

Mr. Court: I was always a trade unionist and believe in unionism.

Mr. JOHNSON: Like fun!

Mr. Court: I am still a life member and they are not likely to take that away from me.

Mr. JOHNSON: It would be necessary to prove first that the hon. member for Nedlands had life, because life requires a heart. The whole idea is to make it a benefit to the employee, or some of the employees, to refrain from belonging to unions so that the unions' power will wane. We know numbers of employers are trying to create tame-cat unions. It is encouraged by many employers.

This is an objectionable piece of legislation supported by the Opposition with thoughts expressed that have very little relation either to fact or the Bill before us and certainly not very well defended by quotations from things which have occurred in another place. As members may have guessed, I oppose the legislation.

On motion by the Hon. J. B. Sleeman, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.23 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 11th September, 1958.

### CONTENTS.

	Page
<b>QUESTIONS ON NOTICE :</b>	
Parliamentary salaries, comparison of figures since 1937	727
Labour Day procession, use of Government vehicles	727
Cancer, installation of linear accelerator, and funds raised	727
Scaveola spinescens, formula for extract, and chemical analysis	727
Used-car dealers, registration at country police stations	728
Search for underground water, purchase of additional drills	728
Education, proposed school at Eaton	728
Housing, programme at Katanning, Kojonup, and Wagin, etc.	728
Local authorities, non-election of members under ward system	729
Manjimup to Denmark road, bituminisation and cost	729
Stirling land settlement area, road from Chillinup-Corackerup	729
Mt. Barker-Manjimup road, mileage bituminised, etc.	729

### CONTENTS—continued

<b>Railways—</b>	
Approaches to Arbitration Court since 1945	729
Disposal of scrap and revenue received	730
Attendance money, payments to ship painters and dockers, and position of shipwrights	730
Grain and superphosphate, deliveries to country sidings	730
Dental Hospital, charges to age pensioners, etc.	731
Preston River, levees and deepening	731
Bunbury Regional Hospital, provision of funds for commencement	732
North-West, port facilities at Napier Broome Bay	732
Crown land, alienations under conditional purchase conditions	732
<b>Midland High School—</b>	
Total enrolment for 1959	732
Fourth year enrolment for 1959	733
Mt. Lawley High School, total enrolment for 1959	732
Travel agencies, establishment in Kalgoorlie	732
Railway freights, quotes outside rate book	732
Perth Modern School, effect of change, and number of students	733
<b>QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE :</b>	
Attendance money, position of shipwrights	733
Empire Games, decision on building village	733
Charcoal iron industry, investigation by Federal Treasury official	734
<b>Abattoir Board—</b>	
Reappointment of chairman	734
New appointment	734
Employment, effect of public buildings	734
Railways, inquiry into closure of lines	734
Traffic, danger from log heaps	734
Trade Mission, statement by the Deputy Premier	734
<b>LEAVE OF ABSENCE</b>	735
<b>BILLS :</b>	
<b>Industries Assistance Act Amendment—</b>	
2r.	735
Message	739
<b>Health Education Council—</b>	
2r.	735
Message	739
<b>Local Government—</b>	
2r.	736
Message	739
<b>Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act Amendment, 2r., Com., report</b>	740
<b>Bush Fires Act Amendment, 2r., Com., report</b>	740
<b>College Street Closure, 2r., Com., report</b>	748
<b>Government Railways Act Amendment, 2r.</b>	752

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

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.****PARLIAMENTARY SALARIES.***Comparison of Figures since 1937.*

1. Mr. JOHNSON asked the Treasurer:

(1) What was the salary, not including allowances, of a Western Australian member of Parliament on the 30th June of each year from 1937?

(2) What was the income tax on that salary for a married member without other dependants?

(3) What was the balance after tax for each year?

(4) Using the "C" series index for Perth, what was the value in 1937 money for each such amount?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (for the Treasurer) replied:

(1), (2), (3) and (4) —

Date— 30th June	Parliamentary Salary (excluding Allow- ances)	Income Tax (Married Man without other Depend- ants)	Available Income	Adjusted Avail- able Income
	£	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1937	600	48 7 0	551 13 0	551 13 0
1938	600	40 12 0	550 8 0	542 3 0
1939	600	50 11 0	549 9 0	529 11 0
1940	600	114 3 0	485 7 0	452 7 0
1941	600	104 2 0	495 18 0	433 18 0
1942	600	94 19 0	505 1 0	413 13 0
1943	600	148 10 0	451 1 0	354 19 0
1944	600	148 19 0	451 1 0	354 10 0
1945	675	179 12 0	495 8 0	388 18 0
1946	675	167 18 0	507 2 0	390 19 0
1947	679	133 3 0	545 17 0	409 6 0
1948	696	98 4 0	597 16 0	411 6 0
1949	960	145 1 0	814 19 0	502 0 0
1950	960	107 14 0	852 6 0	481 11 0
1951	960	102 3 0	857 17 0	400 12 0
1952	1,180	170 15 0	1,009 5 0	403 14 0
1953	1,280	181 19 0	1,098 1 0	410 3 0
1954	1,340	166 12 0	1,173 8 0	414 4 0
1955	1,340	152 1 0	1,187 19 0	402 14 0
1956	1,340	152 1 0	1,187 10 0	388 9 0
1957	2,120	373 1 0	1,747 19 0	555 17 0
1958	2,140	375 0 0	1,764 14 0	557 13 0

**LABOUR DAY PROCESSION.***Use of Government Vehicles.*

2. MR. WILD asked the Premier:

(1) How many Government-owned vehicles were used as floats or for other purposes in the last Labour Day procession?

(2) What was the total cost to the Government for materials used in the preparation of the floats, petrol, drivers' wages, etc.?

(3) Will he list the Government instrumentalities which had floats in the procession?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (for the Premier) replied:

(1) Thirty-nine.

(2) £1,580.

(3) Public Works Department.

Main Roads Department.

State Engineering Works.

Fisheries Department.

Land and Surveys Department.

State Insurance Office.

Health Department.

State Electricity Commission.

Education Department.

Fremantle Harbour Trust.

Railway Department.

State Building Supplies.

State Housing Commission.

Department of Agriculture.

Forests Department.

Metropolitan Water Supply Department.

W.A. Meat Exports.

Industrial Development Department.

**CANCER.***Installation of Linear Accelerator, and Funds Raised.*

3. Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Health:

(1) When will the linear accelerator be installed and where will it be situated?

(2) What was the total amount raised by the Anti-Cancer Council Appeal Fund for this purpose?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Towards the end of next year, and to the west of the Chest Hospital.

(2) £110,000 to date, but more funds are being received.

**SCAVEOLA SPINESCENS.***Formula for Extract, and Chemical Analysis.*

4. Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Further to my question of Thursday the 21st August, on the advice of the Commissioner of Public Health were instructions issued to the Director of the Chemical Laboratories to make up the extract from the native plant *scaveola spinescens* from the original formula supplied by Sergeant Monck; if not, on whose advice was this instruction issued?

(2) What problems would be associated with making a chemical analysis of this extract to the fullest extent possible, and why cannot this be done without interfering with the present method of supply?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No instructions have been given.

(2) The problem is not one of chemical analysis but of testing materials obtained by analysis, and methods for doing this are now being explored.

**USED-CAR DEALERS.***Registration at Country Police Stations.*

5. Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Will he table the instructions for registration procedure that are given to country police stations where the registration of used car dealers can be undertaken?

(2) Will he also table a list of the instructions given to country police stations regarding the operation of the used car dealer provisions of the Traffic Act and regulations, and in particular any instructions regarding the location at which used cars may be demonstrated and sold?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) No specific instructions have been given respecting this matter, and any reference to it is contained in the Circular Order which is referred to by No. (1). Regarding the location at which used cars may be demonstrated and sold, this is dealt with on each individual application. Generally, where a person makes application in respect of several premises which are separated by some distance, a separate licence must be obtained for each of the premises.

**SEARCH FOR UNDERGROUND WATER.***Purchase of Additional Drills.*

6. Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

(1) With reference to my questions on the 19th August, 1958, regarding two additional drills to be purchased to extend the search for underground water, when is it anticipated that the type of drills to be purchased will be determined and the drills be available?

(2) In view of the reference to the matter in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech, is it correct that no decision has been made as to the area and the type of drills?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied:

This question should have been addressed to the Minister for Mines. The answer is:—

(1) The matter is now under consideration.

(2) Partly answered by No. (1). Proposed priorities of areas to be drilled have been set out, but actual drilling will be decided by the willingness of farmers in a district to enter into the Mines Department contract.

**EDUCATION.***Proposed School at Eaton.*

7. Mr. I. W. MANNING asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Is it proposed to build a school at Eaton?

(2) Has a site been set aside?

(3) If so, where is it actually located?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Not at present.

(2) A school site is being allocated in the town area being prepared by the Town Planner.

(3) Not known yet.

**HOUSING.***Programme at Katanning, Kojonup and Wagin, etc.*

8. Mr. NALDER asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) What was the Housing Commission's home-building programme for 1957-58 in the following country towns:—

Katanning; Kojonup; Wagin: (a) rental; (b) purchase homes?

(2) How many homes were actually built?

(3) If the full building programme for the above period was not completed in any of the above towns, what was the reason?

(4) How many houses does the commission intend building in the above towns for the year 1958-59—

(a) rental; (b) purchase homes?

(5) How many current applications for (a) rental; (b) purchase homes, exist for the above towns?

The MINISTER replied:

(1)—

	(a) Rental	(b) Purchase
Katanning ....	4	3
Kojonup ....	2	...
Wagin ....	...	2

(2)—

Homes Built (completed)—		
Katanning ....	4	6
Kojonup ....	2	1
Wagin ....	2	3

(3)—

Katanning ....	Contracts for 3 houses let but work not started.
Kojonup ....	Contracts for 2 houses let but work not started.
Wagin ....	2 Purchase homes cancelled because no applicants available.

(4)—

Katanning ....	10	...
Kojonup ....	2	...
Wagin ....	2	...

(5)—

Katanning ....	33	15
	(Plus 5 2-unit cases)	
Kojonup ....	8	4
	(Plus 1 2-unit case)	
Wagin ....	2	2
	(Plus 2 2-unit cases)	

Average wastage rate on applications is approximately 50 per cent.

Anticipated rental home vacation rates for 1958-59 are:—

Katanning ....	11
Kojonup ....	3
Wagin ....	11

**LOCAL AUTHORITIES.***Non-election of Members Under Ward System.*

9. Mr. EVANS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government:

What are the names of those local authorities that do not elect their members under the ward system?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied:

(a) Municipalities: Boulder, Carnarvon, Guildford, Kalgoorlie, Narrogin and Wagin.

(b) Road Boards: Dandaragan, Greenbushes, Kalgoorlie, Kwinana, Marble Bar, Nullagine, Peppermint Grove, Phillips River, Port Hedland, Serpentine-Jarrahdale, Tammin, West Kimberley and Wyndham.

**MANJIMUP TO DENMARK ROAD.***Bituminisation and Cost.*

10. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Works:

(1) How many miles of road between Manjimup, Walpole, Nornalup and Denmark have been bituminised?

(2) How many miles of that road remain to be bituminised?

(3) When is it expected that the road from Manjimup to Walpole, Nornalup and Denmark will be completed?

(4) What amount of finance is available for work on that road this financial year?

(5) What is the overall estimated cost of the road from Manjimup to Walpole, Nornalup and Denmark?

The MINISTER FOR MINES (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) 25 miles have been surfaced and a further eight primed.

(2) 82 miles remain to be surfaced with bitumen.

(3) Further improvement of the section of this road between Manjimup and Walpole will be carried out as quickly as finance can be made available. Surfacing between Walpole and Nornalup will be completed during the coming summer. The section between Nornalup and Denmark will be brought to the primed stage during the coming summer, and it is expected that it will be completely sealed by the end of the summer of the financial year 1959-1960.

(4) £131,000 was provided for the further improvement of this road in the 1958-1959 programme of works.

(5) Insufficient investigations have been made to enable estimates to be prepared for the improvement of the section of this road from Manjimup to Walpole. Completion of the sealing of the section between Nornalup and Denmark is estimated to cost £23,000.

**STIRLING LAND SETTLEMENT AREA.***Road from Chillinup-Corackerup.*

11. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Can he advise as to whether the proposed road to run from Chillinup-Corackerup to Stirling land settlement area, has been formed?

(2) If so, is the road suitable for heavy transport?

(3) Can he advise whether additional finance will be available this financial year to further consolidate the road?

The MINISTER FOR MINES (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) No.

(3) Funds are available for the stabilising of this road, a work which is being carried out at the present time by a Main Roads Department organisation.

**MT. BARKER-MANJIMUP ROAD.***Mileage Bituminised, etc.*

12. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What mileage of road between Mt. Barker and Manjimup via Rocky Gully, remains to be sealed and bituminised?

(2) Has finance been allocated by Main Roads for the sealing and bituminising of the Manjimup-Mt. Barker road this financial year?

