very large transport vehicles had acquired the habit of parking in such a way as to impede others. If we are to pass a special Act to give the City of Perth special powers to deal with this matter, then the next time the town of Denham has some small traffic problem we will find ourselves in the situation of having to pass a special Act to give the local authority there power to control its own parking. The same could apply, and probably would apply, to, say, Esperance; and to every other local authority area.

We are getting to a stage where just to express that argument is, in itself, quite obviously ridiculous. This legislation is wrong in principle in that it is establishing a precedent by introducing a special Act to deal with the powers of one local authority. The City of Perth is the major local authority—and no doubt it will tell us so itself—in the State of Western Australia, in that it controls the city block of the capital. But it is a local authority amongst local authorities. The problem remains the same, in essence, no matter where it is. It is only a matter of degree

to whatever place it moves. When this problem is dealt with, I think it must be dealt with on a State-wide basis; or, if it is considered too early to tackle it on a State-wide basis, then it should be tackled at least on a metropolitan basis.

I have said in relation to a number of other bits of legislation that affect such matters, that I feel we should have a single authority covering the whole of the area concerned in the metropolitan part of the Stephenson plan; something in the nature of the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works covering certain works to be done inside that area. It would be reasonably logical to give to a body similar to that powers such as are envisaged in this Act. But it ceases to be logical when it is given to a single local authority.

We will find that the City of Subiaco will want this authority; the City of Fremantle will also want it, as will the City of Claremont, the district of Nedlands and the district of South Perth. They all have separate problems and if we are to pass a special Act for each of them, then because each of them has different requirements, the regulations made will also differ, and what is an offence in the City of Perth will not be an offence in Subiaco; what is considered to be an offence in South Perth, will not be an offence in Perth. We will get a multiplicity of detail and the poor unfortunate motorist—who, after all, does not have to cross a barbed wire barrier when he moves from one administration to another—will not know where he is. That point alone is sufficient to illustrate that this matter should be reconsidered.

The electorate I represent lies entirely within the boundaries of the City of Perth so far as local government is concerned, and it is as well to put it on record that neither the City of Perth nor any of the councillors of the district have made any representations to me to support this Bill or oppose it; or to do anything whatever in relation to it. If I am to take that as an indication that the City of Perth does not want the legislation, I could be wrong.

If I am to take it as an indication that the City of Perth does want the legislation, once again I could be wrong. It could be that the City of Perth does not care a hoot; or it could be that it does not know that there are in this Legislative Assembly persons whose responsibilities cover the same area as theirs and whose electors are the same; and if the voice of those electors is to be heard in this Chamber, it has to be heard through the elected representative in this Chamber.

There are quite a number of things in this Act of which I whole-heartedly approve; one of them is the power to tow away. I think that could be put on record very early in the piece because not only is that power salutary but it is one which we, as realists, must admit as necessary if traffic is to flow. There have

been occasions on which everyone of us has been aware that but for the parking of a certain single vehicle in a particular spot, the traffic would flow a great deal faster than it does.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Queensland tried it.

Mr. JOHNSON: Whilst I do not think it necessary to suggest that the power to tow away should be used to any great extent, I feel it is a power that should reside in whoever has authority to deal with traffic, and, in particular, moving traffic. As an example, let us consider the exit from Perth along Beaufort-st. There is a time limit after which parking is prohibited in Beaufort-st. to allow north-bound traffic to get clear of the city. But on almost any day if one cares to use that particular thoroughfare in the late afternoon, one will find there are still one or two vehicles that have been parked sometime earlier in the day, and which are still there at a time when the street is required to clear the traffic.

Because those vehicles are there and the fact that trams run up that street, it means that the traffic in the whole of Barrack-st. is held up. The tow away principle in that case would be eminently sound, and were it applied once or twice, people would come to avoid that region at that time of the day. The provision would not need to be applied more than once or twice. I feel there is need for a little more insurance protection for a vehicle that is being towed away under authority as there appears to be a weakness in that direction. I feel sure, however, that could be adjusted.

Mr. Court: Why should the motorist be made the butt of such arbitrary treatment?

Mr. JOHNSON: It is only one motorist whose vehicle will be towed away. If he is allowed to obstruct the rights of usage of the road by other motorists and every other passenger in vehicles because his motorcar is private property, I would say it is taking the idea of private property to unreasonable lengths. Rights of private property are not such that they should be permitted to intrude on the proper rights of other persons.

Mr. Court: He can still be dealt with by the court, can he not?

Mr. JOHNSON: No. The matter is not one so much of punishment as of being able to get the vehicle out of the way—that is what lies behind this provision. It is the power to move a vehicle that is obstructing, and I think it is one that should be held. The fact that a man owns, or owes, for a motorcar, does not give him licence to impede everybody else. If he does impede everybody else, someone should have the right to move his car. We have all had experience, even outside Parliament House, of vehicles being parked too close to each end of one's car, and it

is not uncommon for us to release the hand brake, put a shoulder to one car, move it a bit, put the hand brake on and do the same with the other car thus providing sufficient room for us to move our respective cars out of park.

Strictly speaking, however, this is an offence, because it constitutes interference with the vehicle without the permission of the owner. One might say that permission is implied, but I think it may not be. It is far better that the authority to move an impeding vehicle should remain in the proper hands. I agree with that. But once again I feel that the proper hands are those of the members of the Police Force only, and not those of the employees of the city council.

Members of the Police Force are special persons, with special authority, special training, special responsibility, and are covered by special regulations—in general, they are very much special people. The employees of the Perth City Council who could be appointed under this Act, could be almost anyone. It is almost certain that they will not be special in training to anything like the same extent as are the police officers. So we could have a weakness in the detailed administration of this measure because of the lack of properly trained persons to do the job.

I notice there is provision for control in the Bill in respect of the type of uniform they may use, but there is no doubt that to a great extent the proposed inspectors will be using powers which are more properly police powers; they would be administering items which should be administered by the Police Force. All the powers under this measure should remain in the hands of the proper traffic authority.

For instance, I can see no reason why, if parking areas cannot be rightly administered by the police, they should not be administered by the Transport Board. That board has power to appoint appropriate inspectors; it has quite a number of other powers most of which are suitable for expansion in the form envisaged here. The Transport Board has a degree of separation from direct ministerial control and could conceivably administer parking matters not only just for the City of Perth area but for the whole of the metropolitan area where there are parking problems.

I know the parking problem in the City of Perth is considerable. I can name at least one block in the suburb of Leederville—admittedly part of the City of Perth—where the parking and traffic problems at certain times of the week are as difficult as any in the City of Perth. The same applies to the City of Subiaco which is outside this legislation. It also applies to Victoria Park. It would be wise for the Minister to take this legislation back in order to see if the principles cannot be applied in a more acceptable manner.

I have certain distaste for allowing the City of Perth to administer any funds that are properly the funds of somebody else. It is envisaged in this legislation that the funds raised by parking meters and rent in parking stations and so on, should be applied for the benefit of the motorist in the form of parking areas. But I think there are certain weaknesses in the Bill which make it possible for the City of Perth, with the help of trained accountants, to find ways of removing from that fund certain moneys which they could later on justly or otherwise claim were intended for the administration of the Act.

Mr. Oldfield: You do not suggest they would take a bit?

Mr. JOHNSON: I do. Whilst their figures would be accurate, I think some of the implications might be a little difficult to deal with. I have had a great deal of experience with the Perth City Council and I know that over the past several years it has, for its own ends, breached various Acts laid down by this House. For instance, it has budgeted for a surplus on more than one occasion over the last several years and has acquired a surplus, which is directly contrary to the Act, and there does not appear to be any power residing in the Government or the Minister to correct the situation.

My advice is that the only person who can correct that situation is the individual ratepayer. There is not the slightest doubt in my mind that the administration of the council's rating values is completely at variance with the intention of the Act. There is not the slightest doubt in my mind that the relationship between values in suburban areas, such as the Leederville ward, and the city block areas, such as the central ward are uneven, and that is contrary to the relative Act.

It appears, that because of the unevenness of the representation of the various areas on account of the variety in numbers behind the election of the various councillors that the city council is, by its very structure, loaded very heavily in favour of the owner of large-scale city property. It certainly does under-rate city property relative to sale values in proportion to the same matter of sale values in suburban properties. Yet it is proposed in this legislation to hand into the tender mercies of a group like that, the administration of what is nothing less than the motorists' trust money, because the intention of the Bill is that the money should be administered for the benefit of those who pay it—the motorists.

Mr. Oldfield: Only a few will pay. Only those who pay for parking space or those with the most sixpences.

Mr. JOHNSON: No; I fancy that the member for Mt. Lawley is a little wrong in that part of the income will come not only from those who pay their sixpences into the one-armed bandits alongside the

kerb, but from those who use parking space in the fringe areas. I do not think it is intended that parking in the fringe parks should be free and, unless I misunderstood the implication of the Minister in his speech, it is envisaged some of the fringe parking will come into being very shortly. Some can be envisaged as coming into use and producing some revenue quite early.

Mr. Oldfield: I doubt it very much.

Mr. JOHNSON: Possibly before a number of one-armed bandits are put alongside the kerbs.

The Minister for Transport: How would the member for Mt. Lawley know?

Mr. Oldfield: The Government does not move rapidly.

Mr. JOHNSON: The main point I wish to make is that this is a brave attempt to deal with a most difficult problem, and the Minister has my whole-hearted sympathy in the knowledge that it is difficult. However, I think it is being done the wrong way, and I am going to express my opposition by voting against it. Should it get through the second reading, I shall do something about the very large number of clauses to see what can be done to make it a little more acceptable to my point of view.

Primarily, my objection is in part—and quite a large part—to the City of Perth itself being given this authority. If it were some other local authority, I might have a little more sympathy with it, but even then the principle is wrong. The type of legislation we should have should be State-wide in its implications or should have at least metropolitan-area-wide implications and for that reason I oppose the Bill.

MR. LAPHAM (North Perth) [8.22]: I rise to oppose this measure. I do not like it at all and I think it is absolutely unnecessary and undesirable. As a matter of fact, it is purely another form of taxation and, what is more, a sectional form of taxation, which makes it worse. I will say this for the Minister: I am satisfied he thinks he is doing the right thing by introducing this Bill. He is not introducing it primarily for the purpose of introducing a taxation measure. I am satisfied he thinks he is doing the right thing in regard to traffic control in this State.

Mr. Court: He has a revolt on his hands, by the sound of things.

Mr. LAPHAM: The people who have been in control of the traffic in this State for many years and who, as a consequence, are responsible for the lack of control of traffic in this State, are the people whom the Minister has to rely on for advice. After all is said and done, as they have been sadly lacking over the past few years, it is very unlikely that all of a sudden they

will become competent to advise the Minister regarding the traffic difficulties in this State. The people whom I feel have been responsible for traffic control and the advice tendered to the Minister are primarily the Traffic Department and the City of Perth. I also feel he would have taken a considerable amount of advice from a body which supposedly represents the motorists—the Royal Automobile Club.

The Traffic Department, of course, has been responsible for the traffic laws for many years past and the Perth City Council has always coveted the right of the Traffic Department to control parking in the city area. Many spokesmen, speaking on behalf of the Perth City Council, have indicated they felt it was the Perth City Council's right to control traffic within its own municipality. I think all these bodies are in touch with what happens overseas and interstate and I feel that is where the advice has been tendered to the Minister to introduce these one-armed bandits without the arm.

The Minister for Transport: Armless bandits!

Mr. LAPHAM: With one-armed bandits, one can have a bit of fun, but these are fed with sixpences without enjoyment.

The Minister for Transport: These are armless bandits.

Mr. LAPHAM: From the Traffic Department's point of view, the idea behind this Bill is a good one; it solves all problems for a start and gets rid of double parking. It gives a rationing of kerbside space and creates a free flow of traffic. The mere fact of 75 cars parking where 100 cars parked before is of no matter to the Traffic Department—it has solved its problem of double parking and achieved a free flow of traffic.

Mr. Court: What would be the comparison in the number of cars per day as compared with the situation before orderly parking?

Mr. LAPHAM: I doubt if one could arrive at a true comparison, but I feel today there are a great number less parked than previously. As a matter of fact, I will give an illustration. At the back of the Trades Hall there is a parking area for the secretaries and officials. Since the introduction of this scheme of parking, the people from outside have seen this vacant allotment and irrespective of the name on each space, so long as they have some connection with the Trades Hall, either with a union or something else, they have parked their cars there.

The Minister for Transport: The reason for that being there was a banned space on a long length of Beaufort-st.

Mr. LAPHAM: It indicates the cars have got to park somewhere, so they are going into private property and by this

Bill we are not solving the parking problem. Making it inconvenient for people, is only pushing the problem underground.

The Minister for Transport: We want to establish parking grounds.

Mr. LAPHAM: It is only natural that the Perth City Council would favour this expansion. It has been clamouring over the years to control parking, and this move will take the right away from the Traffic Department and give the Perth City Council what it wants. All in all, it is a good arrangement for the Perth City Council. What I am perturbed about is the attitude of the Royal Automobile Club, as this body is supposed to represent the motorists. I would have expected that organisation to be up in arms at the proposition to install meters and take away kerb space—which is the hiring of a roadway—from the motorists. It has become obvious to anyone that this is purely a taxing measure and nothing else.

I was rather perturbed to read in that organisation's newspaper, "The Road Patrol," an editorial which is somewhat enlightening, and I feel I should endeavour to analyse it for the benefit of members of this House in order to give them an indication of what this body thinks in regard to parking matters. It may be interesting to members to realise that, although the R.A.C. has for many years assumed a certain responsibility for motorists and has been considered by many to be the spokesman for the motorists and the authority on motoring, if one considers the names of those who occupy official positions with the club one cannot find anyone with any knowledge of traffic whatever. So I find it difficult to accept the R.A.C. as an authority with regard to traffic. Unfortunately, however, it has been accepted as such, and the Minister has unfortunately unwisely taken it into consideration.

The Minister for Transport: The Minister did not even consult them.

Mr. LAPHAM: The Minister has put his foot right into this now. Let us read what this editorial has to say—

The Minister for Metropolitan Traffic (Mr. H. E. Graham, M.L.A.) favours the introduction of parking meters in Perth and it can be assumed, therefore, that provision for their installation and operation will be embodied in forthcoming traffic legislation. Automobile clubs all over the world have at one time or another opposed the introduction of the "one-armed bandits" on the score that they reduce rather than increase kerb parking space and that the glittering take from the meters usually finds its way into general revenue.

With that I heartily agree.

The Minister for Transport: Usually—but not in this case.

Mr. LAPHAM: The editorial continues—

The Standing Joint Committee of the R.A.C. and A.A. London has issued a paper condemning parking meters principally because of the effect on the motorists' pocket and on the grounds that the parking meter does not increase parking space or limit parking. It is only a means of collecting a fee.

So the R.A.C. is fully aware of the views of the automobile clubs throughout the world. It indicates that fact in this editorial. In view of that, one would think it would be a little more cautious in its approach to the subject. But let me continue with the editorial—

In conceding the force of the arguments advanced against meters, the R.A.C. of W.A. cannot ignore the clear evidence from cities in Australia and overseas that the parking meter has demonstrated itself as an effective means of obtaining rapid turnover and rationing of limited kerb space.