(3) If the answer to No. (2) is "Yes", what amount of money is allocated for sealing and bituminising of that road?

(4) If finance is available for the Mt. Barker-Rocky Gully-Manjimup road, what mileage will be sealed and bituminised, and what mileage will remain to be sealed and bituminised from available finance?

The MINISTER FOR MINES (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) 43 miles.

(2) Yes.

(3) £16,400.

(4) During the coming summer 14.3 miles will be sealed and a further 8 miles primed, leaving 28.7 miles to be sealed as finance can be made available.

**RAILWAYS.***Approaches to Arbitration Court Since 1945.*

13. Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

On how many occasions since 1945 has the Railways Commissioner or the Railways Commission initiated any approach to the Arbitration Court in connection with industrial awards affecting the West Australian Government Railways?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

On no occasion (concerning wages or conditions). Action has been taken during industrial stoppages concerning deregistration and penalties under the Industrial Arbitration Act.

#### ATTENDANCE MONEY.

*Payments to Ship Painters and Dockers, and Position of Shipwrights.*

14. Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Labour:

(1) What has been the experience each day under the regulations promulgated under the Fremantle Harbour Trust Act in respect of attendance money to ship painters and dockers under the headings:

- (a) number on roster;
- (b) number engaged each pick-up;
- (c) number who qualified for attendance money;
- (d) how much each, and in total, is payable to those in (c) for each of the days in question?

(2) (a) How has the attendance money been financed?

(b) How will it be financed in the future?

(3) (a) Who will pay the resultant cost of attendance money, and how?

(b) At what rate and in what manner?

(4) Is it correct that the shipwrights are now moving to be awarded attendance money?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The attendance money regulations came into force as from Monday, the 8th September, 1956.

(a) 98.

(b) Monday - 8; Tuesday - 11; Wednesday - Nil; Thursday - 7.

(c) Monday - 53; Tuesday - 54; Wednesday - 62; Thursday - 65.

(d) Twenty-seven shillings per man. Monday - £71 11s.; Tuesday - £72 18s.; Wednesday - £83 14s.; Thursday - £87 15s.

(2) (a) By an advance from the Treasury in accordance with the Act until the first service charge for the month is collected at the beginning of October.

(b) By money received from the payment of the service charge.

(3) (a) The employers engaging ship painters and dockers who will in turn presumably pass it on to the owners of vessels for whom the work is being performed.

(b) At the rate of 1s. 8d. per man hour of employment, to be paid to the Fremantle Harbour Trust monthly after the employment.

(4) Yes; a claim has been submitted.

#### RAILWAYS.

*Disposal of Scrap and Revenue Received.*

15. Mr. COURT asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) What revenue has been received by the Railway Department from the sale of scrap during each of the three years ended the 30th June, 1956, 1957 and 1958?

(2) What is the normal method for disposing of W.A. Government Railways scrap?

(3) Is any systematic drive made to ensure a full recovery of scrap for sale and other purposes?

(4) (a) Is it expected that the revenue from this source will remain fairly constant?

(b) If not, is it expected to increase or decrease?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) 1956—£58,000.

1957—£124,600.

1958—£62,300.

(2) Tenders are invited through the Tender Board for large quantities, but minor sales are negotiated by private treaty.

(3) Yes.

(4) (a) and (b) Revenue is likely to fluctuate, depending on the availability of large items of scrap, the market, and ruling prices.

#### GRAIN AND SUPERPHOSPHATE.

*Deliveries to Country Sidings.*

16. Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister for Agriculture:

In each of the last two years—

(1) What quantity of (i) wheat; (ii) other grain, was delivered to sidings—

(a) between Brookton and Corrigin;

(b) between Katanning and Pingrup included;

(c) between Lake Grace and Hyden included?

(2) What quantity of superphosphate was delivered to the area served by above sidings?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) The information requested is as follows:—

**GRAIN AND FERTILISER TRANSPORT.**

Siding	1956-57				1957-58		
	Wheat	Barley	Oats	Super	Wheat	Barley	Oats
<i>Brookton-Corrigin :</i>	tons	tons	tons	tons	tons	tons	tons
Nalya .....	1,005	.....	.....	823	916	.....	.....
Aldersyde .....	2,135	13	240	1,578	1,873	.....	370
Mears .....	915	.....	.....	477	941	.....	.....
Kweda .....	2,021	.....	.....	1,065	1,709	.....	.....
Bulyee .....	2,543	154	166	1,257	2,524	32	133
Lomos .....	2,754	.....	.....	1,150	3,402	.....	.....
Jubuk .....	1,747	.....	.....	312	1,945	.....	.....
Kunjin .....	2,581	.....	.....	751	2,687	.....	.....
Wearn .....	.....	.....	.....	214	.....	.....	.....
	15,701	167	406	7,627	15,697	32	503
<i>Katanning-Pingrup :</i>							
Coyrecup .....	1,514	.....	.....	1,238	1,363	.....	.....
Badgebup .....	2,087	232	580	1,279	2,344	238	802
Kwobrup .....	.....	.....	.....	765	.....	.....	.....
Chinocup .....	.....	.....	.....	170	.....	.....	.....
Moornaming .....	1,973	.....	.....	723	1,671	.....	.....
Nyabing .....	2,237	246	460	1,162	1,629	67	201
Kuringup .....	2,400	219	57	816	2,155	141	175
Pingrup .....	3,006	443	500	1,434	2,939	166	193
Kibbleup .....	.....	.....	.....	120	.....	.....	.....
Ewlyamartup .....	.....	.....	.....	517	.....	.....	.....
	13,217	1,140	1,597	8,224	12,101	612	1,376
<i>Lake Grace-Hyden :</i>							
Kuender .....	585	.....	.....	221	630	.....	.....
Wardcarrin .....	.....	.....	.....	134	.....	.....	.....
Dornook .....	1,893	.....	.....	451	1,423	.....	.....
Pingaring .....	2,306	83	25	661	1,851	15	118
Pederah .....	1,226	.....	170	440	1,320	.....	165
Karlgarin .....	2,181	232	.....	847	1,840	16	.....
Hyden .....	3,569	28	32	2,051	5,063	131	219
	11,760	343	227	4,805	12,127	162	502

(2) The statement also shows super-phosphate deliveries for 1956-57. Similar figures for 1957-58 have not been segregated. The following total figures in each of the three districts relate to the quantities on which transport subsidy has been paid and are not the total quantities transported. The quantities subsidised for 1957-58 season were:—

Brookton-Corrigin area—3,141 tons.

Katanning-Pingrup area—4,839 tons.

Lake Grace-Hyden area—3,115 tons.

**DENTAL HOSPITAL.**

*Charges to Age Pensioners, etc.*

17. Mr. ANDREW asked the Minister or Health:

(1) What are the charges made by the dental hospital for extractions and dentures—

(a) to age pensioners;

(b) to other people who qualify for dental assistance?

(2) How do these charges compare with those charged by private dentists?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) The charge for upper and lower dentures is £4 and extractions 6s.

(b) These charges vary in accordance with income, size of family, etc.; and as the list is considerable a copy will be forwarded to the hon. member as early as possible.

(2) This is a matter of arrangement between the dentist and the patient.

**PRESTON RIVER.**

*Levees and Deepening.*

18. Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Have funds been set aside this financial year for the raising, strengthening, and extension of the levees along

the lower reaches of the Preston River and for the deepening of the outlet of the Preston River into Leschenault Estuary?

(2) If not, why not?

(3) If so, how much, and what are the works proposed prior to next winter?

The MINISTER FOR MINES (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) No provision of loan funds has been made for any work of raising or extending levees or deepening the outlet of the Preston River. Provision of £1,000 has been made in the Revenue Estimates for maintenance work on the levees.

(2) The expenditure of further capital funds on the levees is not considered warranted. Deepening of the river outlet would not alleviate flooding of the river further upstream.

(3) Answered by No. (1).

### BUNBURY REGIONAL HOSPITAL.

#### *Provision of Funds for Commencement.*

19. Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Health:

When will funds be set aside for the commencement of the regional hospital in Bunbury?

The MINISTER replied:

A site for a new hospital has yet to be selected, but it will be some time yet before loan funds will be available for construction to commence. Meantime, considerable improvements and additions have been carried out on the existing hospital.

### NORTH-WEST.

#### *Port Facilities at Napier Broome Bay.*

20. Mr. RHATIGAN asked the Minister representing the Minister for the North-West:

In view of the fact that settlers in the North Kimberley area are making inquiries at the State Shipping Office, concerning services to Napier Broome Bay, can he advise when an examination will be made with the object of providing port facilities in that area?

The MINISTER FOR NATIVE WELFARE replied:

The Director of Works advises that examination will not be made this year.

### CROWN LAND.

#### *Alienations Under Conditional Purchase Conditions.*

21. Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) How much Crown land has been alienated under conditional purchase conditions for agricultural purposes since 1945 in each of the road districts of Corrigin,

Kondinin, Kulin, Lake Grace, Phillp River, Nyabing-Pingrup, Dumbleyung, and Wickepin?

(2) What acreage of land was alienated prior to 1945 in each of the above road districts?

The MINISTER replied:

Departmental statistics do not provide the information requested in respect of separate road districts. The necessary research and computations to answer the questions would be lengthy and costly and cannot be undertaken immediately.

### MIDLAND HIGH SCHOOL.

#### *Total Enrolment for 1959.*

22. Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister for Education:

What is the anticipated total enrolment for 1959 at Midland High School?

The MINISTER replied:

Approximately 1,500.

### MT. LAWLEY HIGH SCHOOL.

#### *Total Enrolment for 1959.*

22A. Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister for Education:

What is the anticipated total enrolment for 1959 at Mt. Lawley High School?

The MINISTER replied:

Approximately 1,150-1,200.

### TRAVEL AGENCIES.

#### *Establishment in Kalgoorlie.*

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

(1) How many accredited travel agencies have been established in Kalgoorlie?

(2) What is the name of the firm (or firms) involved?

(3) Since when has this practice operated in Kalgoorlie?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) One.

(2) Sub-agency of Geo. Wills & Co.

(3) The 1st September, 1958.

### RAILWAY FREIGHTS.

#### *Quotes Outside Rate Book.*

24. Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) With reference to special quote outside the W.A.G.R. can he say whether these special quotes involve the department in additional losses?

(2) Why does the fact that the railways are a "common carrier" prevent answers to questions of the 10th September being given?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) The commission advises that these special quotes do not involve the Railway Department in losses.

(2) As a common carrier the department deals with those who require transportation, therefore normal business ethics dictate that each client's business be kept confidential.

#### MIDLAND HIGH SCHOOL.

##### *Fourth Year Enrolment for 1959.*

25. Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister for Education:

What is the estimated fourth year enrolment for 1959 at Midland High School?

The MINISTER replied:

This question was answered on the 4th September. No accurate figure can be given until after the junior certificate results are published in January, when applications for admission to the fourth year are considered. It is anticipated, however, that the figure will be in the vicinity of 170.

#### PERTH MODERN SCHOOL.

##### *Effect of Change, and Number of Students.*

26. Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Will he enumerate the reasons for the proposed change in regard to Perth Modern School?

(2) Will he explain whether or not children in the higher I.Q. groups will be advantaged or disadvantaged by the projected change?

(3) How many children will be catered for in the new school?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) With the advent of five-year high schools in the metropolitan area with adequate facilities for full secondary education, it is considered better for groups of children of high ability to be educated in their own district schools rather than continue to bring them from all parts of the metropolitan area into one school.

It will mean that in each of the high schools in the metropolitan area there will be a group of children in the high I.Q. group sufficiently large to ensure that adequate competition is available to them, and that a full education commensurate with their ability will be provided.

It is considered that it will be an advantage to the districts to retain their gifted children, who will set a standard for the others, and it will be of benefit to the gifted children themselves in that they will have shorter distances to travel.

(2) It is considered that the children in the higher I.Q. groups will on the whole be benefited and that they will not suffer any disadvantage.

(3) Approximately 1,300

No. 27. This question was postponed.

#### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

##### ATTENDANCE MONEY.

##### *Position of Shipwrights.*

1. Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Labour:

Arising from the answer he gave to my question, No. 14 on today's notice paper, can he tell me whether the application by the shipwrights for attendance money requires legislative action, or can it be dealt with through the Arbitration Court?

The MINISTER replied:

I am not in a position to give a specific answer to the question. It may be that before attendance money, on the same principle as now applies to the Ship Painters and Dockers' Union, can be paid, legislation will be necessary; but, on the other hand, the Arbitration Court may feel that it has the requisite authority to impose a scheme of attendance money. I doubt whether at this stage, however, the Arbitration Court would have the necessary power or the necessary machinery to implement such a proposal.

##### EMPIRE GAMES.

##### *Decision on Building Village.*

2. Mr. CROMMELIN asked the Minister for Housing:

Further to my question No. 31 on yesterday's notice paper, will the Minister inform me when a firm decision will be made as to whether the State Housing Commission will build an Empire Games village?

The MINISTER replied:

The Minister would if he could. It is necessary to get this matter into its proper perspective. It is more than four years from now until the Empire Games will be held in Perth, so there is no great urgency in the matter of housing, as nobody would wish to see upwards of 100 homes standing in a vacant condition for a period of years. No doubt the Perth City Council will make its approaches in its own good time.

I understand that, meanwhile, the final touches are being put to a proposed design of the lay-out of the village; and that when deliberations on that have been concluded, the Perth City Council will make an official approach to the State Housing Commission. Such an approach has not yet been made since the Empire Games were awarded to the City of Perth, although there have been some informal discussions between the Lord Mayor, the Town Clerk, and the Minister for Housing.



## CHARCOAL IRON INDUSTRY.

*Investigations by Federal Treasury Official.*

3. Mr. HEAL asked the Minister for Transport:

In view of the fact that there appeared in yesterday's issue of "The West Australian" an article headed "Iron Ore Post Still Vacant", and reading, in part, as follows:—

Nearly three months after it decided to send a senior Treasury official to examine facts and figures relating to the proposed charcoal iron industry in Western Australia, the Commonwealth has still to appoint the man for the job.

can the Minister explain to the House the latest developments in that regard; and, if the Government is still awaiting word from the Prime Minister, will the Government urgently request him to consider this appointment so that we can get on with the job of exporting the iron ore? I am asking this question because, in my opinion, permission to export the iron ore would relieve the unemployment which is so severe in this State at the present time.

The MINISTER replied:

I am not in a position to give a specific answer to that question, but will undertake to bring the matter immediately to the notice of the Premier.

## ABATTOIR BOARD.

*Reappointment of Chairman.*

4. Mr. NALDER asked the Minister for Lands:

Is it the intention of the Government to reappoint, for a further term, the Chairman of the Abattoir Board, Mr. Hayes, when he is due to retire shortly?

The MINISTER replied:

No.

*New Appointment.*

5. Mr. NALDER asked the Minister for Lands:

Does the Government intend to make another appointment to the Abattoir Board?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes.

## EMPLOYMENT.

*Effect of Public Buildings.*

6. Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister representing the Minister for Works:

Further to the question I asked the Treasurer some little while ago, regarding the calling of tenders for public works building in Western Australia, and his reply that to assist the employment position this would be done as soon as possible; and as almost one-quarter of the financial year has passed and no tenders have been called

for major building works in the State, can the Minister assure the House that some thing will be done in the immediate future?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied:

I will have the position investigated.

## RAILWAYS.

*Inquiry into Closure of Lines.*

7. Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister for Transport:

When is Mr. Smith likely to commence his inquiry in districts where rail service have been discontinued in order to decide whether the position in those districts justifies the re-establishment of rail services? The reason I have asked the question is that it is necessary for people in those areas to have some idea when the necessary information will be required so that it will be available.

The MINISTER replied:

I am unable to say with any certainty but I understand that it is not likely to be before November. I think, too, that the Minister for Railways intends to discuss with the Royal Commissioner the question of commencing his investigations on those railway lines which have serviced the wheat-producing areas as a first priority.

## TRAFFIC.

*Danger from Log Heaps.*

8. Mr. NALDER asked the Minister representing the Minister for Works:

About three weeks ago I asked the Minister if he would investigate the position of logs which were left on the side of the road by the S.E.C. The Minister assured me that he would have the matter investigated and that lights would be placed on these heaps of logs as a safety precaution. Will the Minister investigate the matter further, because up to date no lights have been used?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied:

The position is as stated by the hon. member, and I know that instructions were issued to have lights placed on these logs. However, if the position is still as stated by the hon. member, I will have another look at it.

## TRADE MISSION.

*Statement by the Deputy Premier.*

9. Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Transport:

In the absence of the Premier I wish to direct this question to the Minister for Transport, who is in charge of the House. When is it expected that the Deputy Premier will return to Western Australia; and, when he does, is it the intention of the Government to have him present a report to Parliament on his activities overseas immediately he takes his seat in this House?

The MINISTER replied:

As I understand the position, the Deputy Premier will be returning to Western Australia within the next two or three weeks, depending not upon which route he takes but upon which form of travel he uses over the latter stages of his journey.

In regard to the second portion of the question, I will refer the matter to the Premier; and, without committing him, I feel sure that he would be agreeable, as no doubt would the Deputy Premier, to a statement being made to this House in a general way with regard to the overseas mission that he has made in company with several other distinguished gentlemen.

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. I. W. Manning, leave of absence for four weeks granted to Mr. Mann (Avon Valley) on the ground of ill-health.

### INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

#### Second Reading.

THE HON. L. F. KELLY (Minister for Lands—Merredin-Yilgarn) [2.46] in moving the second reading said: I suppose this Bill could be termed an all-time small one in this House; and had it not been for the fact that only last night I was accused of being too brief with the information I gave to hon. members in this House, it might not have been necessary to go to any great length in introducing it. However, even though it is only a small measure, I think I should tell hon. members something about the principal Act.

The SPEAKER: Will the Minister speak as loudly as possible?

Mr. KELLY: The original Act was passed in 1915 and was implemented for the purpose of affording assistance to settlers and other persons in rural industry, following a severe drought in 1914. For many years a continuance measure was brought before Parliament as the duration of the Act was limited to 12 months. In 1948 the Government of the time introduced an amending Bill to increase the duration of the Act to five years. The Bill was passed accordingly, and a further five years continuance measure was submitted and passed in 1953.

The advantage of having this Act continued has been borne out from time to time. Since 1944, when the Rural and Industries Bank supplanted the Industries Assistance Board, there has been in existence machinery which can be implemented to render assistance to farmers who have suffered some disaster through flood, fire, or other adversities.

The legislation is administered by the Rural and Industries Bank; and the commissioners are of the opinion that continuance of the Act is most desirable, and

point out the excellent service rendered to the farming community over the years. Funds are made available to settlers either from the bank's Government Agency Section, or by the Treasurer, and finally repaid by the settler. There is usually sufficient finance available from these two sources to cover normal annual requirements; and unless a wide-scale disaster strikes the agricultural industry, continuance of this Act will not necessarily involve financial appropriations by Parliament.

The measure also provides security without the expense and delays usually associated with registration of mortgages and similar documents. Furthermore, this legislation is necessary to preserve security for advances made in the past, and which are still outstanding. It will be noticed that this amending Bill proposes to make permanent the provisions of this Act, and will so avoid in the future the presentation to Parliament of a continuance Bill every five years.

It is of interest to note that over the last five years, the following advances have been made:—

	£
Outstanding—31st July, 1958	2,879
Advances—	
1953-54	3,717
1954-55	4,393
1955-56	5,619
1956-57	1,915
1957-58	2,360

I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Bovell, debate adjourned.

### HEALTH EDUCATION COUNCIL BILL.

#### Second Reading.

THE HON. E. NULSEN (Minister for Health—Eyre) [2.52] in moving the second reading said: This is a Bill which I hope will cause no controversy, because I feel sure it will prove of great benefit to those suffering from cancer and it may lead to something that will prove to be beneficial to people throughout the world.

Mr. Bovell: Is this the result of public subscription—

The SPEAKER: I suggest that hon. members allow the Minister to proceed with his second reading speech without interruption.

Mr. NULSEN: Early in 1956 the Government appointed a non-statutory body composed mainly of members of citizens' organisations for the purpose of awakening in the community a better appreciation of what is necessary to obtain or preserve good health. The body was called the Health Education Council of Western Australia. The council has done an excellent

job. The members of it work with enthusiasm and the public has benefited from its activities.

In this regard I would mention the Corrigin project, which aimed at reducing the toll of home accidents. Apart from being of assistance in our own State, this project has drawn favourable comment and inquiry from overseas. The idea has also extended to other districts within the State.

When the Salk vaccine campaign first commenced the whole of the publicity was carried out by the Health Education Council by means of Press, radio, and talks to parent groups by the executive officer of the council. This campaign made the public aware of the need for immunisation against poliomyelitis with the Salk vaccine. The council has a regular five-minute session each week over every commercial radio station. In the main it deals with home accidents, but some time has been devoted to talks on flies. About 100,000 pamphlets were issued during the fly campaign. In the winter the council advises on colds, chills, and influenza. At Christmas time and at Easter it covers holiday camping hygiene and safety.

Whilst the council has had the benefit of a great deal of public support, it has known that even greater support would be available if it were an autonomous body with its own authority, rather than being, as at present, largely incorporated within the Department of Public Health. In Queensland, where excellent work is being done, the council is an autonomous body.

This Bill constitutes a body to have the functions and immunities prescribed, with the title of "Health Education Council of Western Australia". The council will have 17 members and will be a body corporate. Four members of the State Public Service will be ex officio councillors—namely, an officer of the Education Department, an officer of the Department of Public Health, the Commissioner of Public Health, and the Under Secretary for Health. Through these members, direct liaison will be maintained with the Education Department and with the Public Health Department, and proper supervision will be maintained over public funds to be expended by the council.

There are 13 nominated councillors who will represent a very good cross-section of the community organisation. For instance, one will be a nominee of the B.M.A.; another, the nominee of the Senate of the University; yet another will be nominated by the Red Cross; and there will be one each from the Local Government Association and the Road Board Association. Others represented are the Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations; Perth newspaper proprietors; the A.B.C.; commercial broadcasting stations; the A.L.P.; the Employers' Federation; and the Country Women's Association.

Whilst no doubt there are other organisations which could be of great assistance to the council, there are limits to its size. However, the Bill does make provision for the co-option of other people and organisations for special committee projects. There is provision for the establishment of a fund and the council has an obligation to pay all moneys into an account in the name of the council at the Treasury. The accounts of the council will be subject to audit by the Auditor-General. Members of the Public Service may be seconded to the council with the approval of the Minister and the Public Service Commissioner.

That is really all that is contained in the Bill. It is fairly comprehensive; and I feel perfectly certain that it is going to be conducive, generally, to the welfare of the people of this State. There is no doubt that the members of this council have been very enthusiastic, and they have performed some very fine work. They have endeavoured to help the people, especially parents, in an effort to get them to assist in the training of children to make them aware of accidents that could happen in the home, and other instruction that is in the interests of safety generally; although, of course, the children receive instruction on road safety in the schools.

I am very proud of the work this Health Education Council has done as a non-statutory body; but I think that by making it an autonomous body, similar to the one in Queensland, more public support will be obtained than would otherwise be the case. For some reason, the public seems to have an abhorrence of giving money to any Government department or Government organisation. This Bill, therefore, aims at giving the council the right to more or less look after its own affairs. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr Ross Hutchinson, debate adjourned.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL.

### *Second Reading.*

**THE HON. E. NULSEN** (Minister for Health—Eyre) [3.0] in moving the second reading said: I think we are all very familiar with this Bill and I cannot see why a second reading should be necessary. Hon. members must be most conversant with its contents; indeed I am sure they must have them off by heart. As hon. members know, the Bill passed through this House last year, but it was considerably amended in another place. They will recall, also, that agreement could not be reached at a conference of managers.

The Bill is therefore brought before the House on this occasion in exactly the same condition as it was when it left this Chamber last year. The measure is an attempt to bring both types of local authority in

this State under one Act. It is not intended to be a commencement of an entirely new era in local government, but represents an amalgamation of the two main statutes under which municipal councils and road boards respectively operate at the present time. Since the measure was first introduced in Parliament it has been the subject of much discussion; and the recommendations of a Royal Commission were, for the greater part, adopted by the Government and included in the Bill.

The opportunity was also taken to bring the measure into line with modern thought in relation to franchise, etc. I do not wish to weary hon. members with details of the Bill, but I would recapitulate some of the main provisions. Under this measure all local authorities will become municipalities, and will be divided into cities, towns and shires. Shires will replace the existing road districts and towns the existing municipalities, other than cities.

The number of members elected to a municipality at present will not be altered by the new legislation, but a small change will be made in relation to road districts. Those at present have from five to 13 members, one of whom is chosen as chairman. Under this Bill they will have from four to 12 members as well as the President, who will be elected by the electors as a mayor, as for existing municipalities.

The qualification for membership has been altered so that a person will be qualified if he is an adult, and a naturalised or natural-born British subject, and has resided in the area for at least six months. The qualifications for membership have been relaxed considerably in the measure as compared with existing legislation. Although the relaxation has not been so great as in England, where the interplay of political parties is deemed sufficient to ensure that members of local authorities do not go beyond a reasonable thing, there has been a relaxation as compared with the other States of Australia.

For instance, a councillor will not in future be forbidden to trade with the council in the ordinary course of business. Certain other restrictions will also be removed. Moreover, there has been a considerable relaxation of the restrictions on members voting on matters in which they are interested. That will be a very welcome alteration in view of the confusion and uncertainty that exists at present.