Well, there is no doubt that one gets rapid turnover and limited kerb space. That is due to the fact that many people find it necessary to utilise kerb space on account of their business activities. I was speaking to one traveller the other day who would find it extremely difficult to walk around the town to carry on his business and take his samples from place to place. He has as many as 14 or 15 calls a day. Under the proposal in the Bill he would have to pay 7s. 6d. per day as a penalty for using a vehicle in carrying out his work. Under those circumstances, it can be understood that kerb space would be limited.

The Minister for Transport: I think that a few yards' walk would not do that man any harm.

Mr. LAPHAM: I do not know whether the Minister is hard of hearing, but I have already indicated that it is impossible for this individual to walk with his samples. The editorial continues—

The R.A.C. stands four-square in its protection of the interests of motorists but it does not overlook the fact that there is now approximately one car to every four persons and that a 10 per cent. increase in registrations is occurring each year.

In that paragraph, the R.A.C. apparently attempts to boost its own morale and it is very enlightening to read that it stands four-square behind the motorists. I find it rather difficult to understand this editorial if such is the case. Let me carry on—

The introduction of parking meters must be viewed merely as one step in a composite plan designed to meet a situation that can no longer be ignored.

I feel that that indicates some very nice abstract thinking, and nothing else. It goes on—

The essential safeguard is a statutory requirement that surplus revenue from parking meters over and above maintenance costs should be used for developing ancillary parking areas. The R.A.C. submitted its views in this regard to the Minister who has advised the R.A.C. of his acceptance of the proposals.

The Minister for Transport: They wrote and asked me a question which I replied to.

Mr. LAPHAM: The Minister was in communication with them.

The Minister for Transport: That is so.

Mr. LAPHAM: The editorial continues—

Under the proposed plan, kerb space will be available for the motorist who is prepared to pay the necessary fee. Others with less necessity to use kerb space may inexpensively park their cars in inner and outer fringe areas.

I cannot understand the R.A.C. making use of that statement either. It says that people may inexpensively park cars. How does it know? Let us look at the Bill on that point. On page 9 we find this in Clause 11 (b) (i)—

The council may—

on any land which is within a parking region and which is acquired by or vested in, or which is under the care, control, and management of, the council, establish, control and manage parking stations.

The council may, on any land within a parking region, establish parking stations. It may also, under paragraph (d)—

demand and recover such fees and charges as are prescribed for the use of any parking station or parking facility provided under this Act.

Therefore the R.A.C., when it talks of inexpensive parking, is just making use of words. It has no more idea than any member of this House what the charges will be. Let me continue with the editorial—

It is to be expected that a section of the motoring public, which has hitherto enjoyed free parking on public streets, will complain. Such complaints are not likely to receive much sympathy unless accompanied by practical alternatives.

What a classic piece of ego! The R.A.C. is presumptuous enough to presume that because it has not been able to solve the parking problem, nobody else can. Has anybody else ever been given an opportunity? Have the members of the public, who are to pay this tax, been given an opportunity to solve the traffic problem? The only people who have ever been given an opportunity are the people who, over the

years, have proved their inability to do it. Yet we find the R.A.C., which supposedly represents the motorists, making statements like that. The editorial concludes—

As matters stand, the R.A.C. does not intend to oppose the introduction of parking meters provided the above-mentioned safeguards are incorporated in legislation. It regards their introduction as the only practical method of overcoming an overall parking problem that threatens to get completely out of hand.

I find it extremely difficult to reconcile my view with regard to parking with those of the authorities—I am not holding the Minister responsible in this regard—who consider that the introduction of parking measures will solve the problem. Only those who have been responsible for the present parking mess have been consulted about this matter. There does not appear to be one original thought amongst the lot of them, and they appear to be skilled only in aping conditions operating in other countries. They recommend, as a means of overcoming this parking difficulty, a restriction of a public right—the hiring of a thoroughfare, and in effect, making things more difficult for the motorist than they are today.

Mr. Rodoreda: What is your solution?

Mr. LAPHAM: I am happy the hon. member has mentioned that. I feel that I have a solution, and it is a commonsense one and not a very difficult one. As a matter of fact, the hon. member may as well know it now. The city is bounded on one side by the river; and on the other, by the railway.

Mr. Oldfield: Reclaim both!

Mr. LAPHAM: We cannot do much with the river except remove the pollution, but that does not solve the traffic problem. But we can do quite a lot with the railway. I feel that we cannot afford the luxury of having shunting yards in the middle of the city. If we do intend to have them there, there is still a way out of the difficulty. Under this Bill, it is proposed to allow the council to borrow £437,000 to purchase parking meters and establish inner and outer fringe areas. If that money were spent in putting a cover over the railway station from Pier-st. to Milligan-st., and putting a decent foundation down with a view to ultimately erecting a 10 or 11-storey building there, the money would be well spent.

Mr. Hearman: You could not do much for £500,000.

Mr. LAPHAM: The Government should examine the position with realism and realise that the railways should be in the middle of the city and not on the outer fringe. One of the first steps to be taken would be to put another entrance to the station in Roe-st. and then sell the property on which the court house and lock-up

stands as well as the Perth Boys' School, the Traffic Department, the Museum and Girdlestone. That is all valuable land on the outskirts of the city and its present use is blocking the expansion of the city northwards.

The return from the sale of those properties, together with the £500,000 which it is suggested the Perth City Council be allowed to borrow, would go a long way towards getting us out of our difficulties in this regard. I believe that the first requisite would be to make a roadway over the top of the railway station and yards from Pier-st. to Milligan-st. and that would supply a natural outlet from the city. The big retail stores would naturally want to cross to the other side of the railway and build there, if expansion were made possible in that direction. Such a move would spread the city out and that in turn would lessen our parking problems because the vehicles would be parked over a much larger area.

Mr. Court: Do you suggest the erection of a multi-storey parking station over the railway station?

Mr. LAPHAM: Yes.

Mr. Court: Would you have in mind a 10 or 11-storeyed building?

Mr. LAPHAM: The height of the structure would have to be governed by the availability of money, but I think we should lay down a very substantial foundation so that additional storeys could be added, if required, at a later date. Premier Bolte has a similar idea in Victoria.

Mr. Bovell: He is a good chap.

Mr. LAPHAM: The details of two alternative multi-million pound schemes for roofing sections of Flinders-st railway yards and erecting big buildings there, were disclosed recently by Mr. Bolte. The Press report said:

Mr. Bolte will take the two plans with him when he leaves Melbourne today on the first stage of his round the world sell Victoria mission. He hopes to interest big American construction companies in building and financing the railway project. He said any company willing to do the job would be given a long-term lease of the roof area. It would not have to accept either of the plans he was taking with him. They were simply to illustrate the tremendous potential of the railway yards but he had been assured that both schemes were sound business propositions.

I think they are, too. Can members visualise a great building over the top of our railway station with an exit to the north? Today we have the Lord-st. crossing that cannot be crossed except on rare occasions, and the Pier-st. crossing which suffers from the same disability. Then we have the Beaufort-st. bridge which is always cluttered up with trams.

In the worst period of our double-parking era, the double parkers were never as much hindrance as our trams are to the traffic. If we eliminated our trams, we could carry on with double parking and still have a free flow of traffic. In William-st. where at last we have traffic lights, the traffic flows smoothly, but again at Milligan-st. the crossing is very congested, while at the subway near the markets there is always a blockage.

The trouble with this city is that, having got in, one cannot get out of it, and the police on point duty have one running around and around. I was running around in circles the other day with a trailer on the back of my car. I simply could not park because the car was a private vehicle and could not park on a commercial stand and the trailer was a commercial vehicle and could not park on a private stand, so where could I go?

The Minister for Transport: Would you like a few suggestions as to where you could go?

Mr. LAPHAM: I went around and around until eventually I slipped into a private firm's laneway. I do not think there is any great difficulty in solving the traffic problem, but it needs new ideas. Parking meters will not overcome the difficulty. If we install them, we will simply be emulating the ostrich and burying our heads in the sand and saying that we just cannot see the extra vehicles any more. The installation of the meters would merely limit the right of the people to use the available space.

Where 100 vehicles could park before, we now find that only 75 can park and if we installed parking meters we would find that we had made provision for the member for Nedlands to park his Customline and then, when he went to park it, he would probably find a motorcycle already occupying that area. We know that two vehicles are not allowed to be parked in the one area because they cannot both use the one parking meter. We could, ultimately, see the spectacle of a number of motorbikes occupying all the parking space in Hay-st. from Barrack-st. to William-st. I think it would be preferable perhaps not to go back to the old system entirely but to use a modification of both schemes as I am convinced that the parking meters will not solve the problem.

If those meters were installed, what would be the position of goods delivery vehicles? Would the drivers have to put a coin in the meter to set it going each time they parked their vehicles? If so, it would make the delivery of goods quite an expensive proposition. If I wanted to let my wife out of the car to do some shopping, would I be expected to take her right to the corner before letting her down or, alternatively, if I were desirous of picking her up, would I have to motion to her that she must go to the corner before I could pick her up? It would be absurd.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Completely absurd!

Mr. Court: If you had this major parking station over the railway station, would you ban parking in the streets completely?

Mr. LAPHAM: Certainly not!

Mr. Court: Would you allow Rafferty's rules to prevail?

Mr. LAPHAM: I would not. I see no reason why parking in the streets should not continue and if it was limited to 20 minutes, there would be no difficulty as regards parking space, even in St. George's Terrace. However, some wise guy in the Traffic Branch—and there are plenty of them—decided to alter the 20-minute parking to 30-minute parking, and then the trouble started, although it was obvious what would happen. We have only to revert to the 20-minute parking and most of our troubles will be over.

For my part, I hope the Minister will not continue with the Bill as I am satisfied it will not do any good. If passed, it will just be a blob in our community as it is a taxing measure with no merit at all, and a sectional taxing measure at that. The Bill would accomplish nothing for the Minister, even in a few years' time, and perhaps I am looking to that time also. That is why I hope the Minister will not go ahead with this scheme. I suggest that he hold a competition and ask the general public to submit ideas. It has been my experience that not all the brains are in the Civil Service—or in the Police Force.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: He would have a big fan mail.

Mr. LAPHAM: All the brains are not in Parliament, either. If the Minister sought suggestions in that way, I think he would get some ideas that would help to solve the problem. The idea is worth trying because so far the people who are going to be asked to pay for parking in the city have not had the chance to offer alternative suggestions. They have not been given the right to offer ideas. All that has been considered so far is their right to pay when the meters are installed. I intend to oppose the Bill.

MR. JAMIESON (Beeloo) [8.55]: No matter from what point of view members have opposed the Bill so far, they all seem to have had in common a dislike of handing the proposed power over to the Perth City Council. Even the member for Nedlands inferred that it was a reasonably hot potato and I think it was in the form of a hot roast potato which is most acceptable to the City Council—

Mr. Court: I do not think that is so.

Mr. JAMIESON: After all these years this problem has culminated in a Press campaign which outshone the best examples of Hollywood publicity. Like some

films which cost a lot of money but do not turn out too well, this campaign has culminated in a notice that appeared in Thursday evening's paper a few weeks ago entitled "Graham to Introduce Meter Bill Today." Sometimes Hollywood films do not turn out as well as the producers expect them to, and they gave this particular measure a glamorous title which even caused the Government Printer some concern. After going all that way and receiving publicity and building the public up to believe that parking meters were inevitable, the Minister finally introduced the Bill.

Let us examine the position that has prevailed since 1919 when the Government found it necessary to take over control of traffic from the various local authorities in the metropolitan area. In the intervening period the Government has been involved in considerable expense and to get an idea of the magnitude of that expense, I recently asked the Minister how long had the Police Traffic Branch been responsible for metropolitan and city traffic control and his reply was that it had been responsible since 1919. I asked, further, what had been the cost of that responsibility to the Government for each of the last 10 years and the figures given were:—

	£
1945-46	40,000
1946-47	46,330
1947-48	90,000
1948-49	115,000
1949-50	140,358
1950-51	190,000
1951-52	230,000
1952-53	260,000
1953-54	293,612
1954-55	331,248

Admittedly, a lot of that money is accounted for by motor-vehicle insurance trust receipts, drivers' licence fees, weigh-bridge fees, and so on, but taking it all into consideration, over the years the Government has spent a colossal sum on administering metropolitan traffic and now we are faced with this Bill, which is essentially a taxing measure which the Perth City Council, ever happy to jump on the gravy train and get whatever it can, is pleased to welcome, in its greed to get its hands on the boodle, whether to provide a multi-storey building so that it can in future say, "We built this building for the people," or for some other purpose, although it would not be true for the city council to claim that it had built such a structure when the actual people paying for it would be those who subscribed through the parking meters.

In respect of the allocation of traffic fees, the Perth City Council has done very well for itself in the past few years. In 1954-55 it received £70,182; in 1955-56 £74,524; in 1956-57 it has received so far one-third of its expected quota, amounting

to £18,117. As well as those amounts, the Public Works Department has made the following contributions through works over the past three years:—

	£
1954-55	267,520
1955-56	6,000
1956-57 (to date)	131,710

So again the position has arisen where the Government has been responsible for this expenditure in and around the suburban area—because of the city traffic—for the provision of what control there has been over traffic in recent years.

During the whole of this period, the Perth City Council has spent nothing despite the fact that the Minister implies that its financial position is so buoyant that it can, by various means, raise £447,000. No doubt any member of this Chamber would be able to do the same as the Perth City Council proposes to do, if he could obtain the fees that are expected from these parking areas. No doubt the Minister could also, without this provision giving the power to the Perth City Council.

The only parking facility the Perth City Council has made available is that which commences at the beginning of Mounts Bay-rd. and extends to Mill-st. and I am quite sure that it would be eager to appoint a man with a bag on his shoulder the very day the Minister granted this power to it to control parking areas. It is no use the Minister implying that it has not the authority to provide parking space, because it has. Having had all these opportunities over the years to do something for the motorist, the Perth City Council has still sat back and done very little. In fact, it has done nothing but wait to see what the Government had to offer it in the form of this, that or the other site and then, with the assistance it has received from the Government, it has endeavoured to carry on and put up something which amounts to only half-measures and which is nothing near the size or the nature of that which is necessary to meet the requirements of a city such as Perth.

The overall town planning of the city and suburbs as envisaged in the Stephenson report is the prime prerogative of the Government of the day to implement. Tied up with that plan is a series of under-ways, over-ways and all sorts of traffic facilities that will cost the Government, from time to time, a considerable sum of money. If this legislation with its attendant costs is to be imposed on the motorist in the form of a taxing measure, the tax will be paid by motorists from all parts of the State, not only from those around the City of Perth. The percentage of motorists residing within the Perth City Council boundaries will be fairly small compared to the total number that will be using the traffic facilities from time to time.

Therefore, it is the Government's responsibility to make provision, in the centre of commerce and trade, for parking requirements and in no way should it be the responsibility of the City of Perth. In the overall planning scheme, the provision of these various traffic amenities will be very costly and from a taxing measure such as this, the Government should be entitled to accumulate moneys to build up a fund from which money can be spent not only to provide for fringe parking, multi-storey parking structures and so forth, but also the provision of entrances and exits to the city.