The electoral qualification has been changed so that the right to elect a member of the local authority will not, in future, be based upon the ownership or occupancy of property, but will be available to all adult British subjects who have resided in the district for at least six months immediately prior to the election.

This democratic move is in accordance with the Declaration of Human Rights to which Australia is a signatory, and I feel sure hon. members will agree with the

principle that all adults are worthy of some say in the election of local authorities. The elections themselves remain unaltered in essentials. The hours of polling have been made uniform—from 8 in the morning to 8 in the evening, the same as applies for State elections.

A new type of absentee voting provision, similar to that used in State elections, has been incorporated in the Bill; and provision has also been made for a special method in isolated areas such as the North-West, where a permanent application for a right to vote by post may be made.

Power has been provided in the Bill for regulations to be made requiring officers of local authorities to be suitably qualified. This reform has been urged by the Local Government Officers' Association and by the Institute of Municipal Administration, and is an overdue reform which will bring us into line with the other States. Provision has been made in the Bill that where an employee is jointly employed by two or more local authorities his service with these will count for long service leave entitlements even if he should cease to be jointly employed, and be fully employed by one only of the authorities.

Wide powers for the making of by-laws have been incorporated in the Bill. Provision has also been made for power to make model by-laws for the guidance of local authorities, and the Governor has also been given power to make general by-laws to replace and override those of local authorities, the same as in relation to the general building by-laws which have recently been published.

Power has been given for by-laws made by a local authority to apply to an area beyond its district in certain circumstances. This power can be very useful in the case of local authorities whose districts terminate at high water mark, and yet who wish to control the use of beaches between high and low water marks and even further seaward. Provision has been made for local authorities to be able to sell their assets and other chattels, and under the legislation proposed it will be necessary for sales to be by auction or tender if the value of a particular asset is more than £100.

Provision has been made for power to set up by agreement between local authorities a county or regional district. This district would have referred to it the powers given by the local authorities themselves and no more. It is not suggested that a second-tier system of local government should be introduced, but that there should be a power similar to that in New South Wales of handing over certain functions which extend beyond the confines of one local authority to management by a county or regional authority composed of representatives of the local

authorities concerned. This method could be used, for instance, for the control of beaches in the metropolitan area. Provision has been made in the Bill for the building lines to be created on terms similar to those set out in the City of Perth Act and this will remedy a weakness in the existing legislation.

Part XX of the Bill deals with cattle trespass, pounds, and impounding; and this will bring up to date the legislation referring to straying stock. The out-moded legislation has caused much trouble to local authorities and is very difficult to interpret at the present time; therefore this new provision should be welcomed by all concerned.

Provision has been made for local authorities to operate certain trading undertakings and also to operate as a trading concern anything approved by the Minister. It is not considered likely that there will be any great extension of trading; but, nevertheless, it was felt wise to make provision for eventualities so that there would be no need for special Acts when the occasion arose. Hon. members may be interested to know that local authorities are often called upon to step into the breach when private enterprise has failed to supply a service, and we even have one local authority carrying out undertaking services.

Power has been provided in the Bill for measures to be taken to prevent flooding, and this particular provision will be very greatly welcomed by certain local authorities in the country districts which have sought for some years to divert flood waters before they reach a road or a particular townsite.

In the setting out of the headings under which local authorities may expend their money, provision has been made for the right to insure members of a council against injury whilst on council business. A further provision is that local authorities may purchase motorcars for resale to their officers, and this facility will be welcomed by the great majority of local authorities. The Minister has been given power to agree to the council expending its money on any other matter not covered by the Act, and this should remove some of the complaints which have occurred in the past concerning expenditure being beyond the powers of a particular council.

In the financial provisions it has been provided that ward accounts must not be kept in future; but, nevertheless, shires will still be permitted to keep separate records of differentiation in rating subject to certain limitations set out in the clause. In connection with ward accounting, I would inform hon. members that although much was made of this matter in another place last year, the road board chiefly concerned has now seen the wisdom of abolishing ward accounting and has, in fact, abolished this system.

The Bill provides that each local authority must make its valuation on unimproved values only, and must use the valuation of the Taxation Department. The definition of "unimproved value" is not considered to be entirely satisfactory, and an amendment will be introduced to rectify this at a later stage. The use of unimproved values will ensure that land is properly and adequately developed; and by proper zoning of their districts, the local authorities could ensure that it does not bear unduly harshly on any section of the community, although there will, of course, be anomalies under this system just as under any other system. There will be no need for any suggestion of de-rating of factory establishments as would possibly be the case if annual values were to be used instead of unimproved values.

Mr. Court: At least, there is some admission this time that the unimproved value system of rating is not infallible.

Mr. Graham: It is just an improvement on the rental value.

Mr. NULSEN: I do not think we said it was infallible.

Mr. Court: There were some very strong representations made that it was the ideal system.

Mr. NULSEN: Nothing is infallible. I know that, so far as unimproved value of rating of land is concerned, because at one time I was chairman of a road board. All in all I think the fairest method of rating is the unimproved value system. It has always been considered in this State, as elsewhere, that a tax or rate on unimproved land values is an eminently desirable type of tax, and the same principle was followed in the State Land Tax Act.

Provision has been made for a local authority to use a single rate to cover all of its activities, and this rate is limited to 3s. in the £ of unimproved value where a water supply is incorporated, or 2s. in the £ where there is no water supply. In view of the fact that at the present time, in the absence of a water supply, a municipality may levy a total in rates of about 2s. 2d. in the £, and a road district may levy up to about 2s. 9d. in the £, the limits specified are not unduly great.

The use of a single rate will simplify accounting and will assist in uniformity in the records of the various local authorities. Provision has, however, been made that in the case of shires a differentiation in rating may be made subject to certain safeguards in order to provide for special works or services for the benefit of a portion of the district, or to repay a loan raised for a purpose deemed to confer benefits on only a portion of the district.

The Bill provides that appeals against valuations must be to a valuation appeal court appointed by the Governor, which

will be somewhat similar to the City of Perth Rating Appeal Board which has proved so satisfactory in the case of the city.

In the provisions for collection of rates a somewhat new principle has been introduced, in that a local authority may serve upon a tenant a notice to pay to the local authority all rentals due to the landlord until the rates due from the latter have been extinguished.

The sale of land provisions have been made uniform on lines operating under the Road Districts Act at the present time, and provision has also been made for land to be revested in the Crown for non-payment of rates under the very simple method at present used under the Road Districts Act but with its ambit extended to cover the whole of the district and not only the townships. Under this provision rights of way should be capable of being revested in the Crown without undue trouble to anybody.

The road provisions incorporated in the Bill are slightly different from those in both the Municipal Corporations Act and the Road Districts Act, as it was considered that neither system was at present satisfactory. The provisions in the Bill have been perused and are found to contain some weaknesses; and therefore some amendment will be moved in the Committee stage to overcome this defect.

In relation to borrowing by local authorities, power has been given in the Bill to borrow for a larger number of specific undertakings than the present legislation permits; but the existing power for the Governor to approve of further borrowings has also been incorporated, and this should facilitate the work of the local authorities.

In view of the fact that local authorities are public bodies handling public moneys, the Bill provides that audits must be carried out by officers appointed by the Minister. The existing system for municipalities under which auditors are elected has been abandoned in the Bill. It is considered that experience has shown that the Government type of audit is a better system than that of private auditors whose election may depend just as much upon their popularity as upon their ability, or even more upon their popularity. In the accounting provision the method of dealing with particular funds has been specified with a view to ensuring uniformity and comparability as between local authorities.

These are the main items in the Bill which will come before the notice of hon. members, and I trust that the Bill will be received in the spirit in which it is submitted—that is of conferring a signal service upon local authorities and also upon the people who reside within the particular districts. The Bill is very similar

to that of last year, and I feel that all that can be said about it was said then. I request that all proposed amendments be placed on the notice paper so that they can be thoroughly investigated to see what their effect will be on the Bill.

I do not think there is any need for a long debate on this occasion as the principles contained in the Bill have already been discussed fully. It seems to me that it will be a terrific waste of time if there is too much reiteration of what has been said in the past. Therefore, I hope that we will be able to deal with this Bill reasonably quickly and send it on to another place in order to see what they have to say about it.

Mr. Sleeman: The Bill is the same as we sent to the Council last year?

Mr. NULSEN: Yes. A very gifted gentleman by the name of Gifford, who is a lecturer in Melbourne on local government, planning law, and public administration, recently attended a conference in Perth. He is making an investigation of this Bill, and we are hoping to get something very substantial from him that will be helpful. I do not want to reflect on our own officers, because they are experts who know the position in Western Australia. There is no question about the ability of the two officers in charge of local government; they know all there is to be known about the subject.

If Mr. Gifford is able to forward something constructive, it will put the matter on a sound basis from a law point of view, and will help in administration generally. If he can do this, we will welcome it.

As this will be a short session, I hope the Bill will not be held up for any lengthy period. I would like to see the Bill have a fairly smooth passage, although I know members of the Opposition have various objections to portions of it, to which they are entitled, just as we are entitled to our views on this side of the House. I think there are only four or five principles contained in the Bill, and they should not cause very much controversy. I hope the discussion will be shorter than it was in 1956, in order that the Bill may be sent to another place at an early date. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Hon. A. F. Watts, debate adjourned.

### BILLS (3)—MESSAGES.

Messages from the Lieut.-Governor and Administrator received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the following Bills:—

- 1, Industries Assistance Act Amendment.
- 2, Health Education Council.
- 3, Local Government.

# **PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.**

## *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 9th September.

**MR. ROBERTS** (Bunbury) [3.26]: This measure was presented by the Minister for Police last Tuesday evening and is one mainly of machinery.

The first clause in the Bill gives a definition to the name "society" in the interpretation section of the principal Act. That has been found necessary in view of the fact that the old name of the society was included in the principal Act—the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The present name is The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Western Australia (Incorporated), which will be defined in the interpretation section of the principal Act.

The remaining provisions in the Bill increase the penalty for offences of cruelty from £10 to £50; for hindering a constable or officer of the society in the execution of his duties in inspecting saleyards, etc., from £10 to £25; and for unlawfully obstructing or hindering, molesting or assaulting a constable whilst exercising the powers or authorities under Act, from £10 to £25. I agree with these increases because, as all hon. members know, the value of money has altered considerably since 1920, when the present Act was first brought before the House.

The Bill also contains a provision that compensation shall not exceed the sum of £10 for injury caused to an animal, person or property. I feel that today's money values warrant that sum being deleted from Section 5 of the principal Act. The Minister mentioned that the provision of a penalty of 10s. for offences of cruelty, and 40s. for the sale and purchase of decrepit animals should be deleted, and that it should be left to the discretion of the various courts to make their own determination as to what the minimum penalty should be.

The only other provision in this Bill adds after the word "trap", the words "snare or other device", and I am of the opinion that that is quite reasonable. It is, as the Minister mentioned, only a small Bill although it affects a most important Act; and I feel I should take this opportunity of congratulating the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals for the work it does in the State in carrying out the provisions of that particular Act. It does a good job and I feel every hon. member in this Chamber will agree with me in that respect. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of this Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

## *In Committee.*

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

# **BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.**

## *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 2nd September.

**MR. PERKINS** (Roe) [3.34]: As the Minister has already explained to the House, this Bill deals with a difficulty which arose particularly during last summer. I think some hon. members may recall that when the Bush Fires Act was under consideration a year or two ago in this Chamber, some of us—myself included—forecast that some difficulties would arise as a result of certain provisions in Section 18, which provides that an automatic ban be placed on the lighting of fires if the Weather Bureau makes a forecast of dangerous conditions.

That difficulty did arise last burning season; and as the Minister has explained, he has brought this Bill to the House as a result of representations from individual farmers, the Farmers' Union, and the Bush Fires Board. The method of getting over the difficulty is to create a fire weather officer under Section 38 of the principal Act, which deals—amongst other things—with the appointment of bush fire control officers. I believe that the method adopted by the Minister—although in some respects it is rather a clumsy one—will overcome the difficulty; and within certain limits, I think it is satisfactory.

Members will notice that I have placed certain amendments on the notice paper which I think will make the Bill a more practical one so far as the agricultural districts and the State generally are concerned. Provision has been made in the Bill for the appointment of one weather officer who can override the "dangerous" forecast of the Weather Bureau and give permission to those holding permits to burn after the restricted burning season opens—or, in other words, after the prohibited burning season closes; and that will enable burning to be carried out at the discretion of that particular officer.

I think that that is satisfactory within limits. It may be necessary to have fairly close control in some of the districts where the fire hazard can be very great indeed; but on the other hand, the elasticity of the Act could, perhaps, be considerably widened, so far as it applies to the wheat and sheep districts in particular; and the amendments which I have placed on the notice paper are designed to achieve that purpose. I think that hon. members who know the wheat and sheep areas will agree that once the burning season opens—usually the beginning or middle of February—there is no need for any control to be exercised in those districts, outside of that which is exercised by the local authorities themselves.

The local authorities, in practically all instances, have bush-fire brigades and have their bush-fire officers appointed. I think it would be safe for the Government to agree to allow the maximum discretion to the local authorities and their appointees in the districts concerned. I notice that the Bill contains provision that the local authority must have a suitable fire prevention and control organisation or permission to appoint these fire weather officers may be withheld. Subject to those objections, I think it is safe to agree to the second reading of the Bill, but I hope that when the measure is dealt with in Committee, we will discuss in more detail the matters I have mentioned.

**MR. HEARMAN (Blackwood) [3.41]:** I feel that the Bill, as printed, is not ideal, but that the general idea behind its introduction—to endeavour to remove anomalies which were apparent in the operation of the Act last year, and to gain as much public support, co-operation and goodwill as possible in regard to the legislation—is sound. I would point out that the Bush Fires Act depends almost entirely on the goodwill of people in country areas for its successful operation. Although there were no great complaints about the operation of the Act in my electorate last year, in view of the dreadful experience at Mayanup, people are now more conscious of the need for care in matters such as this, and I am aware that difficulties were experienced in other areas.

I have received no requests from my electorate for amendments to be made to the Act, notwithstanding the very serious fire which occurred there last year. But I am aware of the difficulties that have existed in other areas; and, consequently, I believe this legislation will benefit districts in which, in some instances, there has been a falling off in public goodwill towards the legislation.

The problem which the measure presents in my area is that it proposes the appointment of a fire weather officer—which perhaps is a good idea in view of the difficulties experienced elsewhere—and then proceeds to provide exactly the same powers for the forestry officer. On the inquiries I have made, in the limited time available to me, I find that the local authorities feel that, so long as that proviso regarding the forestry officer is maintained, they will have the greatest difficulty in securing anyone voluntarily to accept the position of fire weather officer; because, as it was put to me in conversation, the forestry officer wants to light fires only when it is raining, but on a day when there is a dangerous fire hazard forecast he will almost certainly say "No", and consequently the fire weather officer will find himself frustrated in almost every effort he makes to override the ban, however well deserving of consideration the case may be.

I know that at first glance hon. members may say, "You want to take the power away from the forestry officers;" but I would point out that if the suggestion I am putting forward is adopted by the House, it will not take from the forestry officer any effective powers, because under another section of the Act he is given all the power that he requires and can override the bush-fire control officer and effectively watch forestry interests.

*Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.5 p.m.*

**Mr. HEARMAN:** I was discussing the advisability of not mentioning anything about the forestry officer in this Bill. The reasons briefly are that, firstly, I think the forestry officer already has ample powers under the Act, and he will still be able, if necessary, to override the fire weather officer in matters affecting the State forests, without mention being made of him in this measure.

In view of the need to establish the utmost goodwill possible, the paragraphs I have mentioned could well be deleted and no harm would be done to anybody. It would make the lot of the local authorities, particularly where there are large areas of State forests involved, easier when it came to persuading people to accept the job of fire weather officer.

I would point out that the responsibility of those appointed as fire weather officers will be very considerable. After all, if it is a dangerous fire hazard, and he is asked to override the other officer, and anything did go wrong, he would obviously accept a considerable responsibility although, of course, he would have full legal protection under the Act. It is not going to be easy to find people to take over this job and I think that their lot has to be made as easy as possible. There is no need to bring before them all the time the fact that they can be over-riden although, in actual fact, that will be the case.

I support the second reading not because I feel that in my particular area there is any great need for any alteration, or any desire for it; but I am well aware that in other areas the legislation is falling into disrepute, as one might say, and in some cases it has been quite openly flouted. That, I think, is a most unsatisfactory state of affairs; because we do not want to revert to the old days when people had no respect for the legislation and when fires were being lit irresponsibly with nobody taking the blame for lighting them. One can cite the example of the candle in the old kerosene tin, and that sort of thing. I support the Bill, because I feel that we should do everything we can to build up goodwill and create greater respect for the Act in those districts where there seems to have developed what one might call deterioration and a negative attitude towards the legislation.



**MR. W. A. MANNING** (Narrogin) [4.11]: The introduction of this Bill has proved necessary because of some incidents that occurred—particularly in the central Great Southern—last summer, when it was found that remote control of fires, by means of weather forecasting only, was not a very satisfactory way to handle the situation. It resulted in antagonism and dissatisfaction because the ruling was not justified. We now have this Bill presented to us which seeks to grant approval to a local authority when it appears to the Bush Fires Board that its standard of efficiency in fire prevention and control warrants the granting of such approval.

So the board will judge the local authority on its efficiency; and if the board considers that the local governing authority has conducted its control on a satisfactory basis, approval will be granted to it to control the lighting of fires even when the forecast is "dangerous." This will mean that in a district where the control and organisation is inefficient, or is not efficient enough to meet with the approval of the Bush Fires Board, the control will remain in Perth.

Therefore, we will have the peculiar situation that where the efficiency of an organisation is at the minimum and the board is unable to control it, the lack of efficiency in that district will be emphasised by taking the control away from the organisation in that centre and replacing it with remote control. As I have said, that is a very peculiar situation, and it is very difficult to overcome the problem.

The Bill in itself is a very good one; but what I have mentioned appears to constitute an anomaly that will be hard to overcome or obviate, because I feel that where the efficiency is at its lowest the control should be greater. Yet we will have the position that this Bill—

**Mr. Perkins:** It will make the local authority become an approved organisation.

**Mr. W. A. MANNING:** I hope that that will be the result. As the hon. member for Roe has said, it may have the effect of forcing a local authority which is inefficient to do something about the control in its own district.

**MR. NALDER** (Katanning) [4.13]: As the member representing the districts that were vitally affected and inconvenienced by the application of the provisions of the Bush Fires Act during the last burning season, I have much pleasure in supporting this amendment to the principal Act. As has already been said by previous speakers—especially by the hon. member who has just resumed his seat—it appears that the greatest inconvenience was felt by the people in the central Great Southern area.

Having been present on the spot at the time, I am fully acquainted with what happened. As has already been mentioned by the Minister, when the burning season opened on the 18th February, a dangerous fire hazard was declared on that day. Immediately that forecast was put over the air it was heard by many people who were interested, and it meant that there was a complete ban on the lighting of fires. That ban, incidentally, also included those people who were travelling.

At this point I wish to state that I am pleased to notice that that aspect has been rectified to a great extent by this measure, because a few years ago the travelling public absolutely disregarded the safety of private property and the risk of its being destroyed by fire. Time and time again one would see people in motor-cars—especially those towing caravans—pulling up by the side of the road and lighting fires, possibly not being aware of the danger they were creating if the fires got out of hand.

Those people, of course, were banned from lighting fires together with anyone who previously held a permit to burn. When the dangerous fire hazard was announced and the message was broadcast by the A.B.C. and the commercial radio stations, it meant that an absolute ban was to be placed on the lighting of fires. That was rather strange; because I understand that the day prior to that was the opening of the burning season, and some people had started their fires and had burnt possibly 100 acres, and the timber and the stumps were alight. Yet those people were told that they were not allowed to burn, despite the fact that conditions were absolutely safe.

In that respect I still think there is a weakness in the Act which probably will have to be investigated, because once a fire has been put through a property it is impossible for a person to put it out. Nevertheless, it was announced that the person who had started a fire was forbidden to continue burning. I have mentioned that point because I think it is a feature that will have to be tidied up. What is important is that the burning on the 18th February was banned.

In the central Great Southern and to the east the dangerous fire hazard was broadcast. Yet it was a beautifully cool day, and the maximum temperature taken at Wagin was 78 degrees. One can realise the feeling of those who were organised, and who had notified their neighbours and fire control officers that if the conditions were favourable they would be allowed to commence burning!

They had everyone waiting to attend the scene of the fires. People were all standing around expecting the lifting of the ban. A dangerous fire hazard was declared for that area, which—if I remember correctly—went as far as Cranbrook,

Katanning, Wagin, Narrogin, and other centres east of the line. Yet it was a very mild day.

The local fire officers immediately contacted Perth to see if they could have the broadcast changed, and they were informed from Perth that everything was all right because within a few hours the temperature would rise to over 100 degrees. However, it did not rise, and 78 degrees was the highest temperature recorded on that day, and also on the following day.

One can realise what a chaotic state of affairs that created. It reached the stage where people absolutely ignored the announcements in connection with conditions for burning and the taking of precautions against fires. I saw several fires that had been started; but, of course, nobody was found to be responsible. However, away the fires went; but no damage was done, because it was an ideal burning day. Three days later a broadcast was made that conditions were ideal, and yet the temperature on that occasion rose to over 100 degrees. That was the day the Weather Bureau broadcast that it was an ideal day for burning off!

So confidence in the Act was absolutely shattered, and we had people disregarding it altogether. As the member for Blackwood said, we do not want that position to arise, and I am pleased the Minister has taken prompt action to see it does not occur again. If we have Acts passed by Parliament we must ensure that they are such that the public can abide by them. I commend the Minister for his prompt action. What I have said proves that immediate action must be taken.

We should not pass a measure which will be flouted and disregarded by law-abiding citizens. That is what it amounts to. The entire incident caused much concern and resulted in several meetings of fire brigades being held. I have many letters in my possession asking that something be done about it; and I am pleased that the Minister has taken the necessary action. I support the Bill, and hope the House will carry it.

**THE HON. L. F. KELLY** (Minister for Lands — Merredin-Yilgarn — in reply) [4.21]: I briefly want to say how much I appreciate the contribution hon. members have made to this Bill. I also wish to point out that it was not easy to secure unanimity of opinion favourable to this proposed alteration to the existing legislation. The board, of course, views with great concern the possibility of there being a likelihood of control getting out of hand; or, in widely diversified areas, of circumstances arising that could bring about a very serious hazard if the existing Act were altered.

Of course, it is quite easy to appreciate that that is a very difficult position. I think the hon. member for Katanning has highlighted that possibility in saying that

when the board declared a hazard in the particular district to which he was referring the maximum temperature at the time was 78 degrees. Yet at a subsequent time when the Fire Brigades Board, through the bureau, advised that everything was all right, on that particular day the temperature rose to over 100 degrees. This shows there is a great disparity between temperatures in varying districts.

**Mr. Hearman:** Under the present law, fire fighting could have been banned.

**Mr. KELLY:** That was done. This shows that we cannot altogether rely on reports from the bureau in their application to the entire State. When the board finally realised that—and it had the temperatures from the different districts to act as a guide—it agreed that some lessening of the severity of the conditions might be possible. As a result of that, the present amendments have been included and placed before the House.

Those amendments have not been brought here in any sense of irresponsibility; they were introduced after a considerable amount of careful consideration had been given to the matter. All the points mentioned by various speakers as possibilities, or probabilities, were given consideration by the board; and, as a result of their deliberations, the Bill, in its present form, was introduced.

With the exception of the particular circumstance that has been ventilated by hon. members, I would say that the Bush Fires Board has done a very good job. Its members are keen and capable, and they are devoting a tremendous amount of their time to matters connected with the board. They regard their responsibilities as of tremendous importance. By all this I do not mean they are placing themselves on a pedestal or anything like that; but only that they are conscious of the fact that they have a very serious job to perform.

I think hon. members will agree that the occurrences in the past few months have sheeted home to us the seriousness of fires getting out of control. There has been loss of life, and we have had some very bad chapters in the fire history of our State in recent times. Accordingly, any alteration to existing legislation is not approached with any great degree of enthusiasm, because of the serious consequences that surround such relaxation of conditions. So I would say to those hon. members desirous of moving amendments, that I would not be very happy at this stage to give them any assurance as to those amendments getting very far.

Another point on which I might perhaps touch is the several suggestions that have been made as to the necessity for establishing goodwill. Judging from the file and the approbation expressed from many quarters, I would say that the degree of

goodwill which exists at the present time is reasonably high. With the possible exception of the bit of a blue that occurred on the 18th February, and the divergence of opinion that then existed, I would say that by and large the goodwill towards this board is reasonably high.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

Mr. Sewell in the Chair; the Hon. L. F. Kelly (Minister for Lands) in charge of the Bill.

*Clause 1—agreed to.*

*Clause 2—Section 38 amended:*

Mr. PERKINS: I move an amendment—Page 2, line 18—Delete the words “a senior”.

This is the first of a series of amendments to achieve the purpose to which I referred during the second reading. If this and the following amendments are agreed to, it will be possible for an approved local authority to appoint several weather officers instead of being able to appoint just one. The local authorities in the wheatbelt may decide to appoint every bush fire control officer as a weather officer. On the other hand, it may be found desirable in other districts of the State, where there is a far greater fire risk at certain times of the year, to restrict the appointment of weather officers to one or two. This would have the effect of giving the maximum discretion to local authorities.

There are still provisions in the legislation to enable the Bush Fires Board, through the Minister and local authority, to prevent burning at any time of the year when the fire hazard is very dangerous. So the point mentioned by the Minister in reply to the second reading debate is adequately covered by the existing legislation. I very strongly urge that this amendment be agreed to.