Recently, from another measure which the Minister introduced to this House, we saw that he is providing for a tax to be levied on the whole of the metropolitan motorists for a period of ten years to meet the cost of the Narrows bridge and its approaches. This will be imposed not only on those motorists who frequent the City of Perth, but also on motorists from all parts of the metropolitan area. Surely, if it is reasonable for them to contribute towards the cost of the Narrows bridge and its approaches, it is good enough for them to pay into a fund such as I have mentioned for the provision of parking facilities!

In any other part of Australia where the control of traffic has been placed in the hands of the principal local authority, no great success has been achieved and, in addition, a flock of officials dressed in uniform are appointed with the powers of policemen. This Bill proposes to permit of another army of policemen being appointed under the jurisdiction of the Perth City Council, subject to the approval of the Minister. Once this step is taken, it will mean that another administrative body controlling traffic will be constituted, and the revenue required for their upkeep will mean that a fair amount will be expended from the proceeds obtained from the parking meters.

Although I do not think he is very interested, in view of the fair amount of support he has obtained from members opposite, the Minister might argue, in reply, that the control of parking facilities by the Government is not warranted and that such control should lie in the hands of the Perth City Council. In none of the other cities of the Commonwealth has any great improvement been achieved when the control of traffic has been vested in the City Council. The department that the Minister desires to be set up can be established within the Traffic Department as it is now. The cost could be completely met from the fund without wastefully constituting another separate department under the jurisdiction of the Perth City Council.

I know that there is provision in the Bill which will permit the Perth City Council to exempt certain persons from this parking regulation. In view of its existing attitude towards its own councillors and

the concessions it has granted, I can visualise in the future such concessions will continue to be granted to the Perth city councillors and those people who are more entitled to receive them, will be refused.

Let us look back to what happened in 1919 when the first traffic legislation was introduced by Hon. W. George, the then Minister for Works. At that time, after referring to the various Acts that governed traffic in that year, he went on to say—

The provisions embodied in those Acts have become totally inadequate. The by-laws which have been made by different bodies are disjointed and conflicting. It is quite evident that such a state of affairs is a menace to good government and must necessarily mean divided responsibility. In this Bill we are endeavouring to eliminate all provisions relating to traffic from the various Bills I have mentioned, and have grouped them in this particular Bill, which, when passed, can be regarded as a plain straightforward statement of the powers and responsibilities that rest upon the local governing bodies. We shall, in fact, have a uniform set of regulations. We shall have the same fees throughout the different districts, and the different statutes and by-laws which have from time to time been got together to suit the different roads boards will be displaced by uniform laws.

As has already been intimated by the member for North Perth, this Bill proposes to do just the opposite. There would be every justification for the City of Fremantle or the City of Subiaco next year to require that the Government should introduce legislation along these lines for their convenience.

Surely if we are to legislate in this State, the essential thing is to legislate for the State as a whole and not for any individual council or body. To do so is, in itself, a retrograde step. It might appear that the provision of these parking facilities would cost the Government much which it could not, at this juncture, afford. However, on a quick calculation the contrary would seem to be the case.

Indeed, a statement by the Lord Mayor was to the effect that the immediate installation of some 750 or more parking meters would return to the people who are in control of them about £100,000 per annum. It is also evident that if they are being used for eight hours a day out of the 24 they would be in operation and for 300 days a year, and considering that the meters would cost approximately £45 each to be installed, which would be covered in two and a half months, the Government would have no difficulty in financing a scheme such as this.

Under the regulations that can be proclaimed by virtue of the provisions of this legislation—and despite the fact that the

revenue to be obtained from these parking meters is to be received by the Perth City Council—it is incumbent upon the police to continue to maintain traffic order and to act as traffic inspectors. In practically every clause of the Bill where reference is made to a traffic inspector, the police are also mentioned. It would appear, therefore, that the police are to be relied upon for the control of traffic with the assistance of these additional officers who are to be appointed by the Perth City Council, but the police will receive no return for their services.

The Bill also prescribes certain charges and that, of course, brings us again to what I was referring to previously, namely, that basing the charge on 1s. per hour, in view of the fact that a car might be parked for only 20 minutes, the revenue from the meters could be boosted by another 50 per cent. The Perth City Council may prescribe regulations relating to parking generally, parking meters and parking exemptions. It can also prescribe regulations that would allow that body to provide some form of shuttle bus service.

No doubt the Minister will claim that the city council is not prepared to run such a service, but is prepared to leave it to private individuals who desire to do the job. In this respect it would tally very closely with Clause 2 of the Liberal Party's transport platform which states "in co-operation with private enterprise to modernise and extend the metropolitan transport system". It would not in any shape or form comply with Clause 5 of the traffic safety platform of the A.L.P. which seeks to co-ordinate existing traffic rules and regulations throughout the State, because it would be setting up a separate entity. This would support a policy which is not normally the prerogative of a Labour Minister to support.

There is another objectionable feature in the Bill, and indeed it is cropping up a lot lately, although it has not been the practice in the past, that is, to amend another Act by including a schedule in the Bill. On this occasion the schedule amends the Traffic Act. If it is necessary to amend that Act, surely a small Bill could be introduced to include the provisions in the schedule, and not have the amendment hidden in a Bill relating to another Act!

To get back to my opposition to this measure, I am opposed in every way to the granting of powers to an autocratic or semi-autocratic body for the reason that it has not earned the respect of those associated with it. In the past it has not endeavoured to co-operate. We might clearly understand that by the fact that every member on this side of the House who spoke against this measure represents in whole or in part some portion of the City of Perth.

That should indicate there is a desire on the part of those members to cause the city council to think twice before rushing in to grab anything dangled before it by the Minister. No doubt he is entitled to persuade them. I do not think it has all been on the part of the city council. As the member for Mt. Lawley interjected a while ago, the town clerk had a lot to do with the drafting of this Bill. It could well be that the original draft came from his office and not that of the Minister.

I am thoroughly opposed to the Bill as it is now framed. I say that the charges to be imposed by parking meters are in reality a taxing measure. Every taxing measure should be retained and should be the prerogative, not of the city council and its by-laws, but of the Government of the day. I would say this to the Minister in all sincerity: There is no guarantee, even with all the clauses in the Bill and all the restrictions envisaged, that the city council will play ball as the Minister thinks it will. I do not know how it has deluded him into that belief. It seems to have convinced him thoroughly. There is no guarantee that the council will not adopt the same procedure which it adopted some years ago by erecting a hessian fence around a certain area so that those outside could not see what was inside.

I intend to oppose the second reading. So as to make the Bill more palatable and more in line with my thoughts, in case the second reading is agreed to, as is possible from the support from the other side of the House, I shall place amendments on the notice paper which will appear tomorrow. I shall be able to argue on the pros and cons of giving the city council authority to impose this tax when the time comes. The Minister is adamant in his attitude of going on with this proposal. That being the case, we will argue the matter during the Committee stage.

MR. OLDFIELD (Mt. Lawley) [9.20]: I cannot reconcile myself to the belief, despite all the assurances given to the contrary, that this will not be a case of the motorists with the most money being able to obtain the greatest opportunity for parking. It is obvious and logical that where a charge is to be imposed for a parking space on the kerbside within the city area, the person with the most money can most afford to pay for such space. In many instances, the space will be practically monopolised by people who are paying the charges not from their own pockets, but out of the businesses or expense accounts. Therefore, those fees would be taxable deductions.

One street I have in mind is St. George's Terrace. If parking meters are installed, I believe that the land agents and other business men who need a car handy to take clients around, will not hesitate to pay the 8s. or 10s. a day for parking fees. They

have to make only one sale and such expense would go on to the cost of that sale. To other people the 1s. an hour or 6d. a half-hour is an additional charge.

It will mean that parking stalls will be available to those who are most willing to pay. In that respect, it becomes a sectional tax. It becomes an additional tax on those who, firstly, have to pay because they cannot park and because the use of a vehicle is their means of earning a livelihood or, secondly, those who have the money and are prepared to pay for the privilege of parking in the city area to the exclusion of those who are not so fortunately placed financially.

We have all overlooked one thing; that is, roads were never intended for parking purposes. No roadway was ever made for parking. It was built to carry traffic. When a railway system is built, the parking areas are constructed in the way of running sheds, shunting yards and sidings. Vehicles not in traffic are shunted off and parked in those areas. Another main line is not put in to park the vehicles not in traffic.

I am one of those who subscribe to the belief that a complete ban on all parking in the city area within peak hours is justified. I have been told that the authorities have been compelled to impose such a restriction in other cities. I do not think any great hardship would be created by this. When I refer to a complete ban, I refer only to the private motorist. I realise that commercial vehicles should be able to park in the city so that they can load or unload goods.

The Minister for Transport: Don't you think that ought to be done off the streets?

Mr. OLDFIELD: I agree with the Minister's approach that there should be no reversing out of laneways. The owners of business premises should be compelled to provide ingress and egress for transport vehicles, but when we take into account the small pie shops, frock shops and others with a 10 to 12 ft. frontage, this proposition becomes impracticable. If access ways are provided through which deliveries can be made, there will be no loading or unloading on the streets.

Perhaps I might issue a note of warning in regard to access ways. When the City of Melbourne was planned about 100 years ago, the town planners had a brilliant idea of wide streets and large laneways. With the rise in land values, many of those laneways became shopping centres, and today we see the Little Collins-sts. all over Melbourne. At one time they were supposed to be laneways for the rubbish vans to pick up the garbage.

Some of the access ways in Sydney and Melbourne have developed into arcades or narrow shopping streets, with a narrow footpath on one side. In time to come

the same thing could happen here. If we adopt the system of access ways, and if they should be covered by statute and not by local government by-laws, then Parliament itself and not certain other people, would have the say as to whether or not they could be used for shopping centres.

If we accept the fact that roads were never intended to be used for parking, and in view of the fact that we have no access ways or other method for delivery and picking up of goods, permission should be granted through a system of wind-screen stickers, even though a charge were to be levied for issuing the stickers. On ordinary vehicles which are the tools of trade of commercial travellers, land agents and the like, this system will be invaluable because the vehicle is their means of earning a livelihood, and they must be able to park so that they can cover the warehouses and retail stores.

I take this opportunity of relating a somewhat amusing incident, and one which I think amply illustrates the anomaly which exists in regard to parking. This afternoon in Barrack-st. I was speaking to a very good friend of the Minister for Transport—one of the commissioners of the R. & I. Bank. We were standing alongside one of the new parking stalls which was occupied by a small type of motor-vehicle. It pulled up fairly well forward on the stall. A motor cyclist rode up and without causing any inconvenience to the car parked in the stall, parked his motorcycle there, to. Immediately behind the motorcycle was a vacant stall.

A policeman came up to the motor cyclist and informed him he could not park there. "Why not?" said the motorcyclist. The policeman said, "You are double parking. There is already a vehicle occupying the stall." The motorcyclist looked rather dumbfounded. He then saw the empty stall and said "Can I park there?" The policeman said, "Yes." So he wheeled his machine back four feet and occupied the vacant stall. Just as he walked away a motor-vehicle pulled into the stall, but the policeman sent the motorist on his way because it was already occupied by a motorcycle!

This incident illustrates what is happening. The motorcycle had plenty of space to park without causing inconvenience to anyone, but because of the law as it is today, and as it will be with parking meters, it had to be moved and take up the full 20 feet of space which would be occupied by a Customline; and it prevented a motorist from parking there. The motorist who attempted to park had to go back into the stream of traffic and find some other place.

I do not think we are heading towards a very solid state of affairs, but are going to get rather chaotic again. In other words, out of chaos is going to come more

chaos. If we are going to accept the fact that the streets are to be used for parking—I feel they should not be—at least we should have an alteration of the present set-up whereby small vehicles such as motorcycles, scooter bikes and so on shall not occupy space to the exclusion of much larger vehicles.

This brings us to the question of what is going to be the position with regard to a push bicycle. Is a push bicycle going to be allowed to occupy the space that would be needed for the Customline owned by the member for Nedlands; because I think he will object to driving around town looking for a parking space when the stalls are occupied by delivery bikes with baskets on the front, because they are vehicles under the Act?

What is going to happen if a motorist pays his 6d. and a push bike comes in and parks inside of him; who is going to be charged with double parking? Many anomalies will occur; we want to have our wits about us and an eye to the future. In the meantime I feel I must oppose the measure.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. H. E. Graham—East Perth—in reply) [9.34]: It is not my intention to speak at length because I feel there are so many points unrelated, whilst comprising the Bill in its entirety, that the debate can well ensue at the Committee stage. There are, however, several observations I want to make. In the first place there has been a considerable amount of insistence on the part of some members that this is a taxation measure. Taxation is something which is imposed and which cannot be avoided. In this case there is no obligation on anyone to pay a penny, but if the city council gives effect to certain of the proposals that are in mind, then a person will be required to pay for a certain privilege, just as is the case with many things at present. When one goes to a sports ground one pays the cost of admission. This will apply with regard to the parking grounds.

However difficult it might be for some of us to understand the position, the time has arrived when we simply have to appreciate the fact that Perth is no longer a small country town but is a city which is growing rapidly. The old free-and-easy days with a devil-may-care outlook, when people were doing practically what they liked on the highways, are no longer with us.

In endeavouring to restore some sort of order out of chaos, we must know what is intended so that our behaviour on the roads with our vehicles may be in accordance with some organised plan—and there is room for a difference of opinion as to whether a plan is right or wrong. Until we have this appreciation I feel that because traffic and transport mean so much our capital is for quite a

number of years going to remain in the position that we have known it. Of course, as other towns reach the same proportions in regard to vehicles, so the disease will spread to them.

The member for Nedlands expressed fears that this may be a piecemeal handling of the entire traffic problem. I assure him, and other members too, that a great deal of thought has been given to a number of aspects of traffic and transport. Most of them have occurred over comparatively recent months—not hastily, but with a broad, overall picture in mind. There is a certain amount of doubt which might be expected because, in the very nature of things, various steps cannot be given effect to in their proper order.

At present we have a session of Parliament, and accordingly it is necessary to pass certain legislation. I would prefer to see these parking areas developed before any move was made in connection with the other alterations so there would be facilities close to the heart of the city to provide off-street parking for several thousand motor-vehicles. Then, for the very precious and limited kerb space left, some arrangement such as is envisaged in the Bill should be made in order to overcome the position whereby a few select persons are able, more or less, to monopolise the kerbside space. Some sort of machinery should be introduced to ensure a rapid turnover of vehicles so that as many different people and vehicles as possible may utilise this space during the business hours of each day.

That is the reason for parking meters. This means there will be a timing device on every parking stall, acting independently, so that each motor-vehicle is separately timed whether the period be twenty minutes, half an hour or longer. I think that is essential. There will be an initial installation cost with maintenance and supervision charges. In addition, certain people will have business in the town, but there will be insufficient kerbside space. To allow the capital investment for the development of off-the-street parking, payment will have to be made for the privilege of parking because parking areas are expensive things. I understand that the multi-storey parking stations cost between £1,000 and £2,000 for each vehicle accommodated, if the usual amenities and facilities are installed.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: How much is charged for parking per day or per hour if that is the capital cost?