Admittedly the measure will work in the form in which it appears; but it does place pettifogging restrictions on local authorities. If the Minister insists on passing the Bill in its present form, he will do nothing to maintain the respect and goodwill of the country people towards the Bush Fires Board.

The Minister made the greatest understatement of the year when he said there was some dissatisfaction earlier in the year over the declaration of a dangerous fire hazard on the 18th February. Nothing could have been more ridiculous. The burning season opened on the 16th February in many districts. The following day, the 17th, was a Monday. Although it was rather a cold day, some landowners were reluctant to burn off although some fires were put through. On Tuesday, the 18th February—which was somewhat warmer than the previous Monday, although it was

still fairly cool—the Weather Bureau issued a dangerous fire hazard forecast. That was the height of absurdity. The result was that for a day or two the settlers in the district affected by that forecast observed the law; but towards the end of the week when the Weather Bureau continued to issue the dangerous fire hazard forecast, the people took the law into their own hands and smoke rose all over the place.

I know the Minister received many telegrams and telephone calls from people all over the State, and a great many from his own electorate, urging him to take action in respect of that matter. He pointed out that it was not possible for him to take any action, with the result that the law was brought into contempt, and in many cases it was ignored by the settlers.

I suggest that, in the wheatbelt districts—which are separated from the great fire hazard districts of the purely grazing areas—once the prohibited burning season has ended, the maximum discretion could be left to the local authority. No-one will suggest that local authorities or persons appointed as weather officers will act in an irresponsible manner.

I hope the Minister will accept the first of my amendments so as to make the legislation more workable. The effect of the amendment will be this: Any local authority which is approved by the Minister as having a bush fire prevention and control organisation will be given the discretion of appointing one or more weather officers. The Bill provides for the appointment of only one weather officer; but if these amendments are agreed to, local authorities will have the discretion to appoint more than one.

In many cases where the fire hazards are not great, the local authority will appoint all the bush fire control officers as weather officers. Bush fire officers would thus be able to issue permits to burn before the time when the bush or stubble can be burnt. It is not possible to start any fire anywhere in the South-West Land Division without a permit from a bush fire control officer.

Under the Act a dangerous fire hazard forecast overrides any permission which may have been granted to burn off. If the amendment is agreed to a weather officer will be able to override the Act and permit a landowner to carry on burning as if no dangerous fire hazard forecast had been issued. I attach great importance to this amendment.

Mr. KELLY: I, too, attach a lot of importance to this amendment. It has been amply demonstrated that the Bill will undoubtedly cover the situation. The hon. member for Roe said that I received telegrams and telephone messages from all over the State in respect of the incident he referred to. I want to correct him. In all, I received five telegrams, three of which were from residents in my electorate, all of

them being in exactly the same wording. I received two other telegrams during that period when this trouble arose; and I had three telephone calls, two of which were from residents in the Yilgarn-Merredin district, and one from outside that district.

We can deprecate to some extent the vast urgency that so many parts of Western Australia felt at that particular time. In his amendment, the hon. member has asked that this House agree that instead of having an "officer" we have "officers" appointed. I would point out that the Bill makes provision not only for an officer but also for a deputy, after approval has been obtained from the Fire Protection Board, in the event of the officer being absent from the district.

I think that is very necessary; because, after all, that board is charged with the responsibility for the control of bush fires throughout the State. Naturally, when it delegates some power, it wants to be certain that that power will be exercised by someone with ability. There are about 140 local authorities in Western Australia, and each would be keen to get the best man possible, and would not appoint a person with any degree of lightheartedness.

Once a road board appointed an officer, it would naturally place a lot of confidence in him; and immediately a need arose, that officer would be in control of the district. If he were not available, his deputy would take his place. If the district were one that had a forestry officer, so much the better, as he would be capable of making decisions and looking after a district. Some districts have the advantage of the experience which can be given by a forestry officer. It is not given in any interfering way, but in an advisory capacity in cases where there is a divergence of view. I would be happy to know that a forestry officer was available to join with a local man with a view to pooling their ideas in an emergency.

The appointment of a fire weather officer, as well as an ordinary officer of the Forests Department, does not present any difficulties at all. In his amendment, the hon. member used the word "officers." He does not say whether a district should have one, two, three, or four officers, or what the total number should be. He does not want the authority in the hands of one man; he wants a lot of men. We have some areas where there are 40 officers, and it would be silly to write something into this Bill as a result of what happened to a limited degree last year in one or two places.

We have all the records available and can fingerprint the places where there was any difficulty. It was outstanding in the district of the hon. member for Katanning. People in Merredin and Bruce Rock, which are in my electorate, were also hot and

bothered because the day was reasonably good. However, it was not as good as stated by the hon. member for Katanning. There is not a great demand for this amendment; there is a far greater demand that we leave the Bill as it is.

Mr. Perkins: I bet there isn't! You will find that out if you do not accept the amendment.

Mr. KELLY: There is no great demand at all. The amendment would be unworkable. If there were two officers in the Merredin-Yilgarn district—say one at Boodarockin and one at Bruce Rock—and a fire broke out on the west side of the district where there was an officer, should they have to wait till they could get together in order to decide whether it was hazardous or not? We do not want to get into that position.

It has been mentioned today that these officers will not be easy to obtain; but this amendment will make the position harder. This is what the Fire Brigades Board has to say in regard to the amendment—

The effect of Mr. Perkins' amendments could mean the appointment of every bush fire control officer as a fire weather officer. It is very desirable that uniformity of decisions be attained as far as possible.

That is very essential. It would not be possible to get unanimity unless all concerned were able to get together; and if a district were large, this would not be possible, and several points of view could operate in the district at the one time.

That is what the Bush Fires Board considered: that each road district should be limited to one appointment. That all the appointments under the subsection should be approved by the Bush Fires Board is considered essential.

That covers more or less the objections I have to any alteration of this particular section. I feel that it would be totally unwise to accept the hon. member's suggestion; and the local government authorities to whom I have spoken, are quite happy to have one officer appointed. They do not want the obligation of appointing a number. They do not want divergence to be created within an area, that could cause delay and confusion; and that is all that the appointment of a number of officers could do. Therefore I do not think the Committee should waste any time on further consideration of this amendment.

Mr. PERKINS: I am surprised that the Minister said he has only had five objections. I think I must have got many times that number. Other hon. members will confirm that the objections were very widespread indeed; and had the Minister made contact with the Farmers' Union, he would have found there is a whole sheaf of objections on its file about the position that was created last year.

The Minister also says that we will be making the position ridiculous and I have just been making a farce of things by providing for perhaps 40 weather officers to be appointed in the same local authority area. If anybody is ridiculing the situation, surely it is the Minister; and he has paid a very poor compliment to the local authorities throughout the State. What he said, in effect, was that local authorities are going to be so irresponsible that they will appoint perhaps 40 officers when four or five could do the job.

Mr. Kelly: The hon. member is certainly stretching his imagination.

Mr. PERKINS: If the Minister has a look at the Hansard report later on, he will find I am only repeating what he said. His exact words were, "There may be 40 officers appointed." The only way 40 officers could be appointed would be by the local authority appointing them.

Mr. Kelly: I said, "There could be," because there are some local authorities who have that number available.

Mr. PERKINS: I will leave it at this: If there are 40 appointed, they must be appointed by the local authorities. I have a higher opinion of the local authorities than to think that they would make a bear garden out of this particular situation.

Mr. Kelly: The hon. member has no higher opinion of local authorities than I have.

Mr. PERKINS: I am very glad to hear that. If the Minister has as high an opinion of local authorities as I have he should realise that the amendment which I suggest only provides that the discretion shall be left to the local authorities on the spot rather than have it centralised in Perth. There is plenty of lip service regarding decentralisation; but when it comes to taking positive action to place this authority back where it can be better exercised, we find this sort of approach by the Minister on this particular legislation.

I admit that the system of having one officer and a deputy would work quite well in some areas, but not in other areas, where three or four might be necessary. That, however, is entirely for the local authority to decide. But what happens in some of those widespread areas such as the one I represent?

Take the Lake Grace Road Board district for instance. It stretches from half-way between Lake Grace and Kuerin to the No. 1 Fence half-way between Lake King and Ravensthorpe and up to Lake Varley in the north. How ridiculous to appoint one officer to control an area like that, several times the size of the metropolitan area and its environs! The same applies to the electorate of the member for Stirling—the area administered by the

Gnowangerup Road Board. I can bring the matter right to the Minister's own doorstep.

Take the Narembeen Road Board. One of the members of that board I know quite well. He lives 50 miles east of Narembeen. What would happen if the legislation were retained in the form the Minister insists on? The particular man I have mentioned is well known to the Minister. He lives out near Holleaton, 30 miles from a telephone. His only communication with the outside world is by pedal wireless through Kalgoorlie. If he wants to contact Narembeen he has to send a telegram through the flying doctor base at Kalgoorlie.

The position will be that if a dangerous forecast is made by the Weather Bureau and there is only one weather officer in the whole of the Narembeen area who can override that forecast—and presumably this officer will be in Narembeen itself—the man I have mentioned will have to go 30 miles to the nearest telephone before he can find out whether this officer will give him permission to burn off.

I suggest to the Minister that if he has another look at the position he will find a great deal of opposition to his proposal even in his own electorate. I am sure other members of this Committee could point out equally good reasons why there should be some modification of the proposal which is put before us, which I would suggest the Bush Fires Board has not sufficiently considered.

Mr. NALDER: I think that the argument the Minister put up is one that anybody could advance. He mentioned his own electorate. I forget the name of the district which he referred to; but take Bruce Rock. There is a distance of 50 or 60 miles—perhaps more—and yet he wants one control officer in the whole of the area to be responsible for deciding whether a forecast that has been given is applicable to that particular area. The member for Roe has put up an extremely good argument, and I feel the places he mentioned are proof positive that it is necessary to have more than one officer appointed in a particular road board district.

It is unlikely that many local authorities will take advantage of the provision, and in some of the smaller road board areas it may not be necessary even to consider a deputy. As the member for Roe said, in the districts to the east of the Great Southern and to the north, where the fire hazard is less than in the high rainfall areas—and where distances are so great—it may be necessary to have two or three officers, but they would have to be appointed with the approval of the Minister. There is the safeguard that the local authority concerned can recommend to the Minister that more than one officer is necessary, and the provision cannot be abused. Most people in this State are now bush fire conscious.

The Minister said that very few approaches were made, and I think the phone call referred to must have been from the member for Katanning. Although he did not speak to the Minister, he spoke to the Minister's secretary and was told that the Minister could do nothing, but recommended that the fire officer in the district concerned contact the Weather Bureau and see whether it was prepared to alter the fire hazard forecast, as given over the air. The member for Katanning had dozens of phone calls after the 12.30 news, because people had been waiting to see if there was any alteration in the forecast. Hundreds of people got in touch with their members to see whether an alteration could be made; and so I think the few approaches the Minister mentioned could be multiplied greatly—

Mr. Kelly: There may have been a number of people concerned in those two districts, but I referred to the telegrams and telephone calls that I received.

Mr. NALDER: A very limited number; and the Minister therefore said there was not much interest in the matter.

Mr. Kelly: When I received only a few telegrams and telephone calls, should I have used my imagination and said there were hundreds of inquiries?

Mr. Watts: What about the complaints that were sent to you by letter from Tambellup?

Mr. Kelly: I am talking of telephone calls and telegrams, at the moment.

Mr. NALDER: The amendment is in the interests of all concerned and the evidence produced shows that it would not be abused. The community will look to and assist the control officer—

Mr. Kelly: You are getting down to the control officer; but it was "officers" we talked about.

Mr. NALDER: Even if I used the wrong word, the Minister knows what I meant.

Mr. Kelly: You said what you have in mind. You are trying to bolster up your case with poor material.

Mr. NALDER: Apparently it will be difficult to get the Minister to change his opinion, but I think the amendment is worthy of support.

Mr. HEARMAN: When the member for Roe first discussed the matter with me I was taken aback, as I thought the amendment would open the gate too wide. I know that the areas over which local authorities have responsibility in his electorate may be much greater than in mine, but I feel that the Minister has been unsympathetic. He mentioned the local authority with 40 control officers who could be appointed fire weather officers, and then by interjection said he had the highest regard for local authorities, but I think he was drawing the long bow.

Such a position could not arise, because the point is covered in lines 22 to 24 of the relevant paragraph, where the wording is to the effect that these people shall be appointed only after application has been made to and approved by the board. If a local authority applied for the appointment of 40 people, it is highly improbable that the application would be agreed to. The board could disapprove of the appointment of anyone as a fire weather officer and need not accept the recommendations of the local authority.

I know a road board chairman who has had a conviction under the Bush Fires Act; and it is conceivable that the board might not agree to his appointment, were it suggested. If the amendment is agreed to, it could be made known that only one man would be appointed, except where the local authority could establish a case for more than one appointment, which would have to be considered by the board. The amendment would leave the decision with the Bush Fires Board. Under the Bill the board could take the whole responsibility away from the local authority, if it did not measure up; and a local authority would have to consider the matter carefully before submitting a name to the board for approval as a fire weather officer. Regardless of the amendment, the control will remain with the Bush Fires Board.

Mr. KELLY: I do not intend to weary hon. members by reiterating what I have already stated. Both hon. members who have spoken a second time to this amendment have adopted practically the same line of argument on each occasion. They both advocate that it would or could be necessary to appoint a number of officers in a district because it is a large one. The hon. member for Roe mentioned a district where the only communication was by pedal wireless. If this amendment is agreed to the local governing authority could appoint any number of officers it liked.

Mr. HEARMAN: There would be a limit because the board would have to agree to the number.

Mr. KELLY: There would be no limit to the number of names a board could submit.

Mr. HEARMAN: I agree that there would be no limit to the number recommended.

Mr. KELLY: Not for one minute do I suggest that a local governing authority would be irresponsible. I have been in contact with road boards who are quite happy about the appointment of one officer—and the hon. member for Roe knows some of those road boards quite well. He has not been briefed by the road boards in putting up the case he has submitted. If the officer and his deputy were not available other arrangements could be made simply by making a telephone call; there would be no difficulty about that. If several men

were appointed, who would be in charge? Let us take a big district such as the hon. member for Roe mentioned and suppose several men were appointed throughout the district. Who would be in charge and who would be responsible? There would be a multiplicity of ideas and they could not be decided upon without a round-table conference. What a situation that would be in a matter such as this!

Mr. PERKINS: It would not be necessary for the man in the Lakes area, for instance, to confer with the man in the Lake Grace area.

Mr. KELLY: There could be one position at one end of the district and another position at the other end of the district, or wherever these different officers resided.

Mr. Perkins: That would not matter.

Mr. Nalder: That is the object of having other appointments.

Mr. KELLY: By this Bill we have got away from State-wide control and watered it down to something worth while; and I do not think the hon. member's amendment would be of any advantage. I have every confidence in the local governing authorities and I hold them in high esteem. So the hon. member for Roe does not want to drag red herrings all over the Chamber in an endeavour to make out that I have said something terrible about road boards. He knows that I have been a member of a road board nearly all my life and I know the part road boards play in the activities of a district. They have a great degree of responsibility. I also have the utmost confidence in the Bush Fires Board, and I do not intend to waste any more time reiterating what I said previously. I am prepared to stand by the case I put forward.

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

#### Ayes—15

Mr. Bovell	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Court	Mr. Owen
Mr. Crommellin	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Roberts
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Wild
Sir Ross McLarty	Mr. I. Manning
Mr. Nalder	

(Teller.)

#### Noes—22

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Lapham
Mr. Brady	Mr. Moir
Mr. Evans	Mr. Norton
Mr. Gaffy	Mr. Nuisen
Mr. Graham	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Hall	Mr. Potter
Mr. Heal	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Rowberry
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Toms
Mr. Kelly	Mr. May

(Teller.)

#### Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Mann	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Brand	Mr. Hawke
Mr. Thorn	Mr. Bickerton
Mr. W. Manning	Mr. Marshall

Majority against—7.

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. PERKINS: In accepting the decision of the Committee I will assume it is an indication that it is useless to go on with the other amendments I have on the notice paper. However, I would like to remind the Minister, following the statements he made when discussing that amendment, that I see another difficulty in this legislation; and I am wondering how he will overcome it. The Minister says he is concerned about the uniformity of decisions. He said that if a number of weather officers were appointed in one area he feared there would be difficulty in regard to the lack of uniformity of decision.

In country areas we find that two, three, or even four boards have their boundaries joining at one point, and there will be an overlapping of the decision on whether the dangerous fire hazard forecast is to be overridden in one or more of those local authority areas. If that is what is concerning the Minister, I am wondering whether he considers any further action is necessary to overcome the difficulty.

*Clause put and passed.*

#### Title:

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that this should be the title of the Bill.

Mr. HEARMAN: Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment on the notice paper which I intended to move to the last clause.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is too late; the clause has been put and passed.

Mr. HEARMAN: I waited for the Minister to reply, but he did not get up on his feet. I have an amendment on the notice paper.

The CHAIRMAN: I put the question and it has been carried. I am afraid the hon. member is too late.

*Title put and passed.*

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

### COLLEGE STREET CLOSURE BILL.

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 9th September.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe) [5.44]: It is with rather mixed feelings that I support this Bill which was introduced by the Minister for Lands. Its effect will be felt more keenly in educational circles because it marks the first outward and practical action to close down officially an educational era. The introduction of a Bill at this early stage in the session to close the street in question indicates that the department desires, with some urgency, to end Perth Modern School as at present constituted and to substitute a normal five-year high school.

Mr. W. Hegney: We are anxious to get some of the rooms ready by next February.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I appreciate that point. There will be many who will mourn the end of Modern School and no doubt the majority of them will fail to understand the reasons why this top line school should be dispensed with. Many, of course, will welcome its end; not so much its demise as a school, but because of the fact that its closure will represent the passing of an era during which talented children were academically and socially segregated from their fellows in the first stage by the passing of a rather unsatisfactory scholarship system and, in the second stage, after passing the Junior University examination.

However, the majority of the people throughout the State will no doubt greatly appreciate the real value that Perth Modern School has been to Western Australia and its education system generally. Many of the State's most distinguished leaders have been educated at that school.

Mr. W. Hegney: It was the only high school in existence for years.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Quite so. I think it should be generally known that, overall, the school has had a remarkable influence on raising the educational standard and the cultural level that obtains in this State.

At first it would appear that to change such a desirable state of affairs would be for the worse. I must confess that when I first viewed the proposition I felt it was a change for the worse; that it could, in all probability, be the means of implementing a policy of levelling down rather than levelling up. However, after considerable thought and a fair amount of research, during which I contacted a number of the State's leading educationists, I have come to the conclusion that the change, with some provisos, could be for the better.

Quite a number of new high schools have been erected in the State and many additions have been made to existing high schools. Also, there are several high schools yet to be built. They will be charged with the task of educating the adolescents in this State. So many things have changed from the time when Perth Modern School was virtually the only high school in the metropolitan area which catered for higher school education. As I have said, we now have many high schools charged with this task. It would seem to me that with such a number of high schools providing education up to matriculation standard, it would be unwise to retain Perth Modern School for the education of children who are, supposedly, intellectually superior to their fellows.

To my mind a complete segregation into one school of the higher I.Q. groups of children lacks, in the circumstances, the

advantages that are offered by the less arbitrary segregations into classes within a school. I feel that if the talented, or gifted, children could be properly catered for by some group, or grade segregation within some normal high school—and by that I mean there should be provision of special and broadened courses and reasonably sized classes—they would most definitely be advantaged by this form of segregation.

Besides the children gaining an advantage in that respect, their fellow students would also benefit by having them living in a community with them and the education system generally would benefit and be improved. I say this because the talented, or gifted, child will not, under the proposed scheme, be segregated socially or on the playing field from his fellow pupils. In short, the school life in a normal high school will reflect, more nearly, the life of the community in which we live.

There are several bad features, however, which might result from the outcome of the closure of the street. One such bad feature is that the proposed new school—to be placed in the precincts of the present Modern School—will, I fear, be oversized, and its numbers will prove to be unwieldy.

When one considers that into the already cramped space available on the Modern School site it is proposed to install 1,300 pupils in this new school building, hon. members will appreciate what I mean, particularly when they consider that apart from these 1,300 pupils, there are also 360 pupils who are at present attending the Thomas-st. primary school. This will mean that there will be about 1,700 pupils who will be crammed into a confined and restricted area.

This confining and restriction of space is very contrary to the wishes of educationists at the present time. Indeed, wherever a new school is built, it is sited with great care so that adequate living room is available for the pupils in the school. By living room, I mean, of course, room to accommodate them socially, physically, academically, and on the playing fields.

Mr. W. Hegney: Could you give us an alternative suggestion that the department might have adopted?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Yes. Briefly, at this time, I feel the Minister should have restricted the number of pupils to attend this school; it should have been far less than 1,300. I have tried to point out to the Minister—though perhaps I have failed—that I feel the 1,300 pupils who are to attend the new school comprise a number far in excess of what is a reasonable thing, because of the restricted space available in that particular region. It is unfair to the children that this state of affairs should exist.



Mr. Oldfield: Perhaps one way out of this would be to convince the Minister that the Mt. Lawley High School should be a five-year high school.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Perhaps the hon. member for Mt. Lawley has something there; it would certainly be better than placing another 1,300 children on the present Modern School site. We must also realise that there are 360 pupils attending the Thomas-st. school. The Minister for Education and the Minister for Lands know that what I am saying is perfectly true.

Mr. Kelly: How many children are there at present at Modern School?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I am not able to find out in the time available to me, but perhaps the Minister for Education would know.

Mr. W. Hegney: Not accurately.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The point I have made regarding cramming constitutes a potentially dangerous educational problem. I think it is generally agreed that having schools of 1,000 to 1,500 pupils or more generally leads to problems of discipline; it certainly leads to a lack of incentive through the anonymity of numbers. I am sure that will be obvious to anyone who gives it more than a passing thought. If these points of lack of discipline and incentive apply to ordinary schools, then they will apply ever so much more to the proposed school which, according to the answer I received to a question today, is to hold 1,300 pupils.

Mr. W. Hegney: I think you are under-estimating the ability and efficiency of the teaching profession when you say that.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: The Minister does not know what he is talking about when he makes a remark of that nature.

Mr. W. Hegney: Yes he does.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I am talking about the physical limitations of space. It is not fair to the teachers or to the pupils—particularly to the pupils—because they are the ones I am thinking about. The Minister for Education should know the trend which prevails in regard to the size of grounds considered essential at present for a high school. It is certainly far in excess of the area we find at Modern School today.

Mr. W. Hegney: Yes, but the Modern School building has been there for some time.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I have known that for some time.

Mr. W. Hegney: We are in agreement, anyway.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Surely we should be able to devise a better means of ensuring that our children receive an

adequate education and are treated fairly other than by putting such a large number of pupils in such a restricted area.

Speaking very generally and briefly on the point of large schools—I know you would not allow me to develop the theme, Mr. Speaker—I feel sure that in the future we will have to devise some means of a more adequate and efficient control of schools which have large numbers of pupils. It will be necessary to divide them so that there will not be that anonymity of numbers of which I have already spoken; so that there will be a more vital personal touch between pupil, teacher and headmaster.

Mr. W. Hegney: You will agree that there is some difference between the touch in a primary school and that of the secondary school.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: Quite a deal. The Minister for Education should take part in this debate, and not so much by interjection—

Mr. W. Hegney: I was trying to help you.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: —but by giving us a well-reasoned speech on the effect of the closure of this street. He should, for example, give us his views on the ending of Modern School as it is at present constituted. It is pertinent for him at this juncture to give us some of his views as to the size of schools in general. He could also answer this question: Is it intended at some future time that the Thomas-st. school should lose its identity and be incorporated in the high school. The member for West Perth is just as interested in this matter as anybody else.

The Minister for Education could well give us some idea on how to retain incentives for gifted children which applied in the past when Modern School was the one to which entry was obtained by some special means. Above all I think it is up to the Minister to explain to us the point I referred to, as to whether or not it is in the interests of the children and education generally that such a large number of pupils should be cramped into this restricted area. That is the concern of people towards this Bill. If the Minister for Education does not reply to that point, the Minister for Lands might assist us.

Mr. W. Hegney: You suggest that Modern School numbers should remain static?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: No. With the school sited where it is the department would be forced to increase the numbers to some extent. I would suggest to the Minister very seriously that 1,300 children are far too many. When we take into account that 1,700 children are sited in that area—that is, including the primary

school—then the numbers are greatly beyond reason. I contend that the youngsters will have no living room. Where will 1,700 children spend their recess periods? How can they all be provided with sporting facilities?

There is a distressing tendency in large high schools at present to give in actual practice only a certain number of children the opportunity to participate in sport. Thus many children are lost to sport by virtue of anonymity of numbers. Teachers cannot adequately cope with all the children with the facilities that are available, so they concentrate on children who are really keen. Even many of the keen ones are unable to get a real go. It is a very serious problem and one worthy of much thought. I submit to the Minister for Education through the Minister for Lands that it is potentially dangerous and certainly educationally unsound to aim at a school accommodating so many children on such a restricted site.

In conclusion, I feel this Bill can be supported; but I am very definite that a number of points should be clarified absolutely, if not at this time because of the Minister's lack of knowledge on the subject, then certainly in the very near future, in order that the public might be satisfied with regard to the proposed change.

**MR POTTER (Subiaco) [5.55]:** I support the measure. The Subiaco Council has, as the Minister advised us, agreed to the closing of College-st. Some time ago an approach was made to me in that direction by the primary school concerned. While the pedestrians and residents in Subiaco-rd. will be amply catered for by the provision of footpaths, one other thing exercises my mind: that is, the emphasis being placed on secondary education and its effect on the primary school in Thomas-st.