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: In the City of Sydney—the only place where I have seen one—I am informed that the capital cost is a lesser figure, but many things have not been taken into account. In that city the maximum charge is 7s. per day. I do not know what might be charged by the Perth City Council when

parking areas are established adjacent to the heart of the city. No doubt it will endeavour to keep its charges as low as possible because the Perth City Council, as the custodians of the various processes surrounding those buildings which return it the greatest rates—the business premises in the heart of the city, who will lose their life blood if the people do not come into the city in their thousands—would not want to make the charges too high and so discourage people from coming into the city. Naturally enough I, as the Minister, would examine closely any projected moves by the Perth City Council to see that justice was done in all respects; and I have no doubt that whoever might be my successor would take similar action.

I think I can say this, too, that if the venture of vesting in the Perth City Council the authority to attend to parking matters in either the whole or certain portions of the City of Perth, were found to be an unsuccessful experiment, then surely there would be sufficient honesty on the part of the majority of the members of this Parliament for them to support a measure—if one were introduced—designed to bring in State control rather than local authority control.

Mr. Jamieson interjected.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Apparently the member for Beelo knows everything about everything!

Mr. Court: I do not think any State would want it back.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I do not think so, either, but there would be no impediment, and there would be nothing that would have to be purchased by the State because, apart from the areas that one might say were presented to the scheme by the Government—that is to say, Government lands—any additional lands, properties and facilities would have been purchased not by the Perth City Council but by the parking fund. Therefore there would be no compensation payable to anyone so that the Government, with the consent of Parliament, would merely take over the whole business and conduct it.

Mr. Court: Has the Perth City Council given you any idea as to its scheme for the next five or ten years? At the moment, everything is based on the flat areas such as those at the Narrows.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I think we have to confess this, that for many years nothing, or virtually nothing, has been done. At long last a few things are being attempted. They may be found to be right; they may be found to be wrong; but they are being introduced with the best of intentions. They will be modified in accordance with experience if it shows that modification is necessary. Even if there be no future plans, the fact is that for the first time in the City of Perth, there are for certain three large parking

areas off the street. But the City Council has in mind other areas; I can recall one immediately and that is some of the land at the western end of the Causeway. I know from talks some months ago with the town clerk, before I was in any way associated with transport or traffic, he mentioned to me certain ideas the council had north of the city where there are some sub-standard buildings and where the land should not be particularly valuable.

I know, too, there has been a great deal of talk about shuttle services operating from parking areas a mile or two out of the city. But if this legislation passes, it will be possible for the first time for the Perth City Council to get down to some hard solid thinking, knowing that it has the power and authority to get on with the job. At the present time it is just talking of something airy-fairy in connection with which it is able to do exactly nothing. As is well known, the most local authorities can do now with respect to parking is to widen the streets to enable a few more cars to be parked without causing an impediment to moving traffic. Beyond that, they are powerless.

But this Bill will give the Perth City Council, not as the council but as the operating authority under this legislation, the power to get on with the job to provide this amenity. Some mention was made of the confusion that could be caused if there were a growth of this sort of thing and other local authorities sought to have similar legislation in respect to their areas. The traffic laws are common to all. What will be done by the Perth City Council will be exactly the same as if it were done by the Government or the Police Traffic Branch. So far as the motorist is concerned, I dare say he would not be the least bit worried as to whether it was authority "A" or authority "B" that was doing it—the effect on him would be identical.

Therefore, it cannot properly be stated that there would be any prospect of conflict or of confusion because they would be operating under the same traffic laws. It is obvious that there is some feeling on the part of certain members with respect to the Perth City Council—a local authority which, it appears, has caused some offence to the point that certain members think that this is an opportunity of evening a score. I submit seriously that this legislation ought to be discussed and evaluated on its merits and that any prejudices that we might harbour should not come into the picture.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Hear, hear!

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I have expressed myself rather strongly with regard to local authorities on certain occasions. I have my own views as regards the Perth City Council but, in connection with this matter, I think it is

sincere and all it wants is an opportunity to get on with the job. I am certain that it will make a success of it.

Mention has been made of this being an infringement of the motorists' rights because it seeks, amongst other things, to charge for the use of kerb space. It is obvious to everybody that with a motor-vehicle population in the metropolitan area, apart from visitors, of something in excess of 100,000, and increasing approximately at the rate of 10,000 per annum, it is physically impossible for those cars to park along the kerb in the heart of the city.

Therefore, if we can have a turnover of motor-vehicles, to that degree we are able to cater for more people. After all, the stop is only 30 minutes and with a timing device there should be few cases where that period is exceeded. Accordingly, as a great deal cannot be done in 30 minutes, the majority of people will be using the car parks where the charge may be, if I can hazard a guess at a figure, say, 2s. for the day, which is a totally different matter to the 1s. per hour, or the 6d. per half hour, in regard to the meters.

The city can accommodate only a limited number of people and it is necessary to have some sort of orderly arrangement; otherwise it breaks down entirely. I think it was the member for Mt. Lawley who suggested that during the busy periods of the day parking in the city ought to be banned.

Mr. Jamieson: That would be a good idea.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: "That would be a good idea," interjects the hon. member! Not by a guess or by anybody's idea but by actual physical counts and by floating studies of moving cars and counting the number of vehicles going in each direction, the number turning to the right or left, the number of vehicles joining them and so on—and these facts are down in black and white—we have been able to work out the position over the past few months.

I am assured that if there were a parking ban in the heart of the City of Perth, it would remind one of Perth on a Sunday morning. In actual fact, the flow of traffic along each main street is very small indeed and of them the greater number of cars are those whose drivers are seeking parking space. Accordingly, if no parking facilities were made available, there would be scarcely any vehicles at all. The traffic counts, notwithstanding this, reveal that our central streets, whatever might be the general impression, can carry several times as many vehicles as they do at present without reaching anything like capacity.

Those are the facts as revealed by actual study. They are not my opinion but the experts have been on the job and have taken these counts. If any member cares

to call at my office, he can see all these diagrams and statistics. This proposed ban on all parking seems to be the easy way around the problem, and I suppose we could cure a lot of things by making a total prohibition on all parking. But it would achieve nothing because, to conclude the point, there would be scarcely anybody in the City of Perth doing business.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: It is quite silly.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: If this Bill becomes law, it will be a ban on free parking in the heart of the City of Perth. But if any person cares to purchase, for the price of 6d. for a half an hour, the convenience of being able to alight from his vehicle at the very door of the place where he has business to do, he will be permitted to enjoy that convenience for that small fee. If he feels that that is an imposition upon him, he will be able to park in any one of the parking stations by paying his several shillings. The alternative will be that his car will be lying on the side of the road a couple of miles from the City of Perth, and that position has been reached already.

We are aware of the roadways west of Parliament House where the whole of the kerbside is used by all-day parkers. Having regard to the tremendous increase in the motor-vehicle population, members can see that unless people are prepared to pay for that very definitely limited area of kerbside space in the heart of the city, or for space at one of the off-street parking stations provided, they will have no alternative but to park a considerable distance out of town.

I should say that that would be a far greater hardship, inconvenience and expense, because the person would have to pay bus fares on top, instead of paying for the privilege of parking in the heart of the city. Experience has shown, if what I can read in certain papers can be believed, that notwithstanding a restriction on parking—usually enforced by an able-bodied man bowing down without a great deal of dignity and marking motor tyres with yellow chalk—two and a half times as many cars can be accommodated on a given amount of kerbside space where that space is rationed or regulated automatically by parking meters.

If we had in the heart of the City of Perth at present a turnover of 5,000 cars during the course of a business day, and there is anything factual in the figures I have read, it would mean that the number could build up to 12,500 which would be able to enjoy the privilege of 30 minutes of precious kerbside space while their owners were attending to their business.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Can you tell me what would happen to a vehicle if the owner overstayed his time—the half-hour period?

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Until this legislation is passed, I cannot fully answer that question.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Within the terms of the Bill as it stands at present?

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: With the installation of parking meters, once the time has expired the dial turns and the word "Expired" on a red background appears. There is an attendant who is patrolling a particular area and he becomes aware of that fact immediately. I think the breach keeps on accumulating if a person cares to leave his car in that space all day long. Under certain provisions in the Bill, if somebody decided to do that and put his thumb to his nose at the law, in the interests of the people his car should be removed.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: How long would it be before that happened?

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: If he exceeds anything approaching a lengthy period beyond what he has paid for. Incidentally, these parking meters allow a certain period of grace beyond the 30 minutes. I am informed that the inspectors who patrol certain streets become so familiar with the movements of cars in and out that they can tell, practically without looking at the time on the meter, how long the vehicle has been parked. I suppose if a car had been in the space for double the period, action would have to be taken to have it moved; otherwise, with this pay-as-you-go scheme, it would be a fine of only 10s. and a person would get more than 10s. worth of parking space by defying the law and remaining there all day.

Mr. Roberts: Can you keep on—

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: No, a person cannot keep on putting 6d. in the parking meter. After the expiration of the period it is necessary for a vehicle to move on, but more of that no doubt in Committee.

I want to mention a point that was raised by the member for Nedlands. He felt that there was a place not only for a public authority but also for private individuals or concerns to provide off-street parking. With that I entirely agree and the Perth City Council also agrees. In view of that it might be asked, why should an application be made to the Perth City Council for permission to provide public car parking facilities off-street? I have endeavoured to cover the position in part by allowing an appeal to the Minister.

If I can give an illustration of what I mean, I suppose every member here knows Trenchet's Corner—the corner of Barrack and Wellington-sts., Perth. Suppose some enterprising businessmen sought to erect a multi-storey car park at

that corner. It would be an absolute tragedy so far as the City of Perth is concerned because the greatest bottleneck we have under the existing arrangement—and we cannot obviously at this stage think of what may happen around the corner—is the Beaufort-st. bridge. It is the greatest bottleneck we have, and I think everybody will agree that in those circumstances, or in similar circumstances, the Perth City Council would be entitled to reject an application to erect a multi-storey car park on that site because of the impossible situation that would be created if they continued with their plans.

I should say the Perth City Council would prefer other people, apart from rating altogether, to construct car parks and to the extent that the Perth City Council did not have to use profits from their car parking arrangements for the purpose of establishing other car parking facilities, it would be possible for it to reduce the charges made to the people. All the way through the objective of the Perth City Council would be to keep the charges as low as possible with a view to making it a simple and cheap matter for the people in their multitude to come to the heart of the city for the purpose of doing business.

If anyone looks at the heart of the city—Barrack-st. for instance, where there are single-storey buildings at the moment—one could visualise that in a few years' time there will be six, seven, eight or even ten-storey buildings. The heart of the city must grow upwards and no doubt accommodate three or four times as much office and business space as is the case at present. It is possible that if the people who come into the heart of the city were compelled to go to other places the rateable value of the land would fall steeply. From the point of view of decentralisation it may be an important aspect but that is an entirely different matter altogether.

Members should regard this legislation sympathetically and acknowledge it, with whatever faults it may contain, as being designed to do something to effect improvements. Members should feel that there is a local authority prepared to co-operate to the ninth degree; a local authority which has shown no disposition to quarrel because there have been inserted in quite a number of places additional to what it wanted, an overriding authority on the part of the Minister so that Parliament finally is responsible for what goes on. I ask members to look at this as something designed to dovetail with other moves which are in mind to deal with traffic and transport. To my mind, this in itself will effect a substantial improvement on the nondescript state of affairs that exists at the present moment.

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

Ayes	22
Noes	16
Majority for	6

Ayes.

Mr. Ackland	Mr. W. Manning
Mr. Court	Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Graham	Mr. Moir
Mr. Hall	Mr. Norton
Mr. Hawke	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Owen
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Potter
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Roberts
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Sewell
Mr. I. Manning	Mr. Crommelin

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Bovell	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Evans	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Gaffy	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Toms
Mr. Lapham	Mr. May

(Teller.)

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

MOTION—RAILWAYS.

Discontinuance of Certain Lines.

Debate resumed from the 7th December on the following motion by the Minister for Transport:—

That in the opinion of this House, having regard particularly to the considerations referred to in Appendix "A" to this motion, the services provided by the railways listed in Appendix "B" to this motion should, notwithstanding certain other considerations, be discontinued and that such railways should cease to be operated.

Appendix "A".

(1) The annual cash deficits of the State railways.

(2) The condition of State railways generally and particularly of the railways listed in Appendix "B".

(3) The need for improvements in the economical operation of the State railways, and for the concentration of railway resources to permit of all-round improvements in the cost of operating the railways.

(4) The facts that the railways listed in Appendix "B" are unprofitable and that their rehabilitation and operation would involve heavy expenditure when compared with existing and anticipated future traffic on those railways.

(5) The rising costs of operating railways.

(6) The need to avoid, to every possible extent, any necessity to increase rail freights on the remaining railways, and to provide for the adequate rehabilitation and operation of the remaining railways.

(7) The recovery of materials for use on other railways.

(8) The availability and use of other means of transport.

(9) The most satisfactory and economical employment of staff.

Appendix "B".

Railways.

	Length of Railways. Miles.
Meekatharra to Wiluna	111
Cue to Big Bell	19
Malcolm to Laverton	64
Geraldton to Ajana	67
Wokarina to Yuna	38
Burakin to Bonnie Rock	76
Mukinbudin to Lake Brown	8
Lake Brown to Bullfinch	50
Bullfinch to Southern Cross	22
Boddington to Narrogin	51
Busselton to Margaret River	38
Margaret River to Flinders Bay	29
Elleker to Nornalup	61
Brookton to Corrigin	56
Lake Grace to Hyden	58
Katanning to Pingrup	59
Gnowangerup to Ongerup	30

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MR. ACKLAND (Moore) [10.10]: Both during the debate on this motion and in conversation one has heard in the corridors of this House, it has been suggested that those who oppose the motion are prompted in doing so by a parochial viewpoint; also that they do not have an appreciation of the tremendous expense to which the State of Western Australia is committed because of the great deficit in the railways. We are told that we are parochial and sectional, and yet every member that has spoken in favour of the motion has voiced a parochial viewpoint in the attitude he has adopted. We have found that on both sides of the House. We saw that viewpoint expressed by some of our Liberal city members on this side of the House and also by the city members of the Labour Party.

Their idea has been that if this expenditure is allowed to continue, there is going to be less money made available for them to have all the amenities added to those which they already possess. I admit we have one Liberal member from the country districts who has no conception at all of the conditions that exist in the wheat-belt and mining areas of the State.

Mr. Moir: Or anywhere else.

Mr. ACKLAND: In Blackwood it would be very much better if there were no railways at all; it would be better if they had a succession of sealed roads because of the nature of their produce. Then again we have the member for Mt. Lawley who talks about those of us in the country districts being parochial. It is

only two or three years ago that he wanted the Transport Act amended so that chaff carriers could be permitted to cart their chaff further in Western Australia because he was interested in the chaff industry. He wanted the distance extended for 60 miles so that they could transport that commodity.

Mr. O'Brien: Quite correct.

Mr. ACKLAND: Those are expressions from people who have accused us of being parochial, and who have accused us by implication, if not by word, of being greedy and wanting an extraordinary share of the money available to this State from loan funds, I could agree with the Minister for Transport if he lived up to what he said in his speech. When talking to the supporters of this legislation it has been stressed that the Minister made a wonderful speech; that he put up an unanswerable case; his case was so strong that no one could stand up to it or oppose it. These are some of the statements made and I refer to them to indicate how unbiased the Minister is. One of his remarks is as follows:—

From information that has been made available to members in recent times apart from what may have been their own general knowledge and observation, I think it must be agreed by all that the time has arrived, if it is not long overdue, for the Government and Parliament to give very serious consideration to all the implications of the railways.

I maintain the Minister has only given consideration to one side of the picture because further on in his speech he says—

I will give an assurance to all employees of the railways system that if these lines are discontinued there will be no retrenchment.

The wages and salaries expenditure of the Railway Department represents more than 70 per cent. of the expenses. When we consider that we had £1,000,000 paid last year in overtime alone, we will have some idea of the nature of the management of the railways. Before I sit down I want to say a few words about the management of the railways. Before doing so, however, I would like to remind members that the Minister for Railways, in the Upper House, said that we must prune the dead wood.

The dead wood in the railways is the mismanagement and the overstaffing. I will talk about that also before I resume my seat. However, first of all I would like to tell the House what it is going to cost if these closures take place. I am going to state that on this occasion there is only a little over 800 miles of railways which it is anticipated will be closed, but in the final stage I believe there is to be some 2,000 miles. The present proposal represents 20 per cent. or thereabouts, but later on it is to be 50 per cent.

Mr. Bovell: Why not close the lot and be done with it?

Mr. ACKLAND: I will deal with the various lines as I come to them. On the Northampton line, with the closing of the railways, and all restrictions removed from the Transport Board, the farmers—those people who live away from the area up there—are going to be very much better off because they will have no railway services whatever to deal with. On the railway from Binnu, which is 55 miles from the port, the railway freight is 9.696d. and the road transport—not taking the 8d. per mile which was one of the figures quoted by the member for Blackwood—at 6d. per mile, which is the figure at which road transport can be carried on a black tar road—will be 8.829d. and from Nanson, which is only 21 miles from Geraldton, the freight by rail is 6.589d.

Mr. Rodoreda: What commodities?

Mr. ACKLAND: I am talking about wheat and superphosphate.

Mr. Rodoreda: Why not say so?

Mr. ACKLAND: These commodities represent the greatest amount of traffic which will be carried. From Nanson it will be 6.589d. by rail and by road at 6d. a mile per ton it is going to be 3.375d. In the cartage from Binnu there is the saving by road of .867d. and in the second instance a saving by road of nearly 50 per cent.—3.21d.

Now I will turn to some of the other lines. We have the Mukinbudin rail-head and I will give the quantities carried at a later stage in my speech. Warralackin is 29 miles from the new rail-head and the rail freight to the port terminal is 16.661d. Under this system, to take the produce and superphosphate into the rail-head, it is going to cost by rail 4.670d. and by road at 6d. per ton mile, 15.643d., a total of 20.313d.—1s. 8.313d. and that will be an excess of 3.52d. per bushel in that area. Then we go down to the Brookton rail-head and from Corrigin we find the distance to the rail-head at Brookton is 49 miles and the freight is 13.929d. By road it will be 12.134d. and by rail 7.883d.; an excess to the people of 6.888d.

Then we turn to the Burakin line. There we find that Bonnie Rock at the fullest extremity of that line is 76 miles from the new rail-head and freight today is 16.661d. to ports and it is going to cost by rail to the nearest port 13.955d., having already cost 6d. per ton mile by road to the new rail-head, 12.294d., an excess cartage of 9.588d. Now let us turn to the Lake Grace rail-head and there we have Hyden, which will be 60 miles from the new rail-head and today the freight to the port of 17.449d. by road; to take it to the rail-head is going to cost 9.643d., by road to the port 13.955d., an excess of 9.588d. per bushel.

I should like at this stage to say these are not my figures; they are figures prepared by Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. which is not directly interested in freight. These figures have been handed to the Minister for Transport so he can check them and he has had them for some days. They are actual rail freights paid today from the rail-head, the proposed new rail-head—to the port, and the road transport that is going to be paid for delivery to the new rail-head.

We now turn to Katanning rail-head and find Pingrup is 59 miles from Katanning. Today to cart that wheat or super, it is the same price per ton, which is 13.591d. per bushel and the cost of taking it by road to the rail-head will be 9.483d. The new rate will be 11.475d., which is going to cost an extra 7.389d. for these people to cart their produce.

From Gnowangerup—this I believe to be the line for which there is the least justification for closing because those of us who know something about the south coast know that the land near the coast below Ongerup is every bit as good as is the land respecting which this Government has entered into an agreement with the Esperance land syndicate—to Ongerup, a distance of 34 miles, the present rail freight is 12.627d. to port. Road haulage is going to cost 5.546d., and the rate from the new rail-head will be 11.368d. It is going to be an extra cost of 4.197d. per bushel.

In the Upper House the Minister for Railways is reported in an article as saying that the Government is going to pay the cost—the extra cost—which is incurred by those who are hard put to it because of these rail closures. I will admit it is on a diminishing scale over the next seven years, but I would like to give the House some indication of just how much it is going to cost the Government. If we take 4d. per bushel for this wheat as an average cost so far as I can work it out, the average, which would be for all the wheat which is 12½ miles or more from the rail-head—12½ miles is the distance from which people can get subsidies at present—on the Bonnie Rock line there are seven sidings and last year they produced and sold—not produced, delivered—633,699 bushels of wheat.

On the Ajana-Geraldton railway there are six sidings, and last year they produced 387,673 bushels. On the Yuna-Wokarina line there are four sidings and they produced 644,987 bushels. On the Southern Cross-Mukinbudin line there are two sidings—leaving Mukinbudin out—and they produced 677,630 bushels of wheat. On the Corrigin-Brookton line there are eight sidings and they produced 782,129 bushels of wheat. On the Hyden-Lake Grace line there are six sidings and they delivered 70,000 bushels of wheat.

On the Pingrup-Katanning line there are six sidings and they produced 586,761 bushels. The Ongerup-Gnowangerup line has five sidings and they produced 640,622 bushels, and on the Bonnie Rock-Kulja line they produced 633,699 bushels. I think I gave that figure before. The total is 5,750,939 bushels, which represents more than 20 per cent. of the whole of the wheat production in Western Australia.

Mr. Rodoreda: So what?

Mr. ACKLAND: I will give the hon. member what before I finish.

The Minister for Lands: You want to give us the money.

Mr. ACKLAND: If the subsidy which the Government is called upon to pay is in accordance with the promise by the Minister for Railways at 4d., it is going to cost this Government £71,887 12s. in the first year and then it will have to pay a subsidy on super back, which, working it at 1 cwt. per acre and 15 bushels average, would mean 383,342 acres which would need something more than 20,000 tons of super to be carted the other way. If the Minister for Railways had given all the facts—he is a very good advocate for the closing of these railways—I am quite willing to admit he has brought in a case which has totally disregarded the second side to this position.

If the Minister had had a searching inquiry made into the administration of the railways of Western Australia; if we had seen a genuine attempt to improve the existing position and after that had been done, if it were found we still had a deficit and some of these lines proved to be unpayable, then he would have had an advocate in myself in the closing of the lines which were unjustified.

But he is not going to remove from the Railways Department one of the 14,000 men who are there. He has to find work for them somewhere, I admit. But I do not see why all the people who are out-back—subsidised by the people of the metropolitan area I heard someone say the other day—should make it possible for 60 per cent. of the people to live in Perth and enjoy all the amenities and advantages and public transport, by motor or rail, and everything that helps to make life more bearable.

If the Minister had attempted to get this railway system on to a reasonable standard, he would have had some justification for what he is trying to do at present. I am of the opinion that there is not going to be one pennyworth of real economy in the Railway Department effected by the closing of these railways. I contend most definitely that there is no justification to close them because there has been no attempt to improve the management.

These lines were constructed after many of the settlers had gone out into the out-back to live, and it will be a gross breach of faith to them if the lines are removed without its having been proved that the State cannot carry them any longer; and I contend that that has not been proved. In my electorate there are four lines, and I can claim that there is nothing parochial in my remarks because not one of those lines is going to be closed.

Mr. Evans: As yet.

Mr. ACKLAND: I am referring to this motion. I have had an opportunity of comparing the management of the Government lines with the management of the Midland Railway Co. On the west we have the Midland railway operating between Midland Junction and Walkaway. Then we have the Miling line which runs northward from Clackline; and then the Mullewa line running from Northam to Mullewa and beyond; and further east the Minnivale-Kulja line, which at this stage is not going to be closed.

In all, there are 4,000 miles of railways, using round figures, and 14,000 employees. For every mile of Government railway there are 3½ employees; and if we take into consideration the effective engine power we find that there are nearly 70 men for every effective engine operating on the Government lines. There are 300 miles of railway managed by the Midland Co. and 1½ employees to every mile of track, with a little over 30 men for every effective engine.

Mr. Evans: That is, of course, a very unfair comparison.

Mr. ACKLAND: They are giving complete satisfaction. I say that with a full knowledge of the people through whose districts the line operates.

Mr. Oldfield: They are still losing money on their rail operations.

Mr. ACKLAND: They are losing very little, and not in the vicinity of £3,000,000 to £5,000,000.

Mr. Oldfield: But you will agree that they are losing.

Mr. Bovell: There is not a railway system in Australia that is not losing money.

Mr. ACKLAND: If we close 20 per cent. of our railway lines—or 400 miles—we will have nearly 5½ employees for every mile, as against 1½ with the Midland Co. The other night the Minister said that there was only 10 per cent. of the Government railways of Western Australia in a fit, safe state. While the Government railways have been putting 10 per cent. of their lines into good working order, with 3½ men to every mile of line in the State, we find that the Midland Co. has re-laid and rebalasted, and—in a great many cases—resleepered 50 per cent. of its line, with one-third of the personnel which we have operating on our system.

When I was speaking in August on the mismanagement of the railways, I referred to a railway crew which had barracks at Piawaning but used to make a trip a day the way to Miling. Inquiries in the Legislative Council elicited the information that during the period that occurred it cost the Government £980. When Commissioner Hall was told about what was going on, he did not believe it. But exactly the same conditions existed this year. I did not get that information by way of questions from the Railway Department or in this House. But the people who live between Piawaning and Miling told me that exactly the same conditions have existed and those men have made that trip of 54 miles to and from Miling because of a shortage of three beds in the Piawaning barracks.

Of course, there is also a hotel and dart-board and no policeman at Miling, so one can realise why that trip was made and how inefficient is the management of the railways in view of the fact that stop was not put to that practice.

Mr. Evans: You are slighting the workers.

Mr. ACKLAND: I am trying to show the ineffectiveness of the management.

Mr. Evans: You are slighting the workers.

Mr. ACKLAND: Oh, go to —!

Mr. Oldfield: He is on your side.

Mr. ACKLAND: Go to my electorate, should have said. It is a good place to go to. The member for Maylands complained bitterly that people did not use the railways. He spoke of how they like to bring their commodities down to Perth by road transport. If the railways were managed efficiently and effectively—

Mr. Oldfield: I did not complain.

Mr. ACKLAND: —we would not find anything like the resistance to the railways which exists in the minds of the people in the country. I want to tell members something that happened in the metropolitan area. It is only a little thing, but it tends to emphasise how the railway system has degenerated. One morning at about 8.30, a one-armed man took a piece of channel steel, weighing 40 lbs., to the West Perth railway station and, with great reluctance, the station master accepted it as freight for Fremantle. I think the man must have been crackers to want to use the railways for that purpose. However, he had to wait on the railway station because there was nobody on the staff who was supposed to handle freight. When the passenger train came, this one-armed man put the 40 lb. piece of steel into the luggage compartment and rang up the consignee at Fremantle.

At 12 o'clock, the consignee got on to him and blackguarded him for not having done what he had promised, and for not having sent the piece of steel. At 4 o'clock

that afternoon it was found in the goods van somewhere between Armadale and Fremantle. It had had a glorious ride up and down all day, because it had been nobody's concern to take it out of the guard's van when it got to Fremantle. That is only a small item, but it is typical of what is going on in our railway system today.

The Premier: What sort of label was on it?

Mr. ACKLAND: I expect that would be on the file. If the Premier is interested, I can get the file from the office in Perth, because it was offered to me when I was given the information.

The Premier: I was just wondering whether it was labelled or branded in any way.

Mr. ACKLAND: They knew what it was when they went to get it. I want to mention one other matter. In my electorate there is a boy not yet 19. I know him very well. His father has a thriving business in one of the small towns. The boy heard such glowing accounts of what a wonderful job one could get in the Railway Department that he decided to join it. He is now a junior fireman, and he told me that he collects an average of £46 per pay. This is a boy not yet 19 years of age but he gets a tuckerbox allowance, a living-away-from-home allowance and some overtime so that, in all, he averages £46 per fortnight. He reckons it is a very good job and he has a jolly good time in doing it.

The Minister for Transport: But that is an Arbitration Court award.

Mr. ACKLAND: When the member for Roe and I were in Victoria two or three years ago we travelled to the western districts by one of the slow trains that pick up milk, cream and so on and when about half way to our destination we learnt, from a conversation beyond our carriage window, that the train was five minutes late. The station master called on all bystanders to help throw in or out the full or empty cans and when the guard blew the whistle the stationmaster said, "That is not too bad. The train goes out of here only half a minute late."

If the management of our railways would make it a crime punishable by a fine for a train to be run late, rather than pay a bonus for inefficiency as it does today, we would get more efficient service from our railways. I believe that a good management could easily work out a schedule of timetables which would make it possible for trains to run on time instead of three or four hours late, as I have known them to be in my district.

If the drivers and firemen had to explain why they were late or else pay a fine for inefficient running of their train, we would get a service which would be better for both the department and the patrons

of the railways. I have not travelled by train for a long time as, in common with many people in the country, I have a phobia against trains, but at one period I often rode from Goomalling to Wongan Hills on a goods train leaving Goomalling a little after nine o'clock and invariably the whole of the train crew were drunk.

The Minister for Transport: How long ago was that?

Mr. ACKLAND: It was some years ago. I have seen the engine-driver lifted into the guardsvan at Pithara, on a train going to Wongan Hills, because he was too much under the influence of liquor to drive his train and the fireman had to do the job. I know the man who did that job. That sort of thing occurs far more frequently than we realise. No one—certainly not I—would suggest that the Premier was dishonest and would take money out of people's pockets, but anyone who does not get service in return for public funds, or funds of any sort under his control, is doing a dishonest action, and I believe that implicitly.

The Premier: We will have to have a close check-up to see whether the hon. member earns his parliamentary salary.

Mr. ACKLAND: The Premier is welcome to do that in regard to the 79 other members, also, including himself. That is his prerogative, and it is a job which he should do.

The Minister for Transport: I think you have been found guilty in advance.

Mr. ACKLAND: I have never been to the Midland Junction workshops—I am sorry the Minister for Police is not here—but I have met lots of people who have worked there. I recently came into contact with a Scotsman who was employed there until two or three years ago and he reports that before the McLarty-Watts Government put £500,000 worth of new machinery into the workshops, half the number of men did twice the amount of work that is being done there now.

The Minister for Transport: There was a Government for you!

Mr. ACKLAND: That is the state of the management of the workshops. Some years ago it was suggested that guards be placed on the gates of the Midland Junction Workshops—I do not suggest that the 3,000 men working there are dishonest, any more than I would suggest that the Premier was dishonest—but the men threatened to go on strike because they would not have guards there to see that there was no pilfering.

I have heard of motorcars being taken in there and fitted with new hoods and I know one man was fined for stealing 45 or 50 lb. of copper bolts and nuts, but a short while afterwards he was reinstated

in that place. Had the Government attempted to secure efficiency in the Railway Department and had it ensured that the management and the employees were giving efficient service before telling the House that certain lines are unpayable and must be closed, I would have been doing all I could to help the Government do the right thing. I have previously had something to say in this House about the Railways Commissioners.

Admittedly it is not a brave action to attack here men who cannot attack me in return, but if it is true that the three men in charge of the Railway Department do not even speak to each other—that is how bad the feeling between them is, and we know that the department has deficits of millions of pounds—it is time one or all of them were replaced. I suppose they have a right to their salaries until they are 65 years of age, but if they cannot manage the Railway Department better than they do and do not know what is going on in it, it is time action was taken.

With 3½ men per mile of the railway service we are told they can only re-service 10 per cent. of the railways, while 1½ men per mile on the Midland railway can do 50 per cent., and trains on that line are run on time while Government trains cannot run to time and so I say there is something wrong at the head. It would be much cheaper for the Government to say to the present commissioners that they had been judged and found wanting and were to be replaced by someone more efficient—

The Minister for Transport: I would like to hear the Railways Commissioners on the subject of the member for Moore.

Mr. ACKLAND: I expect the Minister will have that privilege. I happen to know that the Government is giving thought to an increase in rail freights.

Mr. May: You are a proper little ferret.

Mr. ACKLAND: I know, from information given me this week, that already freights on petrol products are 50 per cent. higher than the road haulage costs. A man can come from Wongan Hills with a load of produce and take back a load of stuff that he wants on the farm—

Mr. May: Allegedly!

Mr. ACKLAND: —and save £60 in a one-day trip to Perth and back.

The Premier: Not if he had to build and service his own road.

Mr. ACKLAND: He pays his licence fees. The Government says it is thinking of cutting out the dead wood, but I do not believe the lines referred to are the dead wood. One or two of them might be, but they are not, in the aggregate. If the Government is going to cut down expenses to keep the whole of the

present railways personnel employed I do not think we will be one brass farthing better off.

The Gnowangerup-Ongerup Railway is possibly going to be one of the busiest lines in the State in the near future owing to the development in places like Jeramungup and other centres towards the south coast and if the Government is going to pay subsidies, even if only for a seven-year period it will find that its costs are very much greater than they are today. It is madness to close down these railways and keep the same number of personnel employed.

I know of one department in the head office in Perth where a staff of two were employed a few years ago but where there is now a clerical staff of seven. With the closing of these railways the surplus staff will have to be put somewhere. The Minister has said more men will be available for ballasting, renewing lines and so forth on the remainder of the service, but I wonder what percentage of the staff consists of fettlers.

Of course I cannot see white collar workers being put to ballasting, sleepering or rail-laying. I am not suggesting that it would not do them good, but I cannot see it being done. For the Minister to say that we must consider all aspects of the railways and then adopt his present attitude, is wrong. If he has done anything to improve the management of the railways, we have not been told of it.

For our friends on both sides of the House to sit back and say, "We will cut these railways down and it will mean that we will have a swimming pool here or a new road somewhere else," is simply to cut their own throats, because as the wheat industry in New South Wales dropped from an average of 70,000,000 bushels per annum to about 40,000,000 bushels, owing to increased costs, I can see those who are forced to use two means of transport, road and then rail, naturally saying, "We can earn a good living from sheep."

The SPEAKER: The hon. member's time has expired.

On motion by Mr. Court, time extended.

Mr. ACKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, but I have practically concluded. If we are to whittle away the railways in Western Australia we are going to stop production where most labour is employed. We are going to stop cereal growing—and I did not attempt to talk about oats and barley, the production of which is increasing every year, and the amount of material that those crops require—and I can foresee the people of Perth taking in each other's washing because that will be the only way by which they will be able to make their livelihood.

MR. EVANS (Kalgoorlie) [11.11]: I wish to voice my keenest misgivings in relation to the motion before the House. In doing so I also wish to completely dissociate myself from the remarks made by the member for Moore. I wish to disagree with the principle of the present motion, but in doing so, unlike him, I do not intend to be disagreeable. I wish to illuminate, both in technicolour and black and white, the position of the people in the outback. The principle behind the motion before the House is one which supports all the interests of road transport. Those interests will stoop to any level whatsoever to obtain their object, which has been to oust the railways, and their method of attempting to do so has been to give the railways a bad name.

For instance, we often hear the saying, "Give a dog a bad name and you can hang him." I feel sure that the inter-departmental committee did not view the situation with eyes of reason and justice. On the contrary, it has looked at this situation through blinkers of intolerance and has adopted a coldblooded bankers' attitude towards this problem. It is the policy of the Government to encourage decentralisation, but this step will only help to loosen the sheet anchor of that policy.

It has been claimed that these men who have met in committee are experts. As I understand the setup the members were: (1) the Commissioner of Railways; (2) the chairman of the Main Roads Department and (3) the chairman of the State Transport Board. By virtue of holding those offices, we should be able to say that each is an expert in his own particular field.

In regard to experts, I have a quotation here which I think is very appropriate. It comes from Disraeli and that learned gentleman once said, "When a group of experts get together, the only thing we can expect is calamity." I can only say that we certainly have it in this instance. Another quotation which I have here in regard to experts is along these lines, "An expert is one who begins to know more and more about less and less until he knows everything about nothing."

I believe the experts who adjudicated on the railway situation were truly experts within the ambit of those two definitions I have given. The policy of the Mines Department is to encourage prospectors to go out into the outback to search for gold and with a view to opening up more mines and new goldfields. Yet, when prospectors go out into the outback to prospect those areas which were once great mining centres; through the districts of Morgans, Leonora and Laverton, they find that, if they are passed by the Mines Department they are given a subsidy and a loan of certain tools and equipment with the right hand, the value of this is cut off

with the left hand as it were because the provision of a railway is to be taken away from them.

Mr. Oldfield: You don't mean to say that you are suggesting that the discontinuance of a railway line is going to stop prospectors in their activities?

Mr. EVANS: I associate the hon. member with a pin, because both have pretty large heads, but the pin has a great deal more point.

Mr. Oldfield: Do you mean to say—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. EVANS: It is often found that our roads are impassable during the period when much rain has fallen. I have travelled over the road from Malcolm to Laverton and I have been bogged on it. In fact, I was bogged for forty-eight hours on that road and could not move out of it. That occurred in 1942. Yet we are expected to believe that that road is suitable for road transport. I cannot accept that contention.

Let us view the composition of this committee again. As a result of the debate that has ensued, and in view of the remarks that have been passed in regard to its recommendation, the members of the committee must be extremely bothered and bewildered. There is no doubt that this committee was biased in the decision it made on the discontinuance of certain railways.

Let us review each individual member of that committee. First of all, there is the chairman of the Main Roads Board. It is the aim of his department to develop the use of main roads. Submission of road transport for railways would please him immensely. It is in his own interest to develop road transport. As chairman of the Main Roads Board, it is his job to develop that interest. Then there is the chairman of the State Transport Board. Once more one of his aims is to develop road transport and the Commissioner of Railways would be only too anxious to see this motion passed so that he could rid himself of the embarrassment of these non-paying lines.

Therefore, the members of that committee are biased and their recommendations are most unreliable. Also, there is no reference to any representation on that committee from the trade unions, and yet various unions are vitally concerned. There is no representation from any particular district on that committee and yet the people in the districts which are affected are the ones most concerned. I mentioned before that this committee looked at the whole situation through blinkers of intolerance, and I see no reason to retract that statement.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Is the Minister biased, too?

Mr. EVANS: Accusations have been levelled against those members who have opposed this motion to the effect that they are parochial in their attitude. I would point out that I have no railways in my electorate that are affected but I am guided by the saying that, "When your neighbour's house is in flames, your own is in danger," because I am perturbed with the thought that if the Malcolm-Laverton line goes, the Kalgoorlie-Leonora line will soon follow. Those people who are eking out their livelihood from the Goldfields—I am sure the member for Nedlands will understand the situation at Gwalia—are very concerned indeed because their future is in jeopardy.

If these people learn that the railway which serves them is to be taken away, they will begin searching for employment in other places and will leave their worries and the district behind them. As a result, the outback will become deserted and following the cliché made by the member for Murchison, as long as I am member for Kalgoorlie, I would not like that to happen!

The recommendations made by this committee were most unreliable. At first their initial recommendation was that 630 miles of railway should be discontinued. Perhaps I am not entitled to level criticism against the Government, but, in my opinion, the Government has out-Goebbelled Goebbels because it has recommended the discontinuance of 842 miles of railway. However, the committee recommended that 50 per cent. of our railway lines should be discontinued and the Government has been guided by its recommendations and, in fact, in my opinion, has, as I said previously, out-Goebbelled Goebbels. However, we have not had an official assurance that the Government is not going to follow the recommendation of the committee for the gradual discontinuance of 2,000 miles of our railways; 50 per cent. of the total. No one can assure me that not one railwayman will be retrenched. It seems to me that our policy of decentralisation has been conveniently forgotten.

Earlier this session I asked a question in the House—when this motion was first introduced—in relation to the loss on those lines proposed to be closed compared with the loss on all Government forms of transport in the metropolitan area for the last year known, and the answers I was given were that for 1954-55 the loss amounted to £500,000 in round figures. That loss included the loss on two lines which at this stage it is not proposed to close, because I understand it was difficult to segregate those figures from the bulk figures.

Yet the Government lost on all forms of metropolitan transport £1,500,000; £1,000,000 more than it lost on these alleged uneconomic lines. Despite this, the Government is anxious to go ahead and co-ordinate all transport in the metropolitan area. This seems to me like the

Indian who cuts off one end of his blanket and sews it on to the other end to save money.

In my opinion, this committee at the moment would rank as No. 1 on the all-Western Australia hate parade because its actions have been insidious and have created great turmoil among the country people. These railway lines are the lifelines of the outback and should be regarded as a public amenity. I have some notes here which were taken by the 1947 Royal Commission which inquired into the administration of the railways wherein it was stated that the railways were regarded as being a public amenity. They should still be so regarded, in my opinion, because these lines were put down to develop the country and to keep the outback open. They should still be regarded as a public amenity and should not be ruined by selfish interests.

Mr. Court: They did not wish they should be kept open at all costs and regardless of economics.

Mr. EVANS: The member for Nedlands reminds me of a cynic. He knows the price of everything, but the value of nothing. Members who have defended the recommendations of the committee have dabbled in tin-pot tyranny. That responsibility must not rest on their shoulders. I do not want it to rest on mine. Is this the only alternative to reducing expenditure? I have not been convinced that it is. I am a doubting Thomas—very doubting! For example, I see money being lost in the metropolitan area, yet the people in the country districts are the ones selected to bear the consequence. I know there are three railway commissioners to run the railway system, yet there is only one Premier to run the whole State.

The Minister for Transport: One Premier and nine Ministers.

Mr. EVANS: I would like to quote extracts from a letter I received from the Western Australian Locomotive Engine Drivers, Firemen and Cleaners' Union dated the 8th October, 1956. Before doing so, I believe that we are making a mistake in going ahead with this motion, because as a Labour man I was born in the trade union movement and I have become wedded to its policies. By following this motion we would be divorcing ourselves from trade unionism. The letter states—

Members of the above branch are strongly opposed to any proposal concerning the closure of branch lines. We believe that much of the criticism of the railways is unfair and is being sponsored by business interests who stand to gain by the closing of sections of the railways and road transport being permitted to take over.

Mr. Bovell: You are suggesting that the Government and business interests are joined together in an unholy alliance?

Mr. EVANS: The Liberal Party, with the exception of the member for Vasse, have endorsed the action proposed to be taken, because they have more than a passing interest in road transport. The letter continues—

The reason for the desperate position of railway finances is due to their having been required to function over a long number of years without sufficient money being provided for maintenance and replacement of equipment.

Much of the criticism for that fact rests on the shoulders of the McLarty-Watts Government. The final paragraph states—

We strongly urge that money be obtained to complete the rehabilitation of the per-way and thus permit speed limits to be increased and full use made of modern equipment; if this is done we are confident that the railways will prove that they are capable of providing a transport service, equal, if not superior, to that operating in other parts of the world and on a more economical basis than can be provided by road transport.

I say that this motion is not only unpopular, but in construction it is most unsound. I have here a report prepared by the Railway Commission in 1956 which contains extracts from the report of the 1947 Royal Commission. In this House we have heard several extracts taken from the report of the Royal Commission, but only the ones that suited the members who are interested in striking a death blow at the railways. I would like to put forward some of the views that have been conveniently kept away from the public ear. Clause 15, on page 5 of the report, states—

It is apparent that for some years now the Commissioner of Railways and heads of branches, as well as other senior officers, had accepted the position that due to the "financial malnutrition" very little, if anything, could be done to improve matters. This inertia has had a devastating effect on the morale and efficiency of the service as a whole, and has also left its mark on the public, who have evidently accepted the inefficiency of the railways as something inevitable which they have to suffer.

I would in particular draw attention to Clause 18, which contains the following extract from the report of the Royal Commission:—

The railways will be indispensable for the further development of the State's agricultural, industrial and mineral resources.

I would also like to draw attention to Clause 32, which states—

From the evidence placed before us we are satisfied that if the railways are to function as a stable and economic business undertaking, it is essential that railway finances be divorced from Consolidated Revenue and, for this purpose, we recommend the establishment of a separate "Government Railways Fund."

This is one of the recommendations which could have been carried out in 1947. In my opinion, both Governments since that time have erred in this respect. The report I am quoting continues on page 17 as follows:—

Turning to specific aspects of railway operations, the suburban passenger service is one that evokes considerable comment, both in and out of Parliament. The improved service brought about by the introduction of the ADG railcars and the reduction in steam trains in November, 1954, has resulted in increased patronage and some economy in operating, but the service still does not pay. For the year ended 30th June, 1955, the loss, including a proportion of overhead costs was calculated to be £1,046,431.

If the committee I referred to had recommended the curtailing of expenditure on metropolitan lines, I would be inclined to support a motion of this nature, to ensure that the committee had looked at the State as a whole through eyes of reason and justice, and not through pink-coloured glasses. I say that this prescription of the committee for our economic ills is failure, no matter how much the label may appear to be attractive to the Government. No matter how attractive the label on the bottle appears to be, I say that the prescription advocated by this committee is failure. It will not cure our economic ills.

Many members mentioned that an inquiry should be held into the efficiency of railway administration to determine the true effects with vigilance, wisdom and commonsense. I have not been assured or convinced that such an inquiry has been made. The railway commissioner, who was a member of that committee, acquired an impregnable position. He has been the judge in his own cause. There is no one to defend the railways or the unions. This man who has been anxious to do away with the railways has been the judge in his own cause with no jury at all. After reading of the neglect, apathy and indifference towards the railways over many years, it does seem that the committee bringing forth these recommendations, has locked the stable door after the horse had bolted, and it has continued its mad frenzy by going ahead and burning the stable down.

I am not happy with this motion. I am opposed to the principle of discontinuing railway lines. I have at heart consideration for the people living in the outback and also the interests of the railway workers who will be affected. I conclude by quoting from a newspaper cutting which appeared in the "Daily News" a little while ago. It is appropriate to the members of the committee when they look at their work and say, "That was our death blow to the railways." The quotation reads as follows:—

Justice without power is unavailing.
Power without justice is tyrannical.
We must therefore combine justice
and power, making what is just,
strong, and what is strong, just.

I plead with the Government to review the situation once more, to remember our policy of decentralisation, and to lodge a full-scale inquiry into the administration of the railways, because right at the very top there are the commissioners. A very apt quotation comes to mind which runs along these lines—

Big fleas have little fleas
To tickle and to bite them
Little fleas have smaller fleas
And so *ad infinitum*.

That gives a very true picture of the railways, particularly in the clerical section and right at the top where the dead wood is located, and not at the bottom. Let us start at the very top. If nothing else avails, then every fair-minded person would agree to this motion. Until that time comes, I ask the Government to look at the situation through the eyes of justice, through the cold light of reason, to pay tribute to our policy of decentralisation, and to do the right, just and honourable thing.

MR. POTTER (Subiaco) [11.28]: I support this motion, and the reason is because some emphasis is placed on the metropolitan area by previous speakers. I would point out to members representing the metropolitan area, in particular one on the opposite side of the House, who are opposed to the motion because it does not strike at the railway employees and does not curtail employment in the railways, that without the metropolitan area the country districts could not exist.

Mr. O'Brien: The metropolitan area would not exist without the country districts.

Mr. POTTER: They are interdependent on each other. At the same time we must realise that the metropolitan area must grow and this State must have more secondary industries if it is to be comparable with the other States. The secondary industries have to be increased by 3 to 4 per cent. Knowing the position of the State from top to bottom, I realise what this motion will mean to some country districts.

As the Minister said, the railways were built at a time when the horse, cart and wagon were the only means of transport. Consequently, the railways were built close together, whereas in these days of motorised transport, commodities can be carted very quickly over a fairly wide area. We should realise that there are other modes of transport available. I would point out that in the northern section of this State, beyond Geraldton and as far as Wyndham, the whole district was developed by motor transport in recent years. Such activities as the Exmouth Gulf oil exploration, mining and other industries have been developed by motor transport.

I do not see why motor transport cannot fill the bill in the various country districts mentioned in the motion. We have to realise that today we have alternative means of transport, such as motor transport. We must, in some measure, cut down the expenditure that the railways involve. We know there is alleged to be a great loss made within the metropolitan area. I do not know much about railway accounting, or what is involved in the loss that has accrued in the metropolitan area. It may be that certain new rollingstock is debited against metropolitan running. However, I do know this that some radical improvement must be made in railway transport if we are to do anything for our economy.

Personally, I am in full agreement with the motion in that it is a courageous endeavour to help the railway economy. After all, it only suggests the closure of certain lines in the present circumstances. This closure, however, may not be the whole solution, but certainly if we go from top to bottom of the administration, I do not think we would make such a colossal saving as some people imagine. I suggest, too, that by closing these lines and making good the permanent way on the main lines, we would perhaps do something to assist the railways.

As far as the employees are concerned, I suggest that by bringing them closer to civilisation we would be doing them a good turn. As the Minister pointed out earlier, there would, because of the turnover of employees, be no retrenchments. Some members have brought up the question of decentralisation. It is very nice to make a glib statement about decentralisation and talk of setting up a soap and candle works at Wyndham or some other place, but are these things economically sound?

I suggest we have two alternatives: To improve some of the railways and keep them, and, as it were, go back to the horse and buggy days—in other words go back to the horse to get a stable economy—or to turn around and cut off some of the lines which, as the Minister has so ably pointed out, are not paying because they carry such a small tonnage, and the people in

those areas are not using them. What exercises my mind is that if the people are not using the railways, then there is apparently no popular demand for them. Therefore I must support the motion.

MR. MOIR (Boulder) [11.36]: This is one of the most momentous motions ever to come before Parliament, and I cannot let the opportunity pass without making some comment. At the outset, I say that it is with the greatest reluctance that I support the motion as I feel that everything has not been done that should have been done before taking the step envisaged here. I quite agree that there is practically no economic argument in favour of keeping some of these lines in existence.

What I am concerned about is the sort of facilities which will be provided for the people living in the areas that will be affected. The place that most concerns me is Laverton. It does not concern me in a political sense, but because I have some regard for the welfare of the people in the outer areas. To provide proper roads to Laverton will cost an enormous amount of money—far more than to keep the line in operation. There is quite a large stretch of country over which it would be very costly to provide an all-weather road. Quite long stretches of road in that area are absolutely impassable after heavy rains. I am speaking now of the Malcolm-Laverton section.

At times this disability has serious consequences. I can remember occasions when there has been serious illness at Laverton and people have set out to bring sick persons to Gwalla, but they have become bogged on the way with the result that an ambulance has been sent from Leonora, but the two vehicles have not been able to get within miles of each other. The result has been that the sick people have had to be transferred through the flood water, or over the railway line on a fettler's trolley.

If the line is discontinued, a strong effort will have to be made to provide a road that the people can be reasonably certain of being able to travel over. I believe that as far as freights are concerned, the people would be served far better by road transport than by the railway. It is amazing that the inter departmental committee, in its report, has not concerned itself with the possibility of keeping the railways open, or finding out how they could be economically worked. If members look at the report they will see that it is the report of a committee to examine the proposed closure of railways. So, there is no doubt that this was a closure of railways committee.

I say here and now that if the recommendations of this committee are carried out in their entirety, and we still have the same type of management of the railways,

we will continue to have large deficits and uneconomical railways, because the people in charge of the railways apparently know very little about running them economically. All they know about is wasting and spending money in all directions with the greatest of extravagance. There is no doubt that many members know this to be perfectly true, of their own experience. I could give numerous instances of the most criminal waste in the railways—and a lot of it at Kalgoorlie. The money wasted on the railways really amounts to a scandal.

People must feel great concern at the closure of railways, but at the same time the concern must be tinged with the knowledge that quite a large number of those who have been served by the railways have not played the game by the department. They have done everything possible to use other means of transport when it suited them, and to use the railways when it suited them. Also, if we look at the position we find that many people have been subsidised by the railways—and no concern can show a profit that way. For years it has been the policy of Governments of all political complexions to subsidise, whether rightly or wrongly, certain industries—mostly the farming industry, but others too,—through the railways. This having been done, I do not see that the railways can be blamed because of the economic effects of such governmental policy.

Probably great mistakes have been made with the railways; possibly things have been done with the best of intentions, but they have not turned out as well as those in charge anticipated. It has, however, been the policy of different Governments over many years to allow cheap freights for various types of goods—probably with a desire to assist people in the country. But not only have we had cheap and uneconomic freight rates but uneconomic passenger rates, as witness the fact that the suburban service showed a deficiency of over £1,000,000 last year. Yet there is not one tittle in the report about that phase of railway operation. There is no recommendation that any metropolitan service can cut down.

The Minister for Transport: It would be a funny railway service without a line linking, say, Fremantle and Midland Junction.

Mr. MOIR: In answer to that interjection, if we follow these recommendations to their logical conclusion, we will close all the railway lines down.

The Minister for Transport: Eventually that may come.

Mr. MOIR: Because the railways terminate in a bottleneck in the metropolitan area is no reason why the people residing in that area should get the service of the railways at below cost. In 1952 the

then member for Kalgoorlie, Mr. Styants, who later became the Minister for Railways, estimated that during the term of the McLarty-Watts Government—

The Minister for Transport: Terrible days!

Mr. MOIR: —63 per cent. of the railway traffic was carried at under cost. He stated then that no railway could be expected to stand up to that sort of thing. I quote from Hansard of the 12th December, 1952, wherein Mr. Styants stated—

There is little wonder that the Railways Department puts up such a poor showing when we find that 63½ per cent. of the freight which is transported by it is handled at less than cost. I have taken these extracts from the comparative statements over the last five years, and find that on wheat the earnings per ton mile were 2.27d. I asked a question during the last few days as to the average haulage cost per ton mile on the railways over the last 12 months and was told that it was 4½d. but that it had been inflated to some extent by the metal trades strike. Nevertheless, for the previous 12 months the rate was 3.24d. or practically 3½d. per ton mile.

We know that railway freights have been increased since that time and we also know that costs have increased considerably. Since then the basic wage has been considerably increased. In 1952 the basic wage for the metropolitan area was £11 18s. 6d. whereas today it is £13 5s. 2d. The Goldfields basic wage in 1952 was £12 4s. 2d. and today it is £13 2s. 8d., a difference of £1 6s. 8d. and 18s. 6d. per week respectively. Of course, that must add considerably to the cost of running the railways because we know that wages figure so largely in the cost structure.

At that time, too, both I and the then member for Kalgoorlie complained bitterly at the action of the McLarty-Watts Government in transporting coal from Collie to Boulder at a serious loss; it was transported at a rate of 1.73d. per ton mile for a distance of 450 miles. The then member for Kalgoorlie estimated that on that the railways would show a loss of £265,000 per annum—over a quarter of a million pounds on that item alone. Although the freight rates shown in the latest report of the Commissioner of Railways indicate that there have been increases, we are still operating at well below cost and there is no excuse for that sort of thing. I suppose members could say that it was doing a good turn to Kalgoorlie in allowing coal to be carried very cheaply. But what it did was to put approximately 500 workers on the woodline out of work. Now we find that the power corporation in Boulder is making strenuous efforts to return to the use of wood fuel and so leave the coal down at Collie.

We also find that cheap rates are allowed for the carrying of ore, particularly pyrite concentrates from Norseman. Under the headings of "Ores and Minerals" in the report, the rate in 1955 was 2.04d. and in 1956 the rate was lower still, being 1.98d., which is slightly higher than the rate in 1952, it then being 1.73d. One can imagine people saying that that would be a great help to the industry at Norseman. I do not agree with that because instead of carting all that tremendous bulk of concentrates to Bassendean to be treated, it could be treated just as economically at Norseman and the acid extract railed to Perth. It would not take up the time of the railways or the use of the rollingstock and the railway service would not show such a terrific loss as it does at present.

Mr. Ackland: Are you sure it can be transported? The advice is that it is too dangerous to transport it.

Mr. MOIR: They transport a far more dangerous commodity, in greater quantity—I refer to the explosives used on the mines. Many tons are carted.

Mr. Ackland: If it is refined to 100 per cent. I believe it is quite easy to transport but if it is refined to only 70 or 80 per cent., which it is for superphosphate manufacture, it is very dangerous.

Mr. MOIR: I would take a lot of convincing that the transport of that acid would be more dangerous than the transport of high explosives. Arising out of that, there is a move at present—and I hope the member for Fremantle is listening to this—

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: I am listening.

Mr. MOIR: —to transport 3,000 tons of concentrates per month from the Golden Mile to Fremantle for treatment, firstly to extract the acids and, secondly, to extract the gold.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: If they do not look out, they will have a lot of residue in the river and it will spoil it.

Mr. MOIR: As the hon. member would know, when they extract gold there is a cyanide process involved and I am sure there will be a lot of dead fish in the river.

Mr. Potter: And not only dead fish.

Mr. MOIR: There is no doubt that the contemptuously low freight rates are an inducement for people to transport large tonnages of materials to the seaboard to be treated. In my opinion, this ore could be just as easily treated in Kalgoorlie. True, it would necessitate the building of a plant, but a plant could be built just as easily on the Goldfields as at Fremantle. There are other factors which must be taken into consideration. Wages were a lot higher on the Goldfields than they used to be in the metropolitan area, but

today the basic wages is higher in the metropolitan area than it is on the Gold-fields.

It is rather interesting to compare the various items, the tonnages carried and the freight rates. For coal, coke, shale and charcoal, the rate was 3.15d. for 1954-55 and 3.11d. for 1955-56. That was considerably below cost. As regards tonnages, in 1954-55, 587,999 tons were carted and in 1955-56, 520,851 tons were carted. Further down the list we see a reference to fertilisers and in 1954-55 the rate was 3.13d. whereas in 1955-56 it was 3.29d.

Wheat was carried in 1954-55 at 3.24d. and in 1955-56 at 3.39d. The next item is grain—I am afraid I do not know the difference between grain and wheat but apparently it means barley, oats and so on—and in 1954-55 the rate was 3.07d. and in 1955-56 it was 3.14d. Why the rate should be lower than that for wheat I do not know. But here is one of the gems. As regards potatoes, in 1954-55, 39,871 tons were carted and in 1955-56, 34,033 tons were carted and the respective rates were 2.83d. and 2.71d.; that is probably about one-third of the economic rate.

No concern can go on like that without showing a huge loss, and to blame that loss purely and simply on the running of the railways is fallacious. So much of the freight is carried at well below cost and there are considerable extravagances in the running of the railways. Is it any wonder that these huge deficits are shown? Until recently we were getting the bad end of the stick with the Commonwealth railways. Passengers were being transported from Kalgoorlie ex the Trans train at a lower rate than Gold-fields passengers were being transported from Kalgoorlie to Perth. There has been a recent adjustment to that, but the amount that the W.A.G.R. are recovering from the Commonwealth railways is still not as much as the Kalgoorlie passengers pay to travel to Perth.

Mr. Perkins: They would be in full trainloads whereas the Kalgoorlie passengers would be only part trainloads.

Mr. MOIR: It is rather apt that the hon. member has mentioned that because there happen to be some figures showing that the number of passengers travelling from Kalgoorlie to Perth is approximately the same as the number travelling to Perth ex the Trans train. From memory the figures are about 26,000 and 27,000 per year respectively. So that argument does not hold water. Quite large trainloads come down from Kalgoorlie to Perth; indeed they are comparable with those that come on the Westland express. The first class fare from Kalgoorlie to Perth, including a meal, is at present £6 1s. 5d. The second class fare is £4 0s. 9d. From Kalgoorlie to Perth ex-Trans train, the first class fare is £5 13s. 4d. and the second class fare £3 14s. 5d. which is a difference of 8s. 1d. and 6s. 4d. respectively.

This may not be a great deal per passenger but it does represent a considerable amount of money when spread over 26,000 passengers. Previous to this adjustment having taken place, the figures were Kalgoorlie to Perth £6 1s. 5d. first class and £4 0s. 9d. for second class, as against £4 19s. 11d. for first class and £3 5s. 6d. for second class passengers ex-Trans train. This constitutes a difference of £1 1s. 6d. and 15s. 3d. respectively.

So it will be seen that prior to this adjustment having been made, the Western Australian Government Railways were receiving considerably less from the traffic ex-Trans train than they were from the passenger train from Kalgoorlie. I might also add that there was no comparison between the accommodation provided for the passengers on the ex-Trans train and that provided for the passengers travelling down from Kalgoorlie on the passenger train. At best, the accommodation provided for the Kalgoorlie passengers was second class when compared with the others even though the former were paying so much more.

Another matter that has intrigued me is the running cost of the diesel locomotives we are using as compared with the costs for steam locomotives. The diesel trains running on the Kalgoorlie express give a reasonably good service. It is a faster service and the trip is better than that by steam train. Possibly, however, we are paying too great a price for this improved service particularly when one sees that out of the 85 diesels the railways had, 28 were out of commission. We know there has been a good deal of difficulty because of structural weaknesses, but the railways cannot be blamed for that. These difficulties were caused by structural weaknesses in the cylinder heads of the engines, and those heads were replaced free of charge by the firm of Metropolitan Vickers.

But this has proved very costly to the State railways because they had to supply the labour; they had to pay the mechanics and the fitters engaged to carry out those repairs. Apart from a faulty head there are quite a lot of other things that seem to go wrong with the diesels and as far as I am aware the State railways have to bear the entire cost. It would be interesting to know what that cost is.

I notice that there is no mention made, and no figures are given, of that aspect in the report on the Western Australian Government railways. I do not know what the position now is but from having an all diesel service on the Kalgoorlie run, including goods trains, we find that steam engines are back on the job as far as goods are concerned. It would appear that the diesel engines either cannot keep up with the job, or they have been transferred to other lines.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You say that steam engines are used on the express?

Mr. MOIR: No, though they may be used to help the diesels up a hill. They have been running regularly on goods trains. A matter that arises from the running of goods trains is the stress that the committee places on the fact that by closing down certain lines more rolling-stock will be made available to the railways. That would be very laudable if it were not for the fact that the best use is not made of the rollingstock they have at present. We find that the goods traffic coming over on the Commonwealth line consists of trainloads of motorcar bodies arriving at Kalgoorlie. A train is marshalled there to bring those bodies down to the metropolitan area. One would think it would be quite a simple matter because there is a diesel train with a full load of motorcar bodies and there should be nothing to prevent that train coming right through.

We find however that the train proceeds from Kalgoorlie to Merredin where it is put off on a side line; it probably stops there for a day, and then continues from Merredin to Northam, where it is again put off on a side line for another day or longer. In the circumstances, it takes four days to bring that rake of motorcar bodies from Kalgoorlie to Cottesloe. Of course, those trucks are out of commission for three days. They take four days to do a journey which could be completed in one day. That undoubtedly shows very bad management on the part of somebody in the railways.

Another matter of great moment to the railways is the cost of coal. We find that the price the Government pays for coal ranges from 65s. to 72s. This was the answer given by the Minister to a question asked by an hon. member.

Mr. May: You are out of touch; it is now 61s. 2d.

Mr. MOIR: The answer given by the Minister indicates that the amount is 65s. to 72s. The railways report quotes the average price over three years. In 1954 it was 66s. 11.84d. for native coal. In 1954-55 it was 70s. 6d.; in 1955-56 it was 64s. 6.55d. At the same time in 1954 the railways paid 162s. 9d. per ton for Newcastle coal, of which they imported 8,573 tons. In the next year they imported 13,144 tons at a cost of 164s. 2d. per ton. In 1955-56 they imported 15,099 tons at 164s. 6d. per ton. I read recently where the Minister for Railways was rather astonished to find that the Railways Commission had imported 18 000 tons of Newcastle coal for use during this year. Heavens knows the reason for that. I do not think there is much difference between Newcastle coal and Collie coal for setting fires.

We find that the cost of Collie coal is terrific. Seeing that it has a direct bearing to railway costs, I should say something about mining costs at Collie. At the outset I might state that I do not know much

about mining coal, but I do know a lot about the mining of ore. I do know that coal should be mined at half the cost at least of mining ores. There is no comparison. I want to quote some of the costs.

Mr. May: You do not pay railway freight on ore.

Mr. MOIR: The price I quote will be the pithead price and no rail freight has been included. I quote the shafthead price of breaking ore and pulling ore of mines located on the Golden Mile. The costs in respect of the Great Boulder Mine were supplied to me by the Chamber of Mines in Kalgoorlie and they can be accepted as authentic. In 1953 the cost was 35s. 11.08d.; in 1954 it was 36s. 1.53d.; and in 1955 it was 38s. 11.55d. per ton. That is the cost of breaking ore, transporting it to the haulage ways in the mine and then pulling it thousands of feet up to the surface. There can be no comparison between the cost of breaking ore and that of breaking coal.

On the Lake View and Star mine the figures are even lower. In 1954-55 the cost of ore extraction was 31s. 3d. per ton, and in 1953-54 it was 31s. 9d. This was the case despite the fact that over the years the mines had to battle against steeply rising costs. I want to quote an extract from the report of another mine which was published in the "Kalgoorlie Miner" on December the 7th. It is in the report of the chairman of directors of the North Kalgurli Mine. It says—

Operating costs last year were, by virtue of the substantial increase in output, 2.1s. per ton lower than the previous year. This lower figure was achieved despite higher wage rates and increases in the prices of most stores and materials used.

So we find that in an efficient industry with a good labour force, and where there is regard for costs, generally the job can be done at a lower cost. But at Collie we find there is no regard for costs. The mines are worked on the cost-plus basis—the more the cost, the more the plus.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: The Premier told us all about that.

Mr. MOIR: As far as the railways and Government usage are concerned, the companies are pricing themselves out of the market.

Mr. May: You are referring to the companies and the men have nothing to do with it?

Mr. MOIR: I am not blaming the men. Do not think that for a moment. I am blaming the direction and the methods employed to mine coal.

Mr. Ackland: Would you blame the employees of the railways for the extravagant expenditure?

Mr. MOIR: No. I had quite a bit to say about that feature, but the hon. member was not in the Chamber. There is no doubt that a serious situation in regard to fuel has arisen, and the position at Collie must be a terrific headache to the Government and the railways. The position at Collie can in a measure be held to be partially responsible for the position of the railways. I can understand the predicament of the Minister especially when we see from the report that very dire consequences are prophesied unless cognisance is taken of the recommendations contained in the report and acted upon.

For my part, I am not concerned so much about the closure of 800 odd miles of line, as the consequences that will follow the closing of other sections of the railways. I do not think that we can accept the position that the State can go on closing railway lines. A long look should be taken at the situation. It is about time that the people who manage the railways were told to do the job properly and to earn a bit in return for the handsome salaries paid to them.

Mr. Boveil: The Government should take a lead in that direction.

Mr. May: Who appointed the commissioners?

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You know who.

Mr. MOIR: It does not matter how inefficient the commissioners, or at least two of them are, they still remain in their jobs. The railways are not like an ordinary business where if the manager or director does not give efficient service or make a success, their services can be dispensed with and someone else can be appointed to do a better job. In the railways no matter how inefficient is the direction, we have to put up with it unless we are prepared to take the same step which the Premier of New South Wales took when he gave the railway commissioner a lump sum settlement for dispensing with his services. Although I do not know the commissioners in this State very well, I think that such a course should be looked into.

The Minister for Transport: Many years of political interference has a lot to do with the position.

Mr. MOIR: No doubt it has. But because there have been long years of political interference does not justify the people of this State being made to suffer.

The Minister for Transport: You can see politics influencing the attitude of members in connection with this motion.

Mr. MOIR: As far as I am concerned there is no politics. I stand here voicing my honest opinion. As far as the closing of lines is concerned, politically it does not matter one iota to me. I have about 1½ miles of railway in my electorate; one line in mine and one in that of the member for Eyre.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member's time has expired.

On motion by Mr. O'Brien, time extended.

Mr. MOIR: I thank members. Railways are not the only form of Government transport losing a lot of money. When we take the Government tramways and ferries' report, we see an alarming situation. I do not know whether the Government proposes to do anything about that, but on page 10 of the report so far as tramway operations are concerned, in 1956 the loss was £57,677, and in 1955, £38,401. The loss on trolley-bus operations for 1956 was £93,118 and in 1955, £81,152. We find that motor-bus operations lost £115,322 in 1956 which rose from £69,062 in 1955. There is an alarming situation developing there.

The Minister for Transport: That is why fares were increased recently.

Mr. MOIR: I think the Minister should double the fares.

The Minister for Transport: We will bear that in mind when dealing with the country.

Mr. MOIR: I think the sauce which is good for the country goose should be good for the metropolitan gander.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MOIR: We find on page 14 of the report under the heading "Accumulation Account and Statement of Net Deficiency" the loss from 1913 to 1955 has doubled. It was £1,649,133 2s. 8d. For the year ended the 30th June, 1956 it was £262,766 5s. 7d. and the accumulated deficiency was £1,911,899 8s. 3d. Somebody should be doing a bit of head scratching over that.

The Minister for Transport: I question the 3d.

Mr. MOIR: If I were the Minister for Transport, I would not treat it lightly. It is not a subject to be treated lightly.

Mr. Boveil: It is the most serious proposal submitted to this Parliament for years.

The Minister for Transport: It will give the country districts modern transport.

Mr. MOIR: The country districts would be more happy if they were going to benefit from modern transport, but I have to be convinced of that. We have a totally different set-up in providing roads. It is not like the funds expended on railways which come out of loan money and revenue. The Main Roads Department's funds come from the Commonwealth disbursement of money collected from the petrol tax and do not carry sinking fund and interest payments like the railways. I definitely suggest that if the railways were financed in the same manner there would be no question about closing them down.

With the growth of road transport in the State there will be many headaches of the sort being experienced in the Eastern States at the present time. When I was there recently, I made a trip from Sydney up through Newcastle. Quite a long part of the trip is on the main road from Sydney to Brisbane. It is an eye-opener to travel on that road behind heavy transport. The traffic comes in convoys, comprising big, heavy trucks, and where the road is winding one cannot see very far ahead and dare not pass in case of an oncoming truck.

That is the situation which can arise on our Great Eastern Highway from Northam to Perth unless considerable money is spent in widening the road. We will have convoys travelling at the pace of the slowest vehicle, which is at the front. That is the situation in New South Wales where it takes hours and hours to do a journey which should be done in a little while.

Another matter I cannot help noticing in the transport report is that these people have little appreciation of what transport on dirt tracks means in the country. I see they intend 10-ton vehicles to travel over dirt roads. That is absolutely impossible. These roads will get cut to pieces in no time. I have seen what heavy traffic has done on dirt roads in mining places. I have seen roads like flour 3ft. and 4ft. down, and it would not be possible to go over them in a car. It was ground very fine and was dry. Roads can be graded by the Main Roads Department into really good roads, but with heavy traffic they become pulverised and after a drop of rain are impassable.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: We will be using helicopters soon.

Mr. MOIR: Another matter about which I am concerned is the number of men who will lose employment if this policy is carried out; not so much in regard to the railways included in this motion but if all the recommendations of the committee are effected. The committee says that it feels there should not be much unemployment, but one knows perfectly well that the railway system cannot be cut in half and the men retained. It is too silly.

Mr. Bovell: It is like the report altogether.

Mr. MOIR: The Minister said on page 2821 of Hansard, "there will be as much money and as many men employed." I do not know whether he looked over his speech to check it, but it is astonishing to note from his statement that we will be spending as much money on the railways that will be left, and still be employing as many men. He said that families would not be left in the out-back; they would come closer in and have the benefit of more amenities.

The railway employees will suffer as a consequence of the motion before us.

Probably not many men will be displaced when the railway services are discontinued, but if the committee's recommendations are proceeded with, a large number will be displaced. I am not saying that we are running the railway system just as a means of employment, but it can have very serious consequences, and we must weigh up the savings involved against the possibilities that can arise.

The Minister for Transport: I would like you to get that point clear—men will not be displaced, but some wastage will not be replaced. There is an essential difference.

Mr. MOIR: There will have to be a severe wastage if these people are to replace the men who leave. In the report some comment is made to the effect that the labour in the fettling gangs is not as efficient as the commission would wish it to be, and mention is made of the new Australians. While some credit is given to the new Australians for the work they have done, the report states that they are not of the type that is altogether competent, and a comparison is drawn between the old and the present type of fettler.

If a man is not an efficient fettler, and he is a young fellow with his health and strength, I am sure he cannot be an efficient porter or guard, so it must mean that he would be displaced—large numbers of these people, too, because I see that mention is made of displacing 500 track men.

I wish now to touch on the Bullfinch-Southern Cross line, and I would like to hear from the Minister on this point. In the report it is stated that a sum of £238,300 will be needed to put the line in good repair. I find it hard to believe that the railway could not be rebuilt for that sum. In these days of earth-moving equipment and, because of the type of country over which the railway runs, it is amazing that this amount of money is set down as the sum required to put the line in order.

As far as I am aware—and everyone else there, including the railway men—there is nothing wrong with the line now; and surely it must be earning some money when it is serving a centre like Bullfinch where there are quite a few people and a thriving goldmine. There must be quite a little passenger service, and a freight service, too.

There is a strong rumour—this is mentioned in the report, too—of the possibility of this line being leased to the mining company. If it is not profitable for the railways to run it, how is it going to be possible for the mine to run it? Also, if I know mining companies, I know that this company will not take over something that is going to cost it £238,000 to put in order. That is just too silly for words. I am concerned that a free gift—or something next door to a free gift—of the assets of the State is to be made to

someone. If this line is to be disposed of, then we should get something near its value including the value of the rolling-stock and motive power that will go with it.

I intend to support the motion, but I do so with the greatest reluctance, and I feel that before any steps are taken to carry out the rest of the recommendation, a searching inquiry should be held into the whole of our railway system and its management.

On motion by Mr. Cornell, debate adjourned.

BILL—BETTING CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council notifying that it insisted on its amendments Nos. 1 and 2 but did not insist on its amendment No. 3, now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Sewell in the Chair; the Treasurer in charge of the Bill.

The TREASURER: In this message the Legislative Council notifies that it insists upon two amendments. The two amendments insisted upon are the same in principle. They have to do with the question of whether a bet laid by a bookmaker is to be regarded as part of his turnover, and therefore whether he has to pay tax on a bet which he himself personally makes on a racehorse. We argued this out previously, and there is not much to be gained by arguing it out again here. I move—

That the Assembly continues to disagree to the amendments made by the Council.

Mr. COURT: Without prolonging the discussion on this matter, I reiterate that I still hold to my previous views that we should concur in the Legislative Council's amendments. There are very good reasons why, in my opinion, the bookmakers should be subject to this tax.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

Assembly's Request for Conference.

The TREASURER: I move—

That the Council be requested to grant a conference on the amendments insisted on by the Council and that the managers for the Assembly be Mr. Court, Mr. Lapham and the mover.

Question put and passed, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

*House adjourned at 12.38 a.m.
(Wednesday).*

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 12th December, 1956.

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

INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION BILL.

Incorrect Press Report.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Seeing that the report in this morning's Press could be interpreted to mean that one Labour member of this Chamber voted against the Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment measure, would you, Mr. President, take steps to see that the correct voting is published?

The PRESIDENT: I have received an assurance from "The West Australian" that the correction will be made.

QUESTIONS.

NORTHAM TIMBER YARD.

Stock Shortage.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER asked the Chief Secretary:

As stocktaking at the Northam timber yard, operated by the Wood Distillation and Charcoal Iron and Steel Industry disclosed at the 4th March, 1956, a net stock