I have had the assurance of the Minister that the playing area of that school will not be restricted or reduced. The parents and citizens' association in that district has contributed quite a sum of money towards facilities for the recreation field, the playing space, and the beautification of the grounds. In regard to the development of playing space in primary schools the Education Department should waive some of its practices. Today that department is developing playing fields of secondary schools by the use of bulldozers, but in the development of recreational grounds for primary schools that was not done. I would like to see the department doing something to develop primary school playing sites.

As the hon. member for Cottesloe said, there are two lines of thought in regard to the size of schools. I am not an educationist, and I shall not embark on a discussion of the merits. Some argument might be submitted for the provision of

these fields in secondary schools. I do not know that Modern School with 1,300 pupils is overcrowded. I have also in mind the John Curtin High School which has some 2,500 pupils. I do not know what playing space is provided. That also applies to the girls' school in East Perth. Perhaps the secondary schools have adequate playing space; but the whole emphasis should not be placed on secondary schools to the detriment of the primary schools. The latter should be given adequate playing space.

There is every reason to support the Bill. I am very pleased to see the way this school is going in my electorate; it will prove to be an asset. We should realise that educational facilities in Perth are very cramped and the school in this area will be the most suitable for the pupils to attend. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

Mr. Sewell in the Chair; the Hon. L. F. Kelly (Minister for Lands) in charge of the Bill.

#### *Clause 1—agreed to.*

#### *Clause 2—Closure of College Street, Subiaco:*

**Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON:** I would like to ask the Minister for Education, through the Minister for Lands whether, if he is unable, at this juncture, to answer some of the points arising out of the brief words I had to say, he will ensure that what I have said is studied and a reply given to both myself and the public.

**Mr. W. HEGNEY:** Remarks of the character made by the hon. member for Cottesloe are always taken into account by the appropriate Minister.

**Mr. Ross Hutchinson:** That is heartening.

**Mr. W. HEGNEY:** I know the hon. member is very interested in education, but we have to be practical about these things. He knows that the trend is toward a tremendous increase in the school population, and no doubt he has read the report of the Education Department.

Perth Modern School is in a central position and we must cater for children in the near part of the metropolis. The object of the Education Department is to provide five-year high schools at various points as has been done at Midland Junction, Fremantle and Kent-st. Therefore, Perth Modern School will become a general high school—that is the reason for the closure of College-st.—and children from various parts of Subiaco and West Perth will attend Perth Modern School.

**Mr. Ross Hutchinson:** When there are oversized schools—

Mr. W. HEGNEY: There is a strong division of opinion as to what the size of a high school should be. The department is hoping to build a high school south of Bentley in order to relieve Kent-st. which is at breaking point—around 1,500. Children from Queen's Park are being sent to Armadale and from Mt. Lawley to Midland Junction. The Education Department obtained a spacious area on which to build a high school. So far as the high school at Midland Junction is concerned, the question of a site was discussed for a long time; but the playing fields at Modern School are 20 times the size of those at Midland Junction.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the Minister will connect his remarks to the clause because we are dealing with the closure of College-st.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: This clause deals with the closure of College-st. for the purpose of extending Perth Modern School. I hope that when the Estimates on education are being debated the hon. member for Cottesloe and the Chairman will engage in the discussion.

*Clause put and passed.*

*Title—agreed to.*

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

## GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 9th September.

MR. HEARMAN (Blackwood) [5.58]: The Minister's explanation of the need to bring down this Bill was quite clear, and I do not think it contains anything particularly contentious. There might be one or two points which other hon. members have in mind; but so far as I am concerned I can see no particular significance in the Bill.

As hon. members are aware, the intention is to appoint a single commissioner. Perhaps the broadest issue before the House is as to what form and type of management our railway system should have. Various suggestions have been put forward, and I notice in the report of the Royal Commissioner on this particular point that he has given very full consideration to the various alternatives and has examined the working of the alternatives in all other States of the Commonwealth.

Despite the fact that some form of a board or a commission—call it what you will—may have some attraction, the Royal Commissioner is in favour of a one-man management. In view of our unfortunate experience with a commission, I think it would be wise to agree to the proposition of the Government for a one-man management.

The Minister said that it was intended to call applications throughout Australia, and also indicated that although it was quite possible preference would be given to a local applicant, the Government was not necessarily restricting applications to railwaymen and possibly somebody other than a railwayman could be appointed.

Now that does raise an interesting point. The Royal Commissioner examined that as well; and he seems to be of the opinion that it would be an attractive proposition to appoint such a man if he could be found. But he pointed out that there are also very many difficulties. I think that the effect will be to influence the type of applicant that is likely to come forward. When I say type of applicant, I mean in relation to his background. It would show to some extent the realism with which the Government indicates its intention to deal with what is a very real problem with our railways, known in America as "feather-bedding".

We hear a good deal of talk about the political control of railways and all other Government instrumentalities, and it would be idle to suggest that there is no political control. It could be argued that there should be political control; but there is the question of how far it goes and of just how far it has been allowed to drift—perhaps to the stage where good management becomes almost impossible.

In case there should be any hon. members who have not perhaps quite grasped what I mean by the term "feather-bedding", I refer to the industrial awards and conditions under which the railways work. I have discussed this situation with many railwaymen—from people who are in senior positions to the ordinary run-of-the-mill railwayman—and without exception they all agreed that there are many conditions in the awards which do not assist in the efficient working of the railways and which are, in my opinion, completely ridiculous.

This applies not only to Western Australia but to railways throughout Australia, and the United States. The problem here has reached such a magnitude that we must show some disposition to tackle it if we are to attract the right type of applicant for the position of commissioner. The interim arrangement with Mr. Marsland, the present commissioner, does provide an excellent opportunity for the Government to show its sincerity in this connection.

I believe the time has arrived when, with judicious handling, the railway unions could be made to realise that a lot of these charges that are raised as a result of industrial awards are completely ridiculous. For instance, last year, in answer to a question, I was informed that, as a result of a difficulty that arose, the placing of a truck of fruit alongside a ship inside Fremantle harbour on a

Sunday cost £46; that is, to take it from the railway yard in Fremantle to the ship's side.

I do not think there is an hon. member in this Chamber who would seriously attempt to argue that £46 was anything approximating a reasonable charge for that service; and yet under the industrial awards, the railways have no option to impose that charge unless they are to handle such freight at a loss. Everyone knows it is a ridiculous charge when made aware of it; and is surprised—not to say aghast—to realise the limits to which charges have gone. When one realises that during the last fruit shipping season no fewer than 11 mail steamers cleared Fremantle on a Sunday, one appreciates the obstacles that this sort of thing places on our export industries.

It simply means that it is practically impossible to export fruit on mail steamers, although at one time it used to be the common practice. There are enough difficulties in that particular industry, without any additional hazards being put in its way. I just mention that because it clearly illustrates the ridiculous lengths to which we have gone to provide improved industrial conditions, as we choose to call them, for railway workers. We are fast reaching the stage when it is not having that effect at all. It is only taking freight away from the railways.

I have a very high regard for the commonsense of the average Australian—and the railwaymen are no different from anybody else in that respect. I have had numerous conversations with railwaymen and they all agree that a great many conditions are ridiculous. The union submits a case to the court, possibly expecting to get half of what it asks for; and if the other side of the case has no argument before the court, naturally it can only decide on the evidence it has and it is liable to make a decision—

Mr. W. Hegney: It is not bound by the rules of evidence, but can inform its mind on any matter.

Mr. HEARMAN: That is so; but I think the Minister will concede that if one viewpoint is argued and the other is not, the court is likely to err in its judgment on the side of the case that has been argued. This afternoon I asked a question in this Chamber, as to what steps the commission had taken, since the war, in an approach to the court to try to get some realism injected into its industrial awards. But according to the answer I received, apart from steps taken during strikes, the commission has made no approach, but has apparently been content to let matters slide. I do not know whether this was because the commission did not care, or whether ministerial pressure was being brought to bear on it. I

say that without bias, because there have been Governments of both political colours in this State in the period under review.

At all events, any new applicant, who finds it will cost him £46 to put a truck of fruit alongside a ship on a Sunday, will try to do something about it, if he is the sort of man we want. He should do something about it, because it is not in the interests of the railwaymen themselves—apart from anything else, and there is a good deal else to consider—to have this state of affairs existing. I would like the Government to offer inducement to the right type of applicant, by making it clear that it will face up to this problem.

If the situation is properly handled, I do not think the railwaymen will object to some of the present conditions being altered to some extent; because the railways will have to come down to a competitive basis, in view of the competition that exists from other means of transport. As members must be aware, the case I have cited is completely ridiculous.

The troubles I have referred to are not confined to Australia; and in an American publication, "Fortune," there is an article which quotes what was said by the president of the Chicago and North-Western Railway. He is reported as having said—

If we could eliminate feather-bedding we could pay substantially higher wages per man.

That is the thought which could well be put to our own railway workers. This man is reported as having proposed early this year that the "Association of Western Railways" hire a research organisation to make a factual study of the impact of feather-bedding on the workers themselves. The article continues—

Heineman believes that if the railroads really try they can demonstrate to the brotherhoods that the "make-work" labour contracts have actually been work-abolishment contracts because they contribute so greatly to the steady decline in the railroads' share of freight traffic.

There is a great deal of thought there which could be injected into this question of the appointment of a new commissioner. I think we should get a man who would tackle the matter along those lines and we should encourage applicants of that sort. The best way to do that is to make it clear that we do not want feather-bedding in this State.

Mr. Potter: There is no feather bedding as regards the unions here.

Mr. HEARMAN: The average railway worker and even district superintendents are not aware of some of the costs that are involved. In his report the Royal Commissioner points out that one section of the railways has no idea of how the next section works, because each is in a

watertight compartment, as it were. That is borne out by my own somewhat superficial examination of the facts.

Although most of the privately owned railways in America are having the same difficulties, and many of them are on the verge of bankruptcy, it is interesting to note that one railway, the Chesapeake & Ohio, is doing very well and its labour force is at a record high. The reason for this is that the president of the Chesapeake & Ohio is not a railwayman but, according to the information I have received, had his training in the coal business. The vice-president came from General Electric, and these two men brought a lot of new ideas into railway working. They did not accept the idea that it is impossible to determine what railway costs are.

They found that a determination of costs could be accomplished by normal business practices, even though they had to be modified in some respects. I do not suggest that there are not other factors to be considered, but what I have said shows that it is not always necessary to have a man with a railway background as a senior railway administrator.

Mr. Brady: You will have to get some of those men in the wool industry in this State.

Mr. HEARMAN: The Minister may not like what I have to say, but I believe there is something in it and that if we obtain the services of a man such as I have suggested we will be able to put our railways on a better basis.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I move—

That the hon. member for Blackwood be given leave to continue his speech at a later sitting.

Motion put and passed.

*House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.*

## Legislative Council

Tuesday, the 16th September, 1958.

### CONTENTS

	Page
<b>QUESTIONS ON NOTICE :</b>	
Derby and Eastern Goldfields schools, attendances and domestic science .....	754
Kalgoorlie native reserve, cost of ablution and sanitary facilities .....	755
<b>QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE :</b>	
Uniform general building by-laws, opinions of Crown Law Department .....	755
<b>LEAVE OF ABSENCE</b> .....	755
<b>BILLS :</b>	
State Housing Act Amendment, 3r. ....	755
Plant Diseases Act Amendment, 3r., passed	755
Junior Farmers' Movement Act Amendment, 3r., passed .....	755
Argentine Ant Act Amendment (Continuance), 3r., passed .....	755
Rural and Industries Bank Act Amendment, 3r., passed .....	755
Broken Hill Proprietary Steel Industry Agreement Act Amendment, 3r., passed	755
Acts Amendment (Superannuation and Pensions), 2r. ....	755
Land Tax Assessment Act Amendment, 2r.	758
Noxious Weeds Act Amendment, 2r., Com., report .....	765
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act Amendment, 1r. ....	766
College Street Closure, 1r. ....	766
Land Act Amendment, 2r., Com., report	766
Local Courts Act Amendment, 2r. ....	767
Electoral Act Amendment, 2r. ....	774
<b>MOTION :</b>	
Health Act, disallowance of fire guards regulation .....	781

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

### QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.

#### DERBY AND EASTERN GOLDFIELDS SCHOOLS.

##### *Attendances and Domestic Science.*

1. The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM asked the Minister for Railways:

What are the comparative figures for the school at Derby and the Eastern Goldfields High School in respect of the following:—

- children attending;
- students attending domestic science;
- proposed cost of new domestic science accommodation;
- proposed cost of new equipment and fittings for domestic science?

The MINISTER replied:

- Derby, 141; Eastern Goldfields High School, 618.
- Derby, 11 at present, but this will be increased in 1959; Eastern Goldfields High School, 152